

Obama Outspending McCain 3 to 1 on TV; Nearly 75% of Presidential Ad Spending in Red States

Nearly \$38 million spent from October 21-October 28; Another new TV record

Obama spends record amount in week

Both candidates focus on the economy

MADISON, WI –From October 21st to October 28th, spending on television advertising in the presidential campaign has totaled nearly \$38 million. Over this time period, the Obama campaign spent nearly \$21.5 million while the McCain campaign spent nearly \$7.5 million. Another \$6.7 million was spent by the Republican Party and \$2.2 million was spent by interest groups.

Because these numbers are for the most recent period for which data are available, they do not include the millions Obama spent Wednesday night on a 30-minute infomercial that aired on seven networks. They combine to put the Obama campaign on track to spend more money in October on broadcast TV – over \$100 million dollars – than any campaign has ever spent in history.

These are the findings of a new study by the University of Wisconsin Advertising Project out this morning.

The air war continues to be waged on what should be John McCain’s home turf—states that George W. Bush won in 2004. Barack Obama spent more than \$15 million in states that went for Bush, and over 70 percent of his total spending has been in states that were “red” four years ago. McCain has been playing defense, spending most of his money in states that have reliably gone for Republicans.

Table 1: Spending in Red States

| | McCain | RNC | Obama | Total |
|--------------------------|-------------|-------------|--------------|--------------|
| Total Spending | \$7,485,000 | \$6,455,000 | \$21,403,000 | \$35,343,000 |
| Spending in Red States | \$5,417,000 | \$5,913,000 | \$15,021,000 | \$26,351,000 |
| % Spending in Red States | 72.4 | 91.6 | 70.2 | 74.6 |

CITE SOURCE OF DATA IN TABLE AS: TNS Media Intelligence/CMAG with analysis by the Wisconsin Advertising Project

Not only has the Obama campaign spent more money than the McCain campaign during the past week, but it has also aired many more unique ads. The Obama campaign aired 46 distinct ads –

also a record – between October 21 and October 28, while the McCain campaign aired only nine unique ads.

Overall, the Obama campaign outspent the McCain campaign and the Republican National Committee on TV by nearly 3 to 2. In some states the margin was even higher. In Nevada, Obama outspent McCain and the RNC over 2 to 1 while in Minnesota Obama’s margin was nearly 3 to 1. In Wisconsin, Obama outspent McCain and the RNC by a margin of over 5 to 1. Combining the McCain campaign’s spending and RNC spending, McCain outspent Obama only in North Carolina and Iowa.

“Political scientists usually think that presidential races are poor places to find advertising effects because both campaigns typically have similar resources and air ads in similar markets,” says Professor Ken Goldstein, Director of the Wisconsin Advertising Project. “The advertising advantage held by the Obama campaign this year puts us in uncharted waters. This year the spending is hugely unequal and in some cases, the Obama campaign has massive advantages,” Goldstein added.

Table 2: Advertising Spending by State (Candidate & Coordinated)

| | McCain | Obama |
|----------------|-------------|-------------|
| Colorado | \$237,000 | \$858,000 |
| Florida | \$1,441,000 | \$4,615,000 |
| Indiana | \$336,000 | \$1,248,000 |
| Iowa | \$429,000 | \$298,000 |
| Minnesota | \$176,000 | \$499,000 |
| Missouri | \$437,000 | \$1,105,000 |
| Montana | <\$1,000 | \$175,000 |
| North Carolina | \$537,000 | \$1,094,000 |
| New Hampshire | \$60,000 | \$643,000 |
| New Mexico | \$223,000 | \$309,000 |
| Nevada | \$357,000 | \$850,000 |
| Ohio | \$753,000 | \$1,984,000 |
| Pennsylvania | \$1,388,000 | \$2,742,000 |
| Virginia | \$637,000 | \$2,450,000 |
| Wisconsin | \$202,000 | \$1,084,000 |

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“Television advertising represents reality,” says Goldstein. “Imagine you’ve been on a desert island for the past year and just came back. If you saw presidential campaign advertising in Indiana, Missouri, Montana, and Virginia, and you saw the focus of the ads heavily on the economy, you probably wouldn’t need to look at the polls to know who was winning the election.”

The Republican Party has been airing ads that have helped to offset the spending imbalance between John McCain and Barack Obama. The RNC aired ads in thirteen states and on national cable, spending over \$6.5 million in their efforts. The RNC’s targets include the traditional battleground states of Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Florida, in addition to states like North Carolina, Missouri, Virginia, and Indiana—states that have been Republican strongholds in past elections. The Democrats have been relatively quiet by contrast, airing just over \$100,000 worth of advertising in New Mexico and on national cable.

Table 3: RNC Advertising by State

| State | Money Spent |
|----------------|-------------|
| Colorado | \$297,000 |
| Florida | \$1,493,000 |
| Iowa | \$7,000 |
| Indiana | \$566,000 |
| Missouri | \$557,000 |
| North Carolina | \$781,000 |
| New Mexico | \$5,000 |
| Ohio | \$999,000 |
| Pennsylvania | \$542,000 |
| Virginia | \$1,208,000 |

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During the past week, the McCain campaign focused its advertising in Florida, Nevada, and Pennsylvania; seven of the top ten McCain markets were in those states. While seven of the Obama campaign’s top ten markets were in Florida, Wisconsin, and Nevada, the Philadelphia, PA market saw the most ads from the Obama campaign. Overall, the markets to receive the most TV advertising were largely in Florida – five out of the top twenty markets were in that state.

