

Political Contributions in New York from the Racing and Gaming Industries

An Overview

This article attempts to review campaign contributions to political candidates in New York State from November of 2004 until December of 2006. It attempts to show: (a) the major racing and gaming contributors to the state candidates and political committees and (b) show the contributions of the major players in the racing and gaming industry.

There are significant caveats on this work. It depends in large measure on how well the State Board of Elections website functions, (There are often misspellings in the names of contributors. There is only limited knowledge of who is actually running a limited liability corporation.) and on whether I am able to figure out whether a particular contributor has a connection to the gambling industries. Mistakes of both omission and commission have been made. So too often this article represents guess work. Hopefully, it is at least somewhat educated guesswork.

There are some general conclusions that can be made on the data.

1. In some state, Indian tribes engaged in gambling are major political contributors. That is not the case in New York. The Indian tribes, with casinos, while they may be major lobbyists, are not big political contributors as of yet in New York. Additionally, even the major worldwide gaming firms are not yet political contribution players in New York
2. That being the case, most of the contributions come from the racing side, rather than from the pure gaming side. Families and individuals who own racetracks (the Gural, Rooney, and Jacobs families) and those who wish to own racetracks (Richard Fields of Excelsior Racing) predominate.
3. Contributions go to incumbents and winners. So the winners predominate. You don't see too many contributions to Chris Callaghan, or the Assembly Republicans.
4. The greatest amount of racing contributions went to Eliot Spitzer. This was the case even though there was apparently a policy in place which largely prevented NYRA officials from donating funds. The Governor-elect had a policy barring contributions from individuals and entities which were the subject of his investigations. This should have excluded NYRA. Nonetheless, there were plenty of major racing contributors to Spitzer, most notably large contributors from racing interest in the state of Kentucky. These Kentucky contributors, at least on paper, have no particular connection to any of the groups involved in bidding on the current NYRA franchise.

5. While the most money went to Spitzer, the fact is that most everyone connected politically to racing gave to the committees representing the majority parties in the legislature. The giving tends to go to the NYS Senate Republican Committee and to the Democratic Assembly Campaign Committee.

6. It is likely that investor Richard Fields is the major contributor with \$200,000 through limited liability corporations donated to Eliot Spitzer. However, there are also considerable contributions from Jeff Gural and his family, the Rooney family of Yonkers Raceway, and the Jacobs family of Delaware North. There were major contributions from NYRA's PAC, and from NYTRA trustee Leonard Riggio. In the past few months, there have been large contributions from the Steinbrenner side of Excelsior Racing.

Alan Hevesi

Comptroller Hevesi received a minimal amount of campaign contributions from the racing industry. It should be recalled that in 2002, when he first ran for Comptroller, much of the NYRA board contributed to his opponent, John Faso. The one NYRA (Stuart Subotnick) board member who contributed to Hevesi in 2002 also did so for the 2006 campaign.

Bill Mulrow \$2,500 from his wife Edwina. Mulrow is associated with Excelsior Racing. He ran against Hevesi in the Democratic primary in 2002.

Maryland Jockey Club \$2,500. That's a Magna Entertainment Track

Saratoga Harness \$1,000

Jayenne Keyes \$1,000 She is the wife of NYRA vice chairman Michael DelGiudice.

Stuart Subotnick \$10,0000 the other NYRA vice chairman.

MEC Lone Star \$2,500 That is also a Magna track.

Jim Gill \$2,500 He is the counsel to the Thoroughbred Breeding Fund.

Jeff Gural \$5,000

Tom Wilmot \$1,000 He has been interested in Indian casinos

Bay Meadows Land Company LLC \$12,500. This was a Magna track

Hollywood Park Land Company LLC \$12,500 from the same address as the Bay Meadows LLC.

Yankee Global \$1,000 a Steinbrenner company

Oneida Nation \$500

Hevesi also received contributions from Vincent Tese and Jerry Weiss who had chaired commission that issued reports on horse racing during the Cuomo administration.

Chris Callaghan

Charles Wait \$500 NYRA trustee

John Simoni \$500 Racing and Wagering Board member

Ed Lewi and Associates \$250 NYRA's upstate public relations firm

Harness Horse Breeders \$200

George Janis \$250 thoroughbred owner

Andrew Cuomo

Stephen Green LLC 's \$100,00 Stephen Green is Mark Green's brother and has some involvement with Empire Racing. Stephen Green had contributed heavily to his brother's campaign, and his late contributions to the Cuomo campaign are unlikely to be related to the franchise process.

