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[Spending on special election campaigns tops \\$300 million](#)

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SACRAMENTO, (AP) --

Campaign committees battling over the eight propositions on last November's special election ballot spent a record \$303.9 million, according to campaign reports filed this week.

All eight of the initiatives, including four promoted by Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger, went down to defeat despite, or perhaps because of, the spending barrage.

"It shows that if you have enough money you certainly can have your issue presented to voters," said Robert Stern, president of the Center for Governmental Studies, a Los Angeles-based campaign think tank. "But it also shows if you have enough money you can defeat almost any issue."

The previous record for spending on ballot measures in a single California election was \$253.6 million, set in November 2004, according to figures from the secretary of state's office.

Schwarzenegger contributed \$8.2 million of his own money to his losing cause.

His two main campaign committees, the California Recovery Team and Citizens to Save California, spent nearly \$56 million altogether to try to persuade voters to approve propositions 74, 75, 76 and 77.

The measures would have extended the probationary period for new teachers, made it tougher for public employee unions to raise campaign money, given the governor new powers to control state spending and taken redistricting duties away from the Legislature.

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After all the spending on the special election, Schwarzenegger's re-election committee is nearly out of money as he begins his bid for another term.

Campaign statements filed late Tuesday show Schwarzenegger raised \$2.5 million in 2005 for his re-election campaign, but spent \$3 million. Although he has about \$150,000 cash on hand, the governor's re-election committee had debts of \$556,000 as of Dec. 31, 2005.

Meanwhile, the two leading Democrats looking to challenge Schwarzenegger in the fall are both flush with cash: state Treasurer Phil Angelides reported cash of \$17 million while state Controller Steve Westly has about \$24 million — aided by donations of \$20 million from himself.

"The money needs to be put into perspective," said Karen Hanretty, the former spokeswoman for the California Republican Party who left last month to start her own consulting firm. "While both Angelides and Westly are sitting on a lot of money right now, both will have to spend an extraordinary amount of money between now and June.

"By the time one of them emerges from the primary, I think Schwarzenegger will have had the opportunity to catch up," she said.

Schwarzenegger is not expected to face any significant challenge in the June primary, which gives him time to rebuild his campaign coffers.

But unlike previous campaigns, the upcoming election is the first one regulated by Proposition 34, which limits individual contributions to a candidate for governor to \$22,300. That means Schwarzenegger will be forced to tap scores of smaller donors to fund his re-election bid or reach again into his own pocket.

In 2003, Schwarzenegger spent more than \$10 million on the recall campaign and his candidacy for governor.

Also on the ballot were measures that would have required parental notification or a judge's waiver before a minor could get an abortion, attempted to lower the cost of prescription drugs for low-income Californians and reinstate some controls on the state's electricity market.

Schwarzenegger was heavily supported by his business allies, but the public employees and Democrats fighting his proposals spent nearly \$133 million in opposition.

While the ballot propositions were losers political consultants and the state's broadcast industries were winners.

The campaigns spent nearly \$16 million on political consultants and another \$105 million on radio and television ads.

Drug companies spent \$83.6 million to defeat Proposition 79, which would have penalized pharmaceutical companies that failed to offer discounts to uninsured, lower-income Californians. Proposition 78, a voluntary discount measure touted by the companies as an alternative to Proposition 79, also failed.

Associated Press writer Tom Chorneau contributed to this story.

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