**Table 4: Advertising Airings by Market and Candidate
(Candidate and Coordinated Ads)**

| Market | McCain Airings |
|------------------|----------------|
| Tampa, FL | 519 |
| Orlando, FL | 506 |
| Des Moines, IA | 447 |
| Reno, NV | 410 |
| Albuquerque, NM | 396 |
| Jacksonville, FL | 367 |
| Las Vegas, NV | 366 |
| Harrisburg, PA | 350 |
| Davenport, IA | 339 |
| Philadelphia, PA | 334 |

| Market | Obama Airings |
|---------------------|---------------|
| Philadelphia, PA | 978 |
| Tampa, FL | 685 |
| Washington, DC | 661 |
| Las Vegas, NV | 628 |
| La Crosse, WI | 601 |
| Milwaukee, WI | 600 |
| West Palm Beach, FL | 520 |
| Miami, FL | 505 |
| Reno, NV | 500 |
| Portland, ME | 499 |

CITE SOURCE OF DATA IN TABLE AS: TNS Media Intelligence/CMAG with analysis by the Wisconsin Advertising Project

**Table 5: Total Airings by Market
(incl. Candidate, Party, Group, and Coordinated Ads)**

| Market | Airings |
|---------------------|---------|
| Tampa, FL | 2,485 |
| Las Vegas, NV | 2,181 |
| Orlando, FL | 2,138 |
| Denver, CO | 2,128 |
| Miami, FL | 2,035 |
| Washington, DC | 1,697 |
| West Palm Beach, FL | 1,693 |
| Cleveland, OH | 1,624 |
| Philadelphia, PA | 1,579 |
| Albuquerque, NM | 1,547 |
| Reno, NV | 1,531 |
| Jacksonville, FL | 1,460 |
| Harrisburg, PA | 1,444 |
| Dayton, OH | 1,420 |
| Norfolk, VA | 1,412 |
| Columbus, OH | 1,410 |
| Indianapolis, IN | 1,377 |
| Raleigh, NC | 1,346 |
| Kansas City, MO | 1,341 |
| Richmond, VA | 1,330 |

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Not surprisingly, the most oft-mentioned issue in both candidates' ads is the economy. Over half of both the Obama and McCain campaign's ads are about taxes and the economy. Apart from taxes, though, the candidates are talking about different kinds of issues. Government spending, housing, energy, and the military occupy the other four slots on Senator McCain's list of the top five most-mentioned issues, while Senator Obama continues to talk about healthcare, education, Medicare, and Iraq in his TV ads.

On balance, the tone of both campaigns has been mostly negative on paid TV over the past week. Sixty-three percent of Barack Obama’s advertisements and seventy-nine percent of John McCain’s ads have been negative.

While more interest groups have begun advertising in the presidential race, the amount of money being spent is still small, especially in comparison to candidate spending. Just over \$2.2 million was spent last week by groups, with \$1.7 of that spent airing ads in support of McCain. Most of the money spent by groups has been spent on National Cable ads but Ohio and Virginia have each seen over \$250,000 spent on advertising by interest groups.

Table 6: Group Spending By State

| Group | State | Est. Spending | Total for Group |
|-----------------------------------|----------------|---------------|--------------------|
| Committee for Truth in Politics | Ohio | \$17,000 | \$18,000 |
| | Pennsylvania | \$1,000 | |
| Latinos por la Reforma | New Mexico | \$5,000 | \$5,000 |
| Let Freedom Ring | Colorado | \$36,000 | \$991,000 |
| | Nevada | \$37,000 | |
| | Ohio | \$76,000 | |
| | Pennsylvania | \$127,000 | |
| | Virginia | \$206,000 | |
| National Republican Trust PAC | National Cable | \$509,000 | \$124,000 |
| | Florida | \$40,000 | |
| NRA Victory Fund | Ohio | \$84,000 | \$12,000 |
| | National Cable | \$12,000 | |
| Our Country Deserves Better PAC | Michigan | \$39,000 | \$81,000 |
| | National Cable | \$42,000 | |
| Republican Jewish Coalition | Florida | \$183,000 | \$374,000 |
| | Nevada | \$88,000 | |
| | Ohio | \$103,000 | |
| Right Change | North Carolina | <\$1,000 | <\$1,000 |
| The Denver Group | Missouri | <\$1,000 | \$1,000 |
| | Ohio | \$1,138 | |
| Vets for Freedom | Colorado | \$66,000 | \$179,000 |
| | Ohio | \$113,000 | |
| Groups Supporting McCain | | | \$1,785,000 |
| AFSCME People | Wisconsin | \$203,000 | \$203,000 |
| Bring Ohio Back | Ohio | \$19,000 | \$19,000 |
| Campaign Money Watch | National Cable | \$56,000 | \$56,000 |
| Defenders of Wildlife Action Fund | Indiana | \$53,000 | \$53,000 |