Leonard Riggio \$30,000 NYRA board member

Martin Wygod and wife \$45,000 major horse owners in California –questionable whether this involves racing or their main business, Web MD.

Karen Murphy \$5,750 equine attorney

Kim Bonstrom \$2,000 partner of Karen Murphy.

Bill Eimicke \$2,000 husband of Karen Murphy.

Mike Hushion \$500 trainer

Dale Romans \$2,000 trainer

Ed Swyer \$2,500 Ad Hoc Committee member

William Mulrow \$250

Jeff Gural \$26,000

Cuomo also received contributions from Vincent Tese and Jerry Weiss who had chaired commission that issued reports on horse racing during the Cuomo administration. He also received contributions from Sal Curiale who had once served as Counsel to the Racing and Wagering Board.

Jeanine Pirro

Fred Newman \$22,500 Ad Hoc Committee

Ed Swyer \$6,000 Ad Hoc Committee

Pat Barrett \$25,000 Ad Hoc Committee

David Cornstein \$2,500 NYCOTB chairman

Robert Berman \$33,900 formerly with Monticello Raceway

Carol Mack \$300 wife of owner and former NYRA trustee Earle Mack.

Margaret Race \$300 wife of Brad Race, former secretary to the Governor and a NYRA lobbyist.

Eileen Cornacchia \$3,000 wife of NYRA trustee Joe Cornacchia

Cranesville Aggregate \$1,500 a John Tesiero company (Racing Commission member)

Bernadette Castro \$1,500 Ad Hoc Committee

Richard Brodsky – ended his AG campaign in the spring

Harness Horse Breeders \$300

Charlie Hayward \$4,500 NYRA President

Leonard Riggio \$10,000

Barry Schwartz \$6,000 former NYRA chair and president

Rooney family \$8,500

Bob Galterio \$1,000 Yonkers GM

Mike Sorrentino \$2,000 Yonkers SOA

Dolph Rotfeld \$250 former NYRA chairman

Yonkers Raceway Programs \$1,200

Yoswein \$750 Yonkers SOA lobbyist

Mark Green

Getnick and Getnick \$13,500 NYRA monitor

Jeff Gural and family \$45,100

Stephen L Green – Mark’s brother, his company and family gave well over \$100,000.

John Faso

Joseph Shields \$35,000 NYRA Trustee

Dennis Dammerman \$15,000 NYRA Trustee

Ed Swyer \$5,900

John Nigro \$7,600

Fred Newman \$12,500

Charles Wait \$7,000

John Tesiero \$3,850 Thoroughbred Racing Commission plus \$8,900 from Cranesville companies plus \$1,000 from Fulmont Ready Mix plus \$3,000 from Cushing Stone.

Earle Mack and wife \$7,000

Jerry Bilinski \$500

John Veitch \$150

Harness Horse Breeders \$175

Charles Knaus \$1,175 former head of harness fund

Willis Vermilyea \$325 Capital OTB board

Tod Greci \$275 Capital OTB

Mike Hoblock \$200 Racing Board

John Hendrickson \$5,000

Holly Noe \$175 same address as former NYRA president and chairman Kenny Noe

Joe Neglia \$100 former Racing Board member.

Bernadette Castro \$1,953

George Pataki

NY State Committee

John Signor \$250 – Capital OTB

Tod Greci \$250

Mike Hoblock \$250

Bill Crowell \$250

Nancy Palumbo \$250

Lots of state employees made the similar \$250 contribution to Governor Pataki in 2005.

