

Because the mean can be affected by a few extreme values, the median is generally the preferred measure of central tendency if the data are likely to be skewed by a few extreme cases, as is the case with self-financing data.⁵ In other words, the median arguably represents the best example of the “average” case, at least in this instance, regardless of extremely low or high self-financing amounts.

Table I. Self-Financing of 2010 House and Senate Campaigns
Excludes Candidates Who Made No Contributions or Loans to Their Campaigns

Candidates			Self-Financing Amounts			
Chamber	Party Affiliation	Number	Median	Mean	Minimum	Maximum
House	Democratic	314	\$9,281.03	\$64,576.65	\$5.00	\$2,284,033.80
House	Republican	790	\$16,250.00	\$110,368.37	\$10.00	\$7,905,050.00
Senate	Democratic	79	\$19,500.00	\$656,650.21	\$20.00	\$23,788,077.00
Senate	Republican	117	\$14,167.00	\$830,492.66	\$15.00	\$50,104,984.00

Source: CRS analysis of FEC data (the “candidate summary file”) for the 2010 election cycle, April 2011.

Notes: The data include activity in all elections during the 2010 cycle (e.g., primary and general elections). CRS created the *self-financing amount* variable from the sum of FEC variables indicating the amounts of candidate contributions and candidate loans.