City of Seattle

2012 Campaign Finance Legislation

Esther Handy

Councilmember Mike O'Brien's Office

esther.handy@seattle.gov

Historical Leadership

1971

- Board of Ethics and Fair Campaign Practices Commission established

1979

- Seattle implemented the first municipal campaign public finance system

1991

- Ethics and Elections Commission established as independent oversight body

2008

- Commission on Public Financing Elections recommends a new public financing model

Resolution 31337

Review Banking & Investment Practices

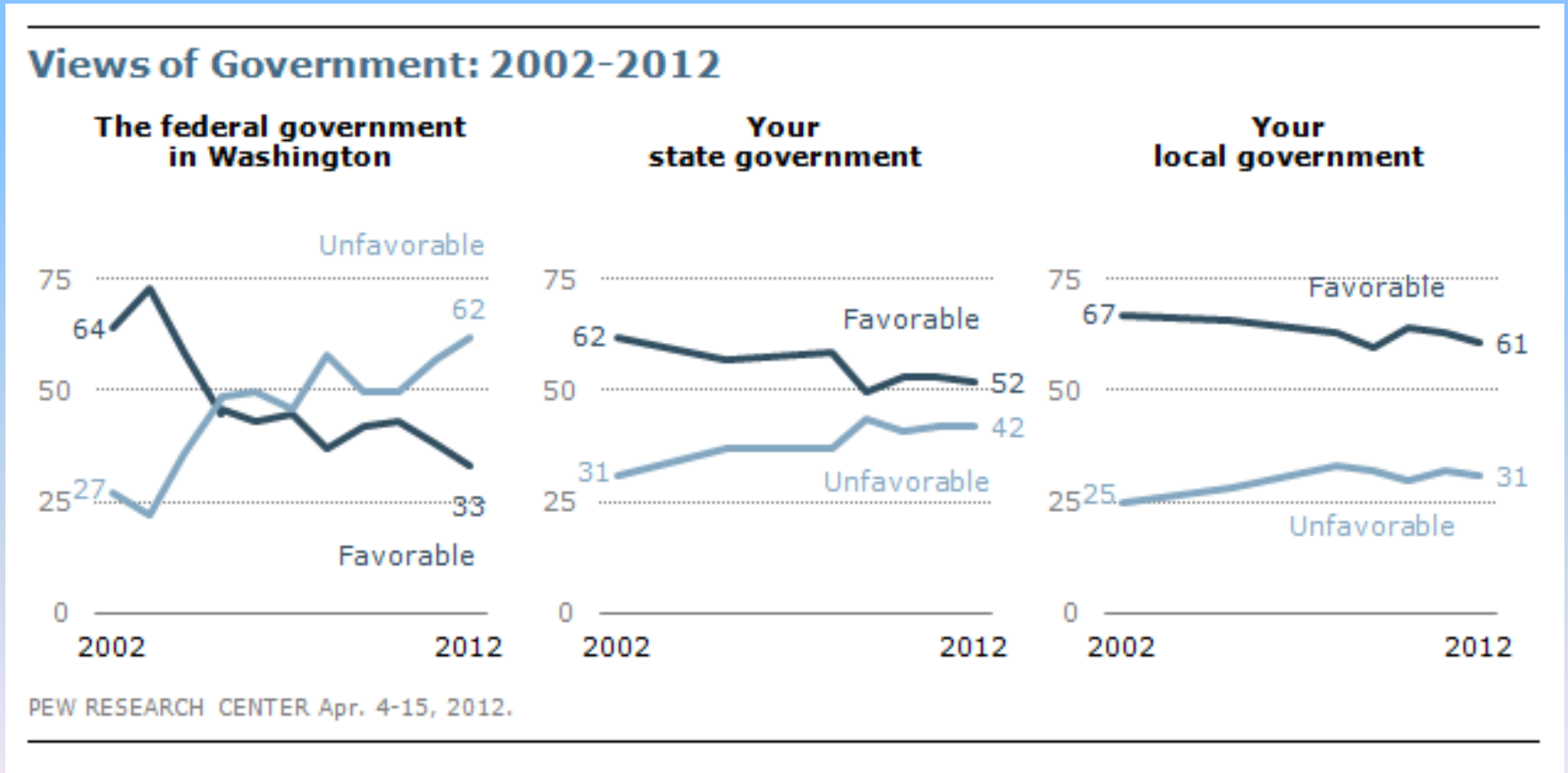
Examine Foreclosures

Review Campaigns Finance Practice

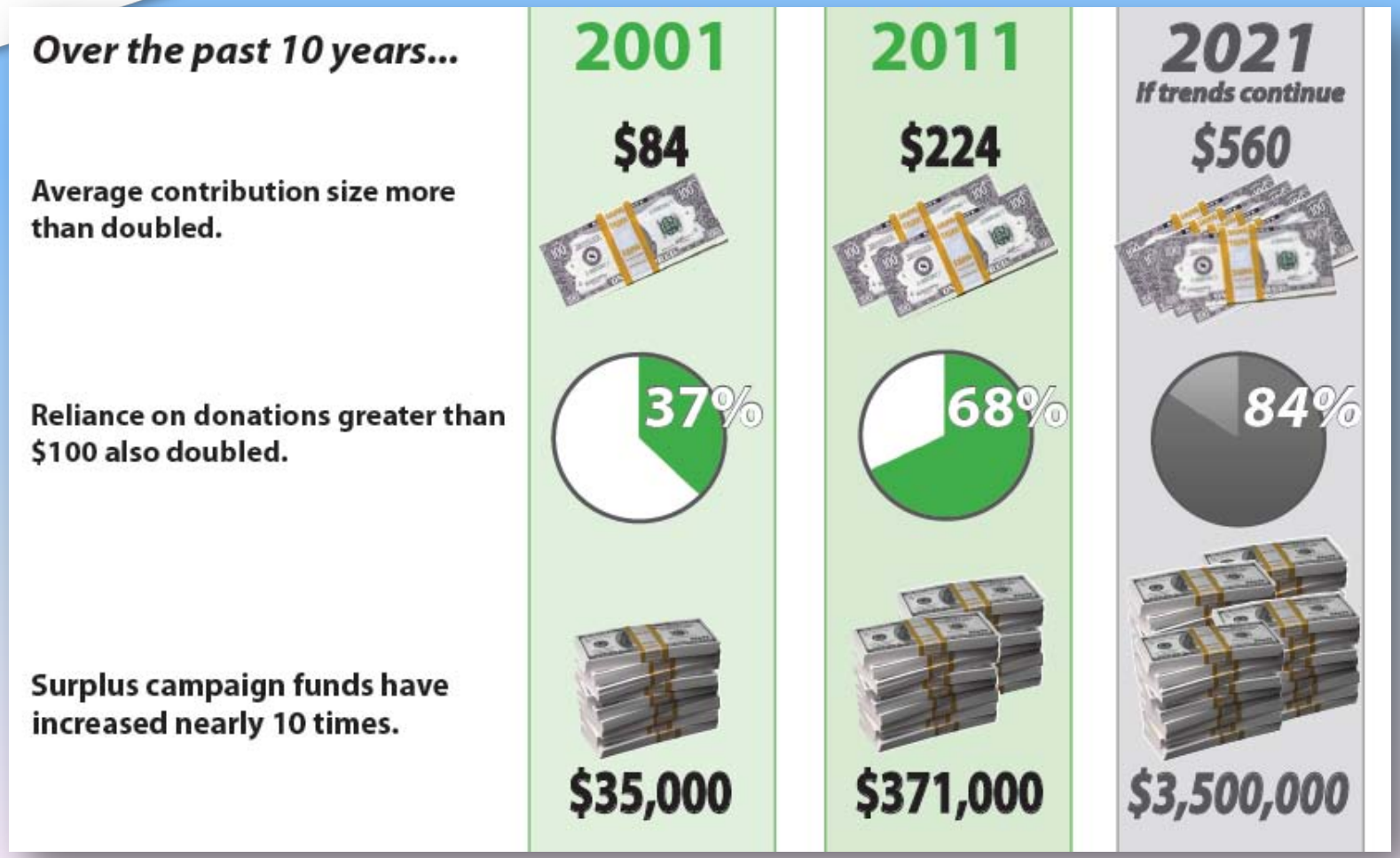
Review Tax Exemptions and Tax Reform

Support Education and Career Preparation

National Trends: Maintaining Trust in Local Government



2011 SEEC Report



Goals and Proposals

Reduce perception of corruption

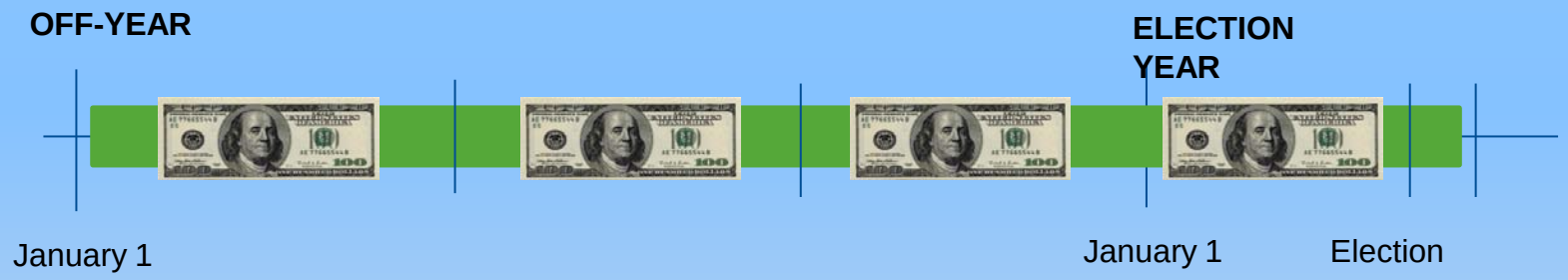
- Minimize time elected officials fundraise and make policy
- Minimize funds raised in uncompetitive races