Jacobs Family \$2,000

Jeff Gural \$1,000

Thoropac \$2,000

West Point Thoroughbreds \$500

Chester Broman \$5,000

Contributions to Virginia PAC

Yankee Global \$25,000 a Steinbrenner family concern

Cranesville Block \$5,100

Bill Crowell 250

John Signor \$250

NTRA \$ 5,000

Brian Boru \$3,000 Yonkers affiliate

Westchester County Fair \$3,000 Yonkers affiliate

Dan Hogan \$500 Racing Board

Saratoga Harness \$25,000

Donald Trump \$10,000

Joe Cornacchia \$750

June Rooney \$10,000

Tishmans \$50,000 part of Excelsior Racing –unlikely that this was being contemplated at the time of the donation

Eliot Spitzer

Richard Fields \$200,000 through 4 LLC's Excelsior Racing

Angela Levy Beck \$50,000 Kentucky

Bill Casner \$50,000 Kentucky

Tracy Farmer \$50,000 Kentucky

B. Wayne Hughes \$50,000 prominent thoroughbred owner

R.D. Hubbard family \$20,000 prominent thoroughbred owner and owner of tracks

Brererton Jones \$10,000 Kentucky breeder former governor

Carolyn Farmer \$8,000

TVG \$5,000

Gemstar \$5,000

NTRA \$5,000

NTRA Pac \$5,000

Three Chimneys \$2,000 Kentucky breeding farm

Blyth Clay \$2,000 Kentucky breeder

Ted Bassett \$1,000 Kentucky

Adam Victor \$5,000 prominent harness owner

Bill Crowell \$3,400 NYRA lobbyist

Jeff Gural and family \$22,000

John Hendrickson \$10,000

Mary Lou Whitney \$10,000

Harry Snyder \$1,000 State Racing Commission

Valerie Keehn Ad Hoc \$250

Patrick Barrett \$50,000

Empire Racing \$4,500

Friends of New York Racing \$5,000

Millennium Capital Markets LLC \$10,000 Michael DelGiudice's company

Thoropac \$5,000

John Nigro \$3,250

Ed Swyer \$10,250

Neil Getnick \$1,000

Leonard Riggio \$50,000

George Steinbrenner \$15,000

David Cornstein \$25,000

Bill Eimicke \$1,500

Chester Broman \$5,000 NYRA Trustee

Jim Gill \$2,500

Wilmot Family \$52,000 aprox

Jacobs family approx \$30,000 assuming Jacobs contributions from near Buffalo are part of Delaware North.

Sportsystems \$3,000

Delaware North \$2,000

Len Wolman \$3,500

The Downs at Albuquerque \$2,500

Hazel Dukes \$450 former NYCOTB president

Blue Chip Farms \$10,000

Saratoga Harness \$2,500

Shorenstein family \$31,000 family of MGM's lobbyist

Senator Libous

Jeff Gural 6,750

Tioga Downs \$4,750

Senator Spano

Yonkers Racing Corp. 4,300

Brian Boru \$1,500

Assemblyman_Pretlow

Robert Berman \$3,400

Yonkers Racing Corporation \$2,000

Thoropac \$1,250

Thoroughbred Horsemen of Western NY \$ 750

Friends of New York Racing \$750

SOA \$500

Lone Star Park \$500 a Magna track

Bill Crowell \$500

Len Wolman \$250

Senator Larkin

Mighty M Gaming \$1,000

Friends of NY Racing \$750

Jeff Gural 2,000

Len Wolman \$900

Harness Horse Breeders \$400

Thoroughbred Horsemen of Western NY \$400

Finger Lakes \$375

NYCOTB Employees \$375

Senator Sabini

Mace Siegel \$5,400 prominent thoroughbred owner

Jeff Gural \$2,500

Oneidas \$3,215

St. Regis Mohawks \$1,000

Thoropac \$1,250

Empire Racing \$1,000

Finger Lakes Racing Association \$500

Adam Victor \$500

Harness Breeders \$500

OTB Employees \$250

Tim Smith \$250

Assemblyman Silver

Robert Berman \$3,400

Yankee Global \$3,400

Sheryl Schwartz \$3,000

Barry Schwartz \$3,000

Delaware North \$3,000

TVG \$3,000

Len Wolman \$1,000

Dan Gerrity \$1,000 Saratoga Harness

SOA \$1,000

Thoropac \$5,000

Senator Bruno

Empire Racing \$8,500

Yankee Global \$8,500

Thoropac \$8,000

Palm Beach Kennel Club \$5,000

Tom Wilmot \$5,000

Jane Wait \$8,000 mother of NYRA trustee

John Nigro \$8,500

NYRA Pac \$5,000

Donald Trump \$2,500

Finger Lakes \$2,500

Jeff Gural \$3,500

Rooney family \$15,000

Lone Star Park \$2,000

Yonkers \$1,907

John Hettinger \$1,000 NYRA trustee

David Flaum \$1,000 former casino seeker

Sportssystem \$1,000

Tom Newkirk \$1,000 Empire

Warren DeSantis \$1,000 Racing and Gaming Services formerly with Saratoga Harness