| | | | |
|--------------------------------|----------------|----------|------------------|
| Health Care for America Now | North Carolina | \$29,000 | \$29,000 |
| MoveOn Political Action | Iowa | \$3,000 | \$11,000 |
| | Nevada | \$1,000 | |
| | Ohio | \$7,000 | |
| | Virginia | \$25,000 | \$25,000 |
| Planned Parenthood Action Fund | Virginia | \$25,000 | \$25,000 |
| United Auto Workers V-CAP | Pennsylvania | <\$1,000 | <\$1,000 |
| Vote Vets Action Fund | Virginia | \$27,000 | \$27,000 |
| Winning Message Action Fund | Ohio | \$3,000 | \$6,000 |
| | Wisconsin | \$3,000 | |
| Groups Supporting Obama | | | \$429,000 |

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The study also found:

- About a third of both candidates' television advertisements feature the American flag.
- Over a quarter of Senator John McCain's ads talk about experience. Less than one percent of Barack Obama's ads mention the word.
- More than a third of Senator Obama's ads mention the word change, while less than two percent of McCain's advertisements mention change.

Using data obtained from the TNS Media Intelligence Campaign Media Analysis Group (TNSMI/CMAG), the University of Wisconsin Advertising Project codes and analyzes nearly all of the political advertising that is aired in 2008 federal and gubernatorial races across the country. The Ad Project, considered the single most important and credible source of information on campaign TV advertising, is funded in 2008 by a grant from the Joyce Foundation.

The Wisconsin Advertising Project codes political television advertising for sponsors, issues, tone, and numerous other characteristics – all in real time. While most of the attention will be focused on the presidential race in 2008, it also tracks candidate, party, and interest group advertisements in congressional, gubernatorial and other down ballot races nationwide, with a particular focus on the Midwest and the five states that comprise the Midwest Democracy Network (Illinois, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio, and Wisconsin.) Findings will be released in a series of real time reports over the course of the campaign.

Ken Goldstein, professor of political science at the University of Wisconsin-Madison and the co-author of Campaign Advertising in American Democracy (Temple University Press), directs the Advertising Project. Goldstein has overall responsibility for the project and is available to work with media and policymakers during the entire course of the 2008 election year.

The Wisconsin Advertising Project coded virtually every significant political advertisement broadcast in the top 75 markets in 2000 and in the top 100 media markets from 2001 to 2004. In this process, using videos and storyboards of ads captured by TNSMI/CMAG, project staff first research the entity responsible for airing each separate political spot aired. In relation to

campaign finance regulations as well as noting the names of sponsors, the project categorizes sponsors between those paid for by candidates, parties, hard money interest groups and soft money interest groups. Each spot is then further researched to attribute it to a specific candidate that the ad sponsors hope to elect. Once this is done, project staff codes the content of each ad, using a battery of questions. This extensive coding allows for the compilation of a massive database of the content of commercials that can be used in a variety of ways by scholars, the media and policymakers.

The University of Wisconsin Advertising Project is affiliated with the university's Political Science Department. This department is one of the nation's oldest and most respected programs. It is highly ranked in national surveys and its award-winning faculty is known for innovative research on the discipline's most current and important questions.

With a reputation for unbiased and non-partisan analysis, Goldstein is a favorite source for both politicians and the news media. He has appeared numerous times on The NewsHour with Jim Lehrer, Nightline, ABC World News Tonight, NBC Nightly News, CBS Evening News, FOX News Channel, MSNBC, CNBC and CNN, and is a frequent contributor on National Public Radio. He is also quoted extensively in the country's top newspapers, including The New York Times, The Washington Post and The Wall Street Journal.

Based in Chicago, with assets of \$935 million, the Joyce Foundation funds groups working to strengthen public policies and improve the quality of life in the Great Lakes region. Its Money and Politics program supports efforts to promote a well-functioning representative democracy with open and accountable government, informed citizen participation, competition of ideas and candidates, fair and equal application of the laws, a high level of public trust and protection of fundamental rights. Other funding areas are education, workforce development, environment, gun violence prevention and culture.

TNS Media Intelligence/CMAG is the leading provider of advertising tracking and analysis of political public affairs and issue-advocacy advertising. TNSMI/CMAG provides customized media analysis services to national trade associations, foundations, Fortune 100 companies, national media organizations, academia and hundreds of national, statewide and local political campaigns. Clients rely on TNSMI/CMAG's experienced political researchers to assemble the most reliable, comprehensive research and reporting. TNSMI/CMAG's customized reporting methods help its clients better manage their media strategy, media buys, public relations and communications efforts.

For more information on the report or the University of Wisconsin Advertising Project, please contact Rachael Tepper or Steve Rabinowitz at 202-265-3000 or rachael@rabinowitz-dorf.com or go to <http://wiscadproject.wisc.edu>. To learn more about the book *Campaign Advertising in American Democracy*, go to http://www.temple.edu/tempres/titles/1922_reg.html.

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