Encourage participation by protecting speech

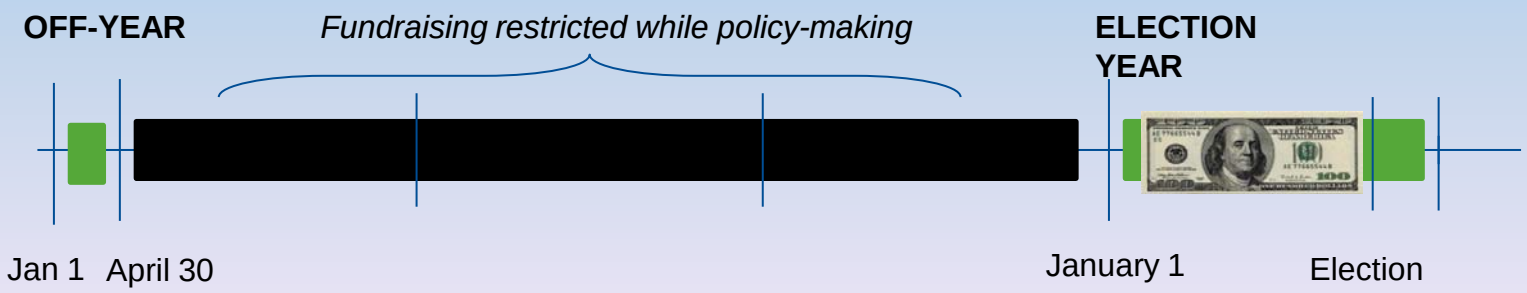
- Preserve donor intent – this candidate, this race

Fundraising Window

EXISTING POLICY: *Fundraising allowable for 4 year term*



WITH PROPOSED FUNDRAISING WINDOW: *Fundraising restricted to January 1 of Election Year*



Other Jurisdictions

States

- 15 State legislatures, including Washington restrict fundraising during a legislative session

Cities

- West coast cities including San Diego, Sacramento and Los Angeles have fundraising windows

