

# Rhode Island



42 Overall Rank

F Overall Grade

Rhode Island	Overall Rank	To Governor	To State Senate	To State House	To Parties	To PACs
Individual Giving	46	40	27	33	44	37
		\$1,000/year	\$1,000/year	\$1,000/year	\$1,000/year	\$1,000/year
PAC Giving	45	41	29	34	45	
		\$1,000/year	\$1,000/year	\$1,000/year	\$1,000/year	\$1,000/year
Party Giving	26	27	23	23		
		\$25,000/year	\$25,000/year	\$25,000/year		
Union Giving	50	50	50	50		
		Prohibited	Prohibited	Prohibited		
Corporate Giving	50	50	50	50		
		Prohibited	Prohibited	Prohibited		

Inflation Adjustment: No

Rhode Island legislators have apparently never met a political speech restriction they didn't like. Despite ranking as one of the worst states in the nation, it's possible the Index actually understates how restrictive The Ocean State's campaign finance laws are. Rhode Island receives a boost in our ratings because of its relatively small population – speech is cheaper when your audience is small. But given the state's proximity to Boston, the seventh largest media market in the United States, campaigns in Rhode Island are more expensive than its modest population would suggest.

The one bright spot for Rhode Island lies in certain exemptions for giving to and from political parties.

The state allows larger donations for party building accounts and exempts from limits a variety of in-kind contributions from parties to their candidates. These provisions are welcome, but they cannot overcome the highly restrictive limits that make Rhode Island one of the ten worst states in the country for political giving. Rhode Islanders would be significantly better served if the state's strict limits on individual giving to candidates, political parties, and PACs were increased and indexed to inflation in order to prevent the limits from becoming more restrictive over time.