



PRESS RELEASE

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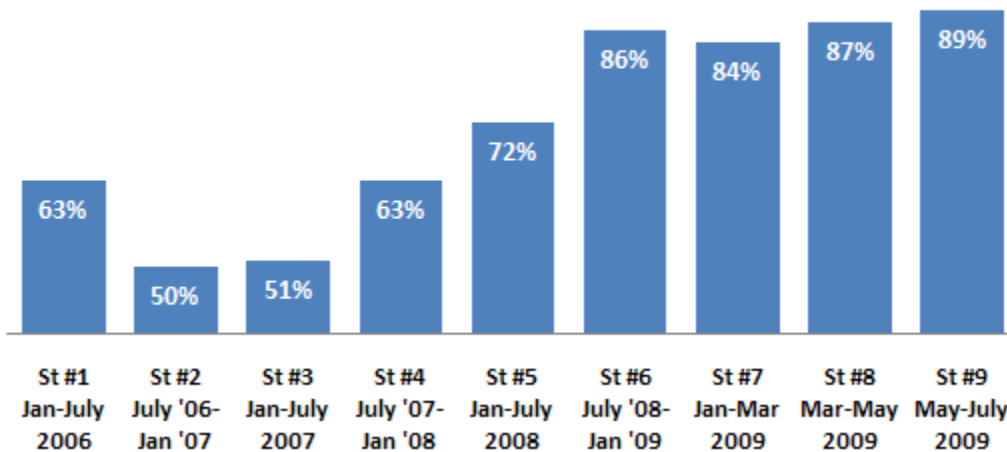
CFB ANALYSIS: SMALL DONORS PLAYING A BIGGER ROLE AS ELECTIONS GROW NEAR

August 3, 2009 – With the primary elections about six weeks away, New Yorkers are getting involved in their local elections at increasing rates. An analysis of contributions reported to the Campaign Finance Board through July shows that small donors are a growing focus of campaign fundraising for every office, as candidates work to qualify for public matching funds distributed through New York City’s landmark Campaign Finance Program.

Contributor interest in this year’s election is still higher than ever, with small donors as the focus of recent fundraising efforts. As the fall draws near, more New Yorkers than ever are showing interest this year’s elections. With more candidates running for office, more contributors are getting involved in local politics; the number of contributors to all candidates between May 12 and July 11, 2009 (21,942) is up 25 percent from the total for the same period in the 2005 election cycle (17,550).

The new contributors who are just now starting to get involved this year’s contests are largely small donors. With each successive disclosure period as the election nears, the proportion of small donors continues to increase. For the two-month filing period just concluded, 89 percent of contributors were small donors whose contributions were \$250 or less, continuing a marked trend that started a year ago.

Percentage of small donors (giving \$250 or less) by disclosure statement, 2009 elections, all offices

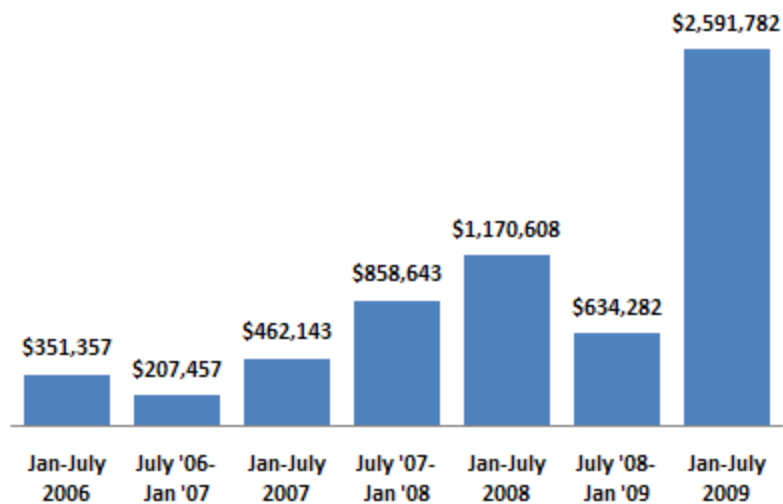


With a large number of small-dollar donors, candidates are less beholden to any one large contributor, or to a small group of major funders. Not only can small donors provide candidates the freedom to represent the broadest concerns of their constituents, they provide candidates with a committed base of volunteers. Research on contributor behavior shows that many small donors volunteer their time with campaigns as well as their money, helping candidates collect signatures, canvass for support, and build their grass-roots efforts.