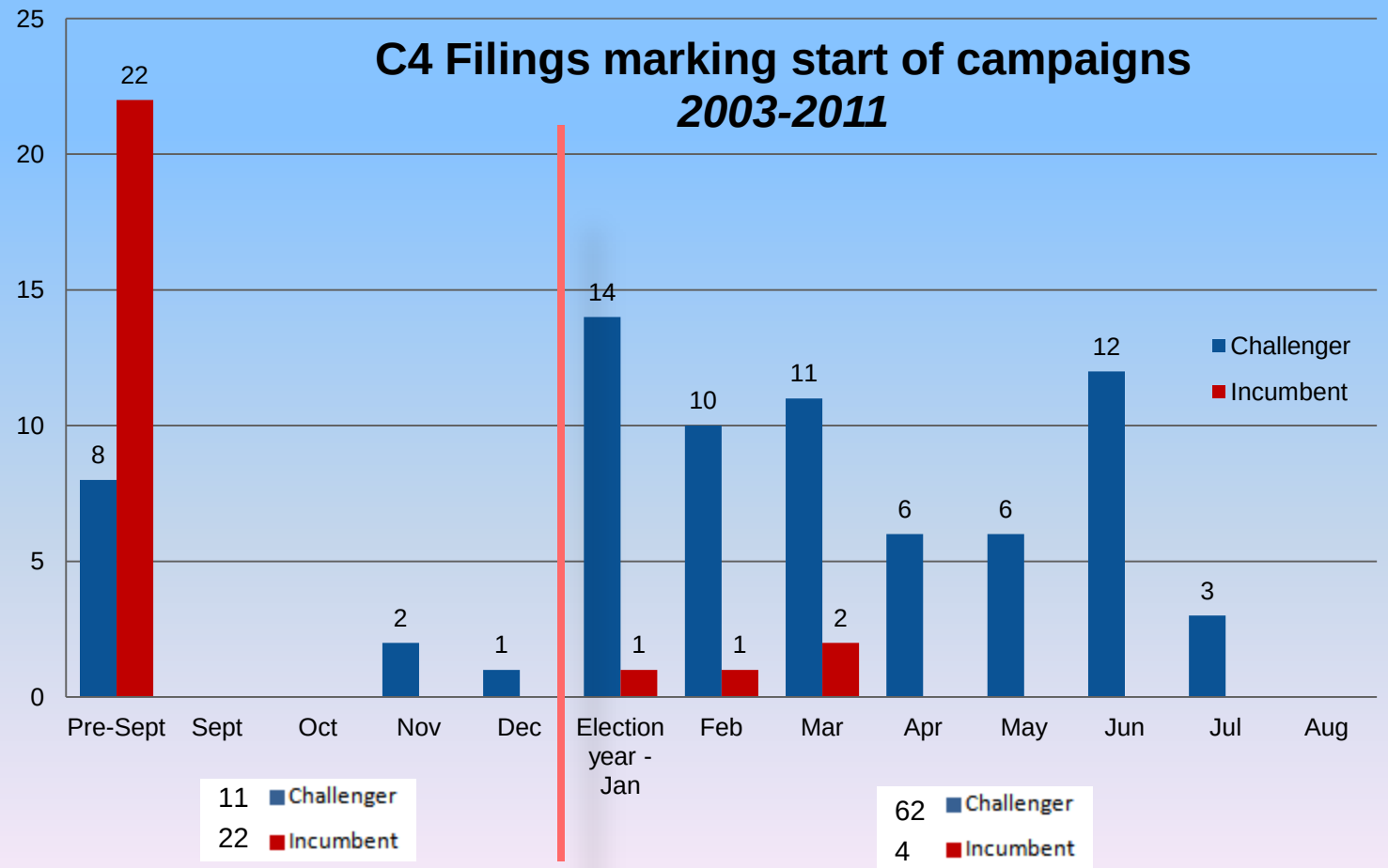
Cities

State Legislatures

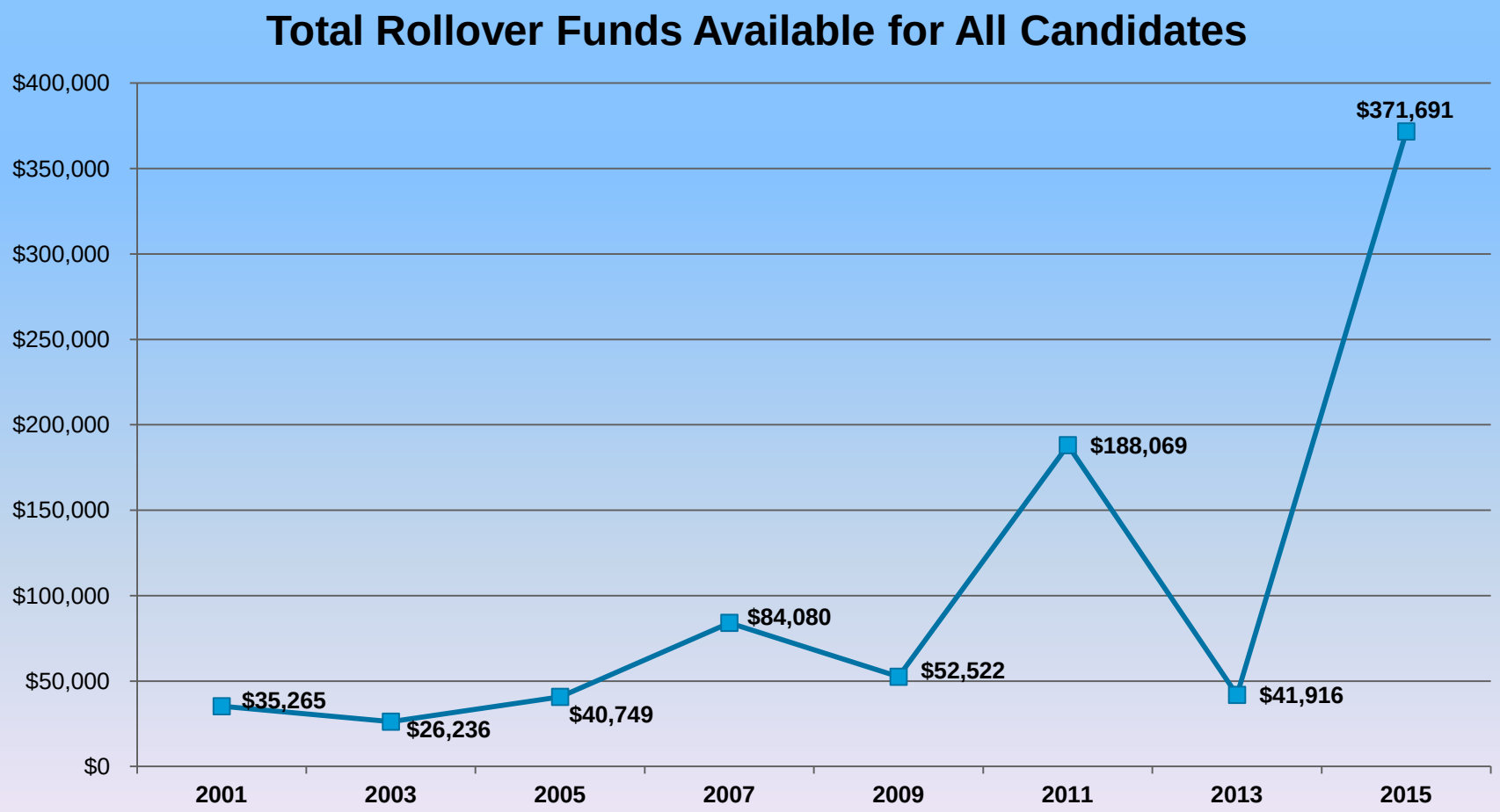
Examples, may not be comprehensive

Unintended Consequences?

Does the fundraising window inadvertently advantage incumbents?
→ 85% of Challengers enter race after January 1



Rollover Funds



Unintended Consequences?

Will refunding surplus dollars being an administrative burden?

- Similar to reporting

Will it impact the ability to compete with self-financed candidates?