Ed Lewi \$2,000

Ken Noe \$1,000

Lorraine Tharp \$1,000 Breeders Fund

Wayne Barr \$1,000 former NYRA board member

Saratoga Harness \$1,000

John Simoni \$350

Republican State Committee

Jared Abbruzzese \$10,000 Empire Racing

George Steinbrenner \$10,000

Earle Mack and wife \$15,000

David Cornstein \$5,000

Jim Gill \$1,000

Nancy Palumbo \$500 lottery director

Senate Republican Committee (only the approximate highlights)

Wayne Barr \$5,800 approximately

NYRA PAC \$40,000

Wilmot family \$25,00

Robert Berman \$25,000

John Nigro \$25,000

Ed Swyer approx \$50,000

Thoropac \$25,000

SL Management \$25,000 Stephen Green

Patrick Barrett \$9,300

Ogden Phipps \$6,000

Hendrickson and Mary Lou Whitney \$13,000 in toto

Jeff Gural \$6,000

Yonkers Raceway Market \$10,000

Oneidas \$3,000

David Cornstein \$8,000

Friends of NY Racing \$16,000

McMahon of Saratoga \$700 Breeders

Chester Broman and wife \$4,000

Len Wolman \$1,000

St. Regis Mohawks \$2,000

Earle Mack and wife \$11,000

Saratoga Harness \$1,000

Richard Bomze \$2,000 NY horsemen

Gary Contessa \$2,000 Excelsior and trainer

Jerry Bilinski \$2,000

Jacksonville Greyhound Racing \$2,500

Cranesville Block \$3,000

Empire Racing \$16,500

Yonkers Raceway Programs \$5,000

Rooney Family \$20,000

Trading Cove \$5,000

Thoroughbred Horsemen \$2,000

John Nigro approx \$58,000

Democratic Assembly Campaign Committee (only the approximate highlights)

NYRA's Pac \$75,000

Thoropac \$32,000

Robert Berman \$20,000

Friends of New York Racing \$20,000

Leonard Riggio \$10,000

Joseph Lambert \$10,000 associate of Mike DelGiudice

John Meriwether \$10,000 NYRA Trustee

Daniel Tishman \$5,000

Blue Chip Farms \$5,000

IGT \$2,500 slot manufacturer

Rooney Family \$15,000

Jeff Gural \$3,500

Oneidas \$3,250

Chester Broman \$2,500

SOA \$1,000

Trading Cove \$1,000

Jeremy Jacobs \$1,000

Major Filers

Richard Fields

\$200,000 to Spitzer through 4 LLC's.

George Steinbrenner and Yankee Global

Approximately \$67,600 in toto

\$25,000 Pataki via Virginia PAC

\$8,500 Bruno

\$3,400 Silver

\$1,000 Hevesi

\$15,000 Spitzer

\$10,000 Senate Republicans

Empire Racing

\$4,5000 Spitzer

\$8,500 Bruno

\$16,500 Senate Republicans

\$1,000 Sabini

Friends of New York Racing

\$750 Pretlow

\$16,000 Senate Republicans

\$20,000 Assembly Democrats

\$300 Assemblyman DiNapoli

\$ 650 Senator Little

\$ 5,000 Spitzer

\$ 750 Larkin

\$300 Assemblyman Reilly

\$300 Senator Breslin

\$10,000 Pataki

NYRA's PAC

Contributions were from Fried, Phipps, Duncker, Rankowitz, Hayward, and Lambert/DelGiudice.