**Candidates focus on qualifying for public matching funds.** With the first payments of matching funds for the 2009 elections coming later this week, candidates are focusing more of their time and energy on raising the small contributions that help them qualify to receive matching funds. The Program matches the first \$175 of contributions from New York City residents; candidates submit these contributions as “matching claims” when they file their disclosure reports with the Board.

The first payment for the primary elections will be made this week, after the Board of Elections conducts hearings on the ballot; that payment will be based on matching claims disclosed through the disclosure statement submitted July 15.

**Matching claims reported by all participating candidates, 2009 elections**

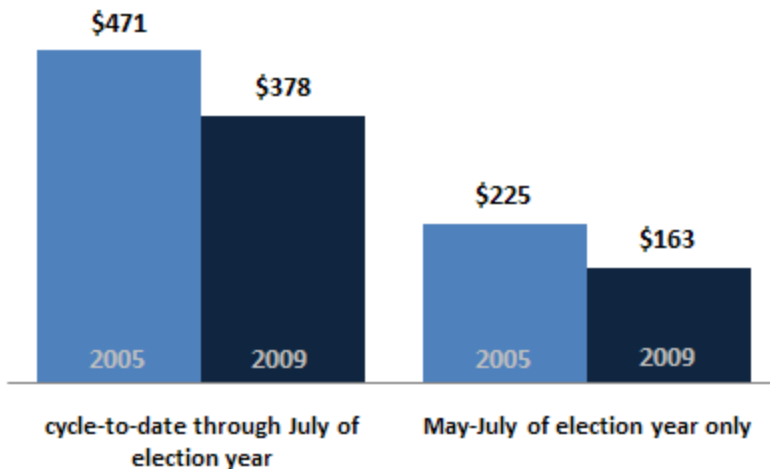


Between May 12 and July 11, candidates reported raising \$1.1 million in matching claims, more than in either of the two two-month periods preceding it. For comparison, a look at the first six months of 2009 shows that candidates have reported almost \$2.6 million in matching claims this year—more than twice the amount in any six-month period during the 2009 election cycle. (Changes to the matching rate for the 2009 elections make any comparison with previous election cycles difficult.)

**New matching rate brings even more small donors into the system.** The new matching rate has made a marked difference in candidates’ fundraising behavior. For the previous two citywide elections, the Program matched the first \$250 of New Yorkers’ contributions at a rate of \$4 to \$1. To provide further incentives for candidates to solicit

small contributions, the rate was changed for the 2009 election cycle to match the first \$175 at a rate of \$6 to \$1.

**Average contribution size for candidates participating in the Campaign Finance Program, 2005 and 2009 elections**



In response to the new matching rate, the average contribution size has dropped significantly from the last election. Overall, among participating candidates, the average contribution has fallen from \$471 for the 2005 elections, to \$378 for the 2009 elections to date. Over the two-month period between May and July of the election year, the

average contribution fell 28 percent, from \$225 in 2005 to \$163 in 2009.

With more New Yorkers getting involved in the political process, as noted above, fundraising is keeping pace with, or exceeding, that of previous election cycles, even with smaller average contribution sizes.

**The next disclosure filing deadline for the primary election is only weeks away.** The next scheduled disclosure filing is due August 14, 2009, covering transactions between July 12 and August 10. Only candidates running in the September 15 primary elections are required to file this statement, which will be the 10th disclosure filing for the 2009 election cycle. By law, participating candidates who are eligible will be paid public matching funds within four business days of the disclosure deadline. The August 14 filing will also help determine eligibility for the first round of New York City's official [Debate Program](#), administered by the CFB and sponsored by various media partners. You can see the [full schedule](#) of disclosure filing deadlines on the CFB website.

For more information or detail about campaign fundraising and spending, please visit the CFB website's [financial summary page](#) or the [searchable online database](#).