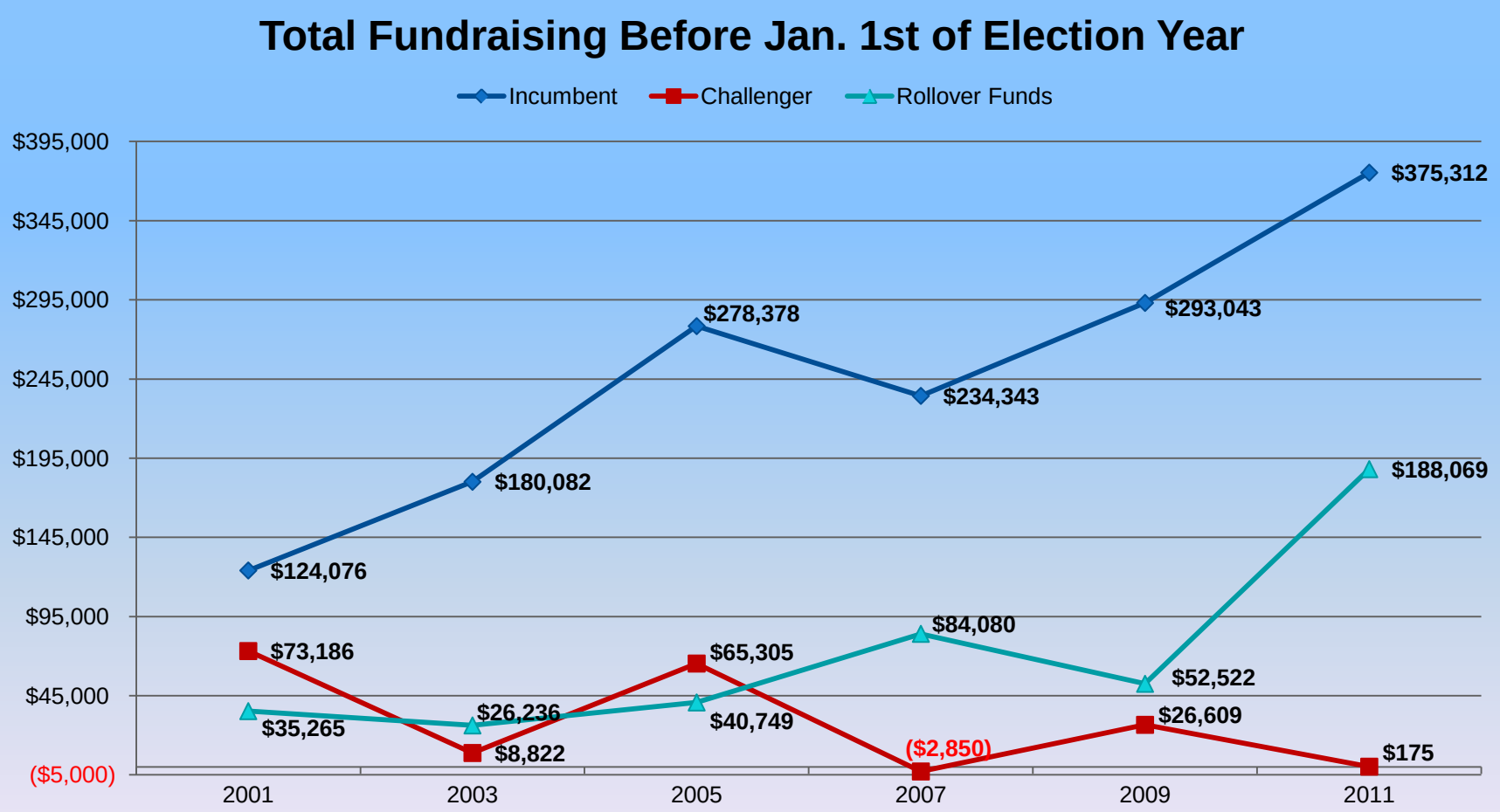
- No change

Will fundraising be front-loaded to January 1?

- May see a lot of activity in January, but expect the same from challengers and incumbents.

Together, building trust and encouraging participation

Reduce the perception of corruption

Encourage civic participation by protecting speech

Total Fundraising Before Jan 1