\$75,000 Assembly Democrats

\$40,000 Senate Republicans

\$5,000 Bruno

\$4,000 Senator Saland

Thoroughbred Breeders –highlights approximately \$90,000 in contributions

\$8,000 Bruno

\$750 Assemblywoman Pheffer

\$ 250 Senator Onorato

\$27,000 Assembly Democrats

\$8,400 Senator Skelos

\$6,000 Spitzer

\$25,000 Senate Republicans

\$5,000 Silver

\$1,250 Pretlow

\$1,250 Sabini

\$750 Assemblyman Magee

\$400 Larkin

Western NY Thoroughbred Horsemen \$15,850 in toto

Highlights

\$4,000 Senator Nozzolio

\$2,000 Republican Party

\$750 Pretlow

\$500 Senator now Lt. Gov. Patterson

\$2,000 Senator Robach

\$1,100 Senator Alesi

\$500 Larkin

Charles Hayward

\$700 Senate Republicans

\$10,000 NYRA Pac

\$ 500 Assembly Democrats

\$4,500 Brodsky

Ogden Mills Phipps

\$10,000 NYRA Pac

\$ 2,000 Assemblyman DiNapoli

\$6,000 Senate Republicans

Leonard Riggio

\$30,000 Cuomo

\$10,000 Brodsky

\$50,000 Spitzer

\$10,000 Assembly Democrats

David Cornstein

\$25,000 Spitzer

\$2,500 Pirro

\$8,000 Senate Republicans

AD HOC Committee Members

Patrick Barrett

About \$115,000 toto

Highlights

\$50,000 Spitzer

\$25,000 Pirro

Fred Newman about \$40,000 toto

\$22,500 Pirro

\$12,500 Faso

\$5,000 Randy Daniels

Ed Swyer about \$80,000 toto

\$50,000 Senate Republicans

\$10,250 Spitzer

\$2,500 Cuomo

\$6,000 Pirro

\$5,900 Faso

John Nigro about \$85,000 toto

\$58,000 approximate Senate Republicans

\$3,250 Spitzer

Saratoga Harness

\$2,500 Spitzer

\$25,000 Pataki through Virginia PAC

\$1,000 Hevesi

\$1,000 Senate Republicans

\$1,000 Bruno

\$1,000 Assemblyman Tokasz

\$300 Assemblyman Tedisco

\$250 Assemblyman McDonald

Jeff Gural total approximately \$181,500

Note: There are also about \$3,000 in contributions from Newmark Realty, and on the federal level Newmark employees have given \$376,957 during the 2005-2006 election cycle ranking Newmark 16th in the state in amount of money contributed by firms in federal elections as of 10/16/2005. See

<http://www.opensecrets.org/states/contrib.asp?State=NY&Year=2006>

Highlights

\$5,000 Hevesi

\$45,100 Mark Green

\$2,000 Larkin

\$6,750 Libous

\$22,000 to both Spitzer and Patterson

\$26,000 Cuomo

42,000 Assemblyman Weprin

Yonkers Raceway and the Rooney family

Basically impossible to track

Under the names of various Rooneys from Yonkers, Palm Beach and Pittsburgh, there are approximately \$60,000 in individual donations. Most went to Senator Bruno (\$15,000), the Senate Republicans (\$20,000) and Assemblyman Brodsky (\$8,500).

There were also numerous Yonkers subsidiaries which made political contributions including but probably not limited to:

Yonkers Raceway Inc.
Yonkers Raceway Market
Yonkers Raceway Programs
Yonkers Raceway PAC
Brian Boru
Westchester County Fair
Palm Beach Kennel Club
Association of Florida Greyhound Tracks

Most contributions went to the Senate Republicans with some contributions to Senator Spano, Assemblyman Pretlow, and Assemblyman Brodsky. The family also made contributions to Governor Pataki through the Virginia PAC. With these contributions, the Rooney family likely made more than \$100,000 in contributions. Other than the abortive Attorney General campaign of Assemblyman Brodsky, none of the Rooney money went to candidates running statewide.

Delaware North and the Jacobs Family

Much like the Rooney family, this is impossible to track. There are many contributions on similar dates from individuals named Jacobs in the Buffalo area or who give an address of 40 Fountain Plaza in Buffalo. There are also a number of subsidiary corporations such as Finger Lakes Racing Association, Sportsystems, Finger Lakes Food Service, Delaware North, and Sportservice. It really is not practical to determine how much was donated, but it is likely in excess of \$50,000. Considerable money was contributed to the Spitzer campaign late in the election. Otherwise, most of the contributions go to incumbents in Western New York.