

South Carolina

35

Overall Rank

D+

Overall Grade

South Carolina	Overall Rank	To Governor	To State Senate	To State House	To Parties	To PACs
Individual Giving	19	35	37	35	1	1
		\$3,500/election	\$1,000/election	\$1,000/election	Unlimited	Unlimited
PAC Giving	22	35	38	37	1	
		\$3,500/election	\$1,000/election	\$1,000/election	Unlimited	
Party Giving	45	41	44	44		
		\$50,000/election	\$5,000/election	\$5,000/election		
Union Giving	22	20	23	22		
		\$3,500/election	\$1,000/election	\$1,000/election		
Corporate Giving	19	18	20	19		
		\$3,500/election	\$1,000/election	\$1,000/election		

Inflation Adjustment: No

South Carolina's Index ranking could be improved significantly with one simple and uncontroversial change: indexing the state's modest contribution limits to inflation. Contribution limits that are not tied to inflation have an insidious effect on free speech and association over time; as the price of communicating rises, the amount a contributor can give stays constant. This is precisely why a majority of states (counting those without limits on individual giving) periodically adjust their limits upward based on inflation to account for this reality.

South Carolina's score also suffers from extremely low limits on the amount political parties can give to their legislative candidates. If not for a 2010 court case that ruled the state's definition of "political committee" overly broad and unconstitutional, the Palmetto State would perform even worse in the Index, as PACs were previously restricted to giving just \$3,500 to political parties. As it stands, the state is credited for having no limits on giving to parties by individuals and political committees.