

Groups Outspent Candidates in Record \$14M AG Race

Written by Wisconsin Democracy Campaign, Matt Rothschild
Thursday, 26 January 2023 14:19

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In Wisconsin these days, just about every race for every position is breaking a record in campaign spending. Matt Rothschild of the Wisconsin Democracy Campaign reports on the race for Wisconsin attorney general.

MADISON - Outside electioneering groups outspent the candidates in last fall's record \$14 million race for Wisconsin attorney general, a Wisconsin Democracy Campaign review found.

Nineteen special interest groups doled out \$7.58 million ([see Table below](#)), including \$4.18 million to support Republican candidates in the primary and general election and \$3.4 million to back incumbent Democratic Attorney General Josh Kaul, who won reelection.

The five candidates – Kaul and four Republicans – spent a combined \$6.42 million with Kaul leading the pack at \$4.8 million. Kaul's final ballot opponent, Eric Toney, spent \$962,884. The three other GOP candidates spent a combined \$661,013 before Toney sidelined them in the Aug. 9 primary.

The total spent by groups and candidates in the 2022 attorney general's race came to \$13,996,086, which beat the previous record in 2018 by just \$949.

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The top-spending outside groups in the race were:

[Republican Attorneys General Association](#), in Washington, D.C., which spent \$3.11 million through a state political action committee called [Wisconsin Freedom PAC](#)

. The group spent its money on television and online ads and mailings that accused Kaul of being soft on crime and cutting funds for new officer training and the State Crime Lab;

[Democratic Attorneys General Association](#), in Washington, D.C., which spent \$1.9 million through an independent expenditure committee called [DAGA People's Lawyer Project](#)

. The sponsored television and online advertising that said Toney would prosecute doctors and nurses for performing abortions and supported making the procedure a felony with no exceptions for rape or incest;

[Americans for Prosperity](#), a Koch-backed state group which spent nearly \$550,000 on canvassing, mailings, and digital and radio advertising to support Adam Jarchow, one of the GOP candidates Toney defeated in the primary.

To learn how much was spent by all of the outside groups involved in Wisconsin's 2022 race for attorney general, please see the [table below](#). For more information about the groups and their electioneering activities, check out their profiles in our [Hijacking Campaign 2022](#) feature.

Table
Spending by Outside Special Interest Groups in the 2022 Attorney General's Race

Group	Amount
Wisconsin Freedom PAC (Republican Attorneys General Association)	\$3,110,000
DAGA People's Lawyer Project (Democratic Attorneys General Association)	\$1,900,000
Americans for Prosperity	\$549,691
Planned Parenthood Advocates of Wisconsin	\$474,952
Badger Values PAC	\$407,483
A Better Wisconsin Together Political Fund	\$400,000
For Our Future	\$264,480

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Wisconsin Conservation Voters Independent Expenditure Committee	\$100,492
Voces de la Frontera Action Inc.	\$72,712
Wisconsin Family Action	\$69,102
BLOC PAC (Black Leaders Organizing for Communities)	\$43,251
Leaders Igniting Transformation Action Fund	\$18,722
NRA Political Victory Fund – Federal PAC	\$18,674
Volunteers for Agriculture (Wisconsin Farm Bureau Federation)	\$15,201
AFSCME Working Families Fund	\$14,716
Blue Sky Waukesha	\$11,799
NextGen Climate Action Committee	\$8,053
Power to the Polls Wisconsin	\$737
Human Rights Campaign Equality Votes PAC	\$32
TOTAL	\$7,576,934