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HOME/NEWS

# Scott, Crist continue to fill big campaign chests

Scott funds took in \$4.7 million; Crist tops \$2 million

By Jim Saunders Wed, Jun 11, 2014 @ 10:17 am | updated Wed, Jun 11, 2014 @ 11:14 am

## TALLAHASSEE | The arms race continues between Rick Scott and Charlie Crist.

Crist, trying to win back the governor's mansion as a Democrat after a mid-life political conversion, raised more than \$2 million in cash in May for his campaign and a closely aligned political committee, newly filed records show.

Scott, trying to win a second term and keep Republicans in total control of state government, brought in about \$1.16 million in cash for his campaign and the sister "Let's Get to Work" committee. But the state Republican Party, which is expected to play a huge role in Scott's campaign, said it collected \$3.54 million during the month.

The money will help fuel what is expected to be an expensive --- and nasty --- race filled with negative ads. As a sign of what's to come, the Let's Get to Work committee reported spending about \$3.1 million on advertising in May, after spending about \$5.1 million on ads in April.

Scott's campaign reported raising \$1,116,038 in May, bringing the overall total to nearly \$4.7 million. The campaign had also received about \$1.5 million in in-kind contributions through May, with the state party covering expenses such as staff and consulting.

Let's Get to Work reported raising an overall total of slightly less than \$28.1 million through May, though it also has spent about \$12.9 million. The committee has dramatically ratcheted back its fund-raising during the past two months, collecting \$46,100 in May and \$257,000 in April. But the significance of that drop-off remains to be seen, as, for example, harder-to-track money can flow through the state GOP.

**Crist's campaign reported raising \$410,787 in cash in May, bringing its overall total to nearly \$3.7 million. Also, the committee has collected a total of \$836,310 in in-kind contributions. Meanwhile, the committee, known as "Charlie Crist for Florida," collected \$1,627,500 in cash during the month, bringing its total to \$8,234,580, records show.**

Attorney General Pam Bondi collected \$151,125 in contributions in May, giving her an overall total \$1,310,746 as she runs for a second term this fall, newly filed records show. Two committees closely aligned with Bondi's campaign, known as "Justice for All" and "And Justice for All," also have raised an overall total of \$1,682,350. Bondi is far outdistancing Democratic challengers George Sheldon and Perry Thurston. Sheldon reported raising \$14,704 in May for his campaign account, giving him a total of \$235,428. Thurston raised \$34,689 during the month for his campaign account and reported an overall total of \$137,081.

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Though they appear to face little opposition, Agriculture Commissioner Adam Putnam and state Chief Financial Officer Jeff Atwater continued to pile up campaign cash in May, which each nearing \$2 million in total contributions, newly filed records show. Putnam raised \$186,295 during the month, bringing his overall total to \$1,964,604. Atwater collected \$164,500 in May and reported an overall total of \$1,899,354. Updated campaign-finance figures had not been posted online early Tuesday evening for Thad Hamilton, a Democrat running for agriculture commissioner. But Hamilton had raised \$12,163 through April. Similarly, William Rankin, a Democrat running for chief financial officer, had raised \$8,105 through April.

Many lawmakers appeared to have a light fund-raising month.

**Among the exceptions was Rep. Ronald “Doc” Renuart, R-Ponte Vedra, who raised \$28,800 for his re-election bid in St. Johns County’s House District 17.**

Other top legislative fund-raisers for the month included newcomers seeking open seats. For instance, Paul Renner, R-Jacksonville, reported raising \$22,245 in May and an overall total of \$178,795 as he tries to succeed Rep. Daniel Davis, who is not seeking re-election in House District 15. An updated report for Renner’s opponent, Jacksonville Republican Jay Fant, indicates he raised \$25,120 in May and an overall total of \$406,486.

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