



NEWS RELEASE

CALIFORNIA SECRETARY OF STATE ALEX PADILLA

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CONTACT:

Sam Mahood (916) 653-6575

Secretary of State Alex Padilla and MapLight Launch New Open Source Search Tool to Track Independent Expenditures

SACRAMENTO – California Secretary of State Alex Padilla today launched a powerful new search tool to easily track independent expenditures. [Power Search](#), the open source campaign finance search engine already available on the Secretary of State's website, has been upgraded to provide this new capability. Power Search was developed by MapLight, a nonpartisan research organization that tracks money in politics.

Power Search now enables users to quickly and easily browse all independent expenditures affecting state-level candidates and ballot measures from 2001 through the present. The tool uses the California Secretary of State's [CAL-ACCESS raw bulk data](#) and examines the independent expenditures reported in Form 465 (Supplemental Independent Expenditure Report) and Form 496 (24-hour Independent Expenditure Report). The data is refreshed daily.

"Each election cycle the amount of political spending by Independent expenditure committees continues to grow. Candidate campaign communications are now regularly overshadowed by independent expenditure committees," Secretary of State Padilla said. "It is imperative that the public and the press have a clear view of the source and flow of funds going into independent expenditures committees. During the 2014 election cycle alone, major donor and independent expenditure committees spent over \$80 million in California," Padilla added.

An "independent expenditure" is a payment for a communication that expressly advocates the election or defeat of a clearly identified candidate, or the qualification, passage, or defeat of a clearly identified ballot measure, but which is not coordinated with or made at the behest of the affected candidate or ballot measure committee. Independent expenditures are typically made by major donors (such as corporations and individuals) and political action committees operated by a variety of political organizations.

"Independent expenditures are a way that wealthy interest groups influence who is elected to run our government," said Daniel G. Newman, President and Co-Founder of MapLight. "The search tool launched today by MapLight and Secretary Padilla supports transparency and accountability in our government, and makes it easier for citizens throughout California to keep track of who is funding election campaigns."

According to a MapLight analysis, major donor and independent expenditure committees spent \$81 million on candidates and ballot measures during the 2014 Election Cycle. Nearly \$57 million (71%) of the \$81 million was spent in support of candidates and ballot measures, and \$24 million (29%) in opposition to candidates and ballot measures.

Independent expenditure committees spent nearly \$10.3 million on candidates and ballot measures during the 2002 Election Cycle. A little over \$9 million (88%) was spent in support of candidates and ballot measures, and slightly over \$1.2 million (12%) in opposition to candidates and ballot measures.

“Working in a public-private partnership with MapLight is allowing us to greatly improve the speed and accuracy of our campaign data searches. Adding this latest online search tool provides the public and the press easy access to important campaign information. Working with MapLight we are increasing transparency at little to no cost to the state,” Padilla added.

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