### Table 3-12
Political Party Contributions, Coordinated and Independent Expenditures for Congressional Candidates, 1976-2016,
Adjusted for Inflation, 2016 Mean Net Dollars

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Senate Contributions</th>
<th>Senate Expenditures</th>
<th>House Contributions</th>
<th>House Expenditures</th>
<th>Total</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Coordinated</td>
<td>Independent</td>
<td>Coordinated</td>
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<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>Democrats</td>
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<td>8,308,995</td>
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<td>623,400</td>
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<td>39,172,190</td>
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<tr>
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<td>660,156</td>
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<td>34,760,708</td>
<td>373,669</td>
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<tr>
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<td>675,821</td>
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<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>Democrats</td>
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<tr>
<td>2008</td>
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<td>4,261,566</td>
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<td>1,706,249</td>
<td>45,315,212</td>
<td>3,465,923</td>
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<td>460,468</td>
<td>10,458,263</td>
<td>2,149,975</td>
<td>2,270,955</td>
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<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>Democrats</td>
<td>1,375,229</td>
<td>12,901,708</td>
<td>27,584,865</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Republicans</td>
<td>2,704,249</td>
<td>13,846,592</td>
<td>14,611,432</td>
<td>7,189,160</td>
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<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>Democrats</td>
<td>497,043</td>
<td>7,177,497</td>
<td>359,481</td>
<td>1,362,674</td>
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<td>Republicans</td>
<td>723,519</td>
<td>15,085,962</td>
<td>550,804</td>
<td>2,434,931</td>
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<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>Democrats</td>
<td>150,490</td>
<td>1,706,249</td>
<td>45,315,212</td>
<td>3,465,923</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Republicans</td>
<td>460,468</td>
<td>10,458,263</td>
<td>2,149,975</td>
<td>2,270,955</td>
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<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>Democrats</td>
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<td>21,384,120</td>
<td>2,221,873</td>
<td>1,189,530</td>
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<td>1992</td>
<td>Democrats</td>
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<td>7,177,497</td>
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<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>Democrats</td>
<td>150,490</td>
<td>1,706,249</td>
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<tr>
<td>1988</td>
<td>Democrats</td>
<td>1,375,229</td>
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<tr>
<td>1986</td>
<td>Democrats</td>
<td>975,530</td>
<td>13,173,458</td>
<td>2,221,873</td>
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<td>2,431,196</td>
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<td>1,381,190</td>
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<td>9,567,230</td>
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<tr>
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<td>2,958,328</td>
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<td>9,378,799</td>
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<td>Democrats</td>
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<tr>
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<td>3,922,929</td>
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<td>-</td>
<td>15,430,932</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

[Adjusted for Inflation, 2016 Mean Net Dollars](https://www.brookings.edu/VitalStats)
Notes: The table includes three different kinds of party support for candidates: direct contributions, coordinated expenditures and independent spending. Direct contributions: House candidates may receive a maximum of $20,000 in primary and general election combined from national and state party committees. In 2012, Senate candidates could receive $43,100 from national party committees and another $10,000 from state parties. The National Party to Senate candidate amount is indexed for inflation.

Coordinated expenditures: For most House candidates, party committees may spend an inflation adjusted amount that in 2012 came to $45,600. The limit is doubled (to $91,200 in 2012) for states with only one congressional district. For Senate candidates, the limit goes up with a state's population as well as inflation. In the smallest states, this was $91,200 in 2012. In the largest states (California) it was $2.6 million. The median states (Kentucky and Louisiana) had party coordinated spending limits of $305,000 and $315,400 respectively.

Independent spending by the parties cannot be limited since the Supreme Court's decision in Colorado Republican Federal Campaign Committee v. Federal Election Commission 518 U.S. 604 (1996). Despite this ruling, the parties did not do a great deal of independent spending between 1996 and 2002 because such spending has to be funded entirely with money raised under federal contribution limits. The parties preferred to use "soft" money (no contribution limits) to help pay for communications that were designed to get around these restraints. After the Bipartisan Campaign Reform Act of 2002 prohibited national party soft money, the parties shifted more money into independent expenditures. Unfortunately, it is not possible to know how much soft money was spent to help congressional candidates in the elections through 2002. In 2012, party independent spending in House contests spread out to over 74 districts, with a maximum of $5.0 million spent in one district. Senate independent spending focused on seventeen races, with $14.4 million spent in Virginia.

Source: Campaign Finance Institute analysis of Federal Election Commission data.