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Kentucky Legislative Ethics Commission
22 Mill Creek Park, Frankfort, Kentucky 40601-9230
Phone: (502) 573-2863
http://klec.ky.gov

Cigarette tax, solar policy drive lobbying spending

Immediately following a year of record lobbying spending, Kentucky businesses and organizations spent an all-time high of $2.6 million on lobbying in the first portion of the 2018 General Assembly session.

After spending $20.8 million in 2017, 684 employers and 596 lobbyists started 2018 by spending 20 percent more than they spent in the same period at the beginning of last year's session.

The top spenders during the first month of this year's session were: **Foundation for a Healthy Kentucky**, which spent $100,240, with 98 percent of that amount spent on advertising in favor of increasing the tax on tobacco products; **Kentucky Chamber of Commerce**, which spent $55,387, a 42 percent increase over the same period in 2016, the most recent session in an even-numbered year; and **Altria**, which spent $44,643, also a 42 percent increase over 2016. **Altria** owns cigarette maker **Philip Morris**, cigar maker **John Middleton**, and **U.S. Smokeless Tobacco**.

Other leading spenders early in the 2018 session include: **Baxter Healthcare** ($35,000); **Kentucky Hospital Association** ($32,559); and **Consumer Energy Alliance** ($25,051), a Houston-based lobbying group that includes **Big Rivers Electric**, **East Kentucky Power Cooperative**; **Kentucky Chamber of Commerce**, **Kentucky Association of Electric Cooperatives**, **Kentucky Oil & Gas Association**, and **Louisville Gas and Electric & Kentucky Utilities**, and is lobbying on HB 227 that would reduce credits that utilities provide to future solar panel owners for extra electricity they produce.

The rest of the top 10 lobbying spenders are: **Warby Parker** ($22,500); **Sullivan University** ($22,332); **Kentucky Association of Electric Cooperatives** ($22,251); and **Big Rivers Electric** ($19,149).

Rounding out the list of top 20 spenders are: **Kentucky Medical Association** ($18,763); **Greater Louisville, Inc.** ($17,700); **Wine Institute** ($17,500); **Kentucky Justice Association** ($16,832); **Kentucky Association of Health Care Facilities** ($15,731); **Kentucky Bankers Association** ($15,182); **Anthem, Inc.** ($15,000); **Kentucky League of Cities** ($14,893); **Kentucky Retail Federation** ($14,561); and **Kentucky State AFL-CIO** ($13,500).

Newly-registered lobbying employers

Businesses and organizations which have recently registered to lobby include: **1800Contacts**, a contact lens supplier; **ADVOCATESincDC**, a trade group for pharmacy benefit managers; **American Massage Therapy Association**, lobbying on changes to regulatory boards;

American Society of Landscape Architects; **Amplify Education**, a provider of digital products to schools; and **CompTIA**, Computing Technology Industry Association, a trade association lobbying on HB 59 and HCR 93.

Other new registrants are: **Diamond Game**, a California-based provider of lottery products; **Dish Network**; **District Judges for a Better Commonwealth**; **Lexington Public Library Foundation**; **National Taxpayers Union**, lobbying on House Bill 191; **Ohio Valley ISRI**, lobbying on issues related to recycling; **Petersen International Underwriters**, which underwrites high limit disability, medical, and life insurance plans; **Pet Food Institute**, trade association for pet food manufacturers; **Starr's Liquor**, lobbying to maintain the current retail quota license system; **Synergy Rehabilitation**, lobbying on SB 121, HB 126, and HB 323; and **TransparentBusiness**, lobbying on contracting and communications technology.

Ethics & Lobbying News from around