

## **How Much Major Nonprofit Players Spend on Lobbying**

Nonprofit organizations and the lobbyists who represent them are braced for the biggest fight they've had on Capitol Hill since passage of the 2006 Pension Protection Act, a law that governs a wide swath of charitable activity. While it's unclear how far Congress will get in debating a tax-code overhaul, many issues of importance to charities are likely to come up, including reconsideration of the deductions people take for giving to good causes.

In addition to charities and philanthropic organizations, many of the nation's biggest financial companies will also lend their voices to the effort. But while the major banks have deep pockets, legislation designed to benefit philanthropy is a small part of their portfolio.

For example, Bank of America, which spent \$3.1-million lobbying in 2013 and \$1.5-million during the first three quarters of 2014, wants to see legislation that encourages social-impact bonds.

Sen. Orrin Hatch (R-Utah), the new chairman of the Senate Finance Committee, championed a social-impact bond bill last year, and it is likely that a similar bill will come up for debate this year. Lobbying disclosure rules don't require lobbyists to specify how much they spend lobbying particular bills, so it is impossible to know how much of the banking behemoth's lobbying tab went toward pushing the bond measure. But with a huge list of legislative issues on its plate, from the treatment of swaps and derivatives to Internet security, it is unlikely that the social-impact bond bill amounted to anything more than a sliver of the bank's overall lobbying budget.

Similarly, Charles Schwab spends heavily—\$3.4-million in 2013—lobbying Capitol Hill and the administration on a range of issues, including bankruptcy, consumer protection, and international tax policy. The financial firm, which created the Schwab Charitable Fund, a donor-advised fund sponsor and the nation's fourth-largest charity, also lobbied unsuccessfully to make the "IRA rollover" permanent. The rollover is a tax provision that creates an incentive to make charitable donations from retirement accounts.

So what are nonprofit players spending? Sums that are much smaller.

Here's a sample of how much several major nonprofit players spent in the first three quarters of last year, the most recent data available, compared with their spending in earlier years.

### **Council on Foundations: \$270,000**

In 2005, the council spent the most it had since 1998, providing more than \$1-million to influence debate on the Pension Protection Act. Through the first three quarters of 2014, the organization spent \$270,000 lobbying.

### **Fidelity Charitable Gift Fund: \$20,000**

After racking up \$460,000 in lobbying fees in 2005, Fidelity, which manages donor-advised funds, cut back its presence on Capitol Hill. In 2013, the fund spent nothing. The fund's parent organization, FMR Corporation, spent \$2.5-million lobbying on a range of issues.

**Independent Sector: \$150,000**

The organization lobbied Congress on the charitable deduction and other tax issues. Its lobbying reached a high-water mark in 2005 when it spent \$680,000, in part because of measures proposed as part of the Pension Protection Act.

**The Jewish Federations of North America: \$602,000**

The organization lobbies on many issues of importance to Jews, including beefing up Iran sanctions and strengthening the U.S.-Israel relationship. It also lobbied in support of donor-advised funds and the charitable tax deduction. During 2013, the group spent \$830,000.

**Philanthropy Roundtable: \$190,000**

The organization's spending peaked at \$400,000 in 2009, when it lobbied to preserve the charitable tax deduction.

**Silicon Valley Community Foundation: \$20,000**

In 2014, the foundation made its first foray into lobbying, largely focusing on legislation affecting donor-advised funds and community foundations. The foundation manages donor-advised funds, including one launched with \$1.5-billion from Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg and his wife, Priscilla Chan.

*Source: U.S. House and Senate lobbying records compiled by the Center for Responsive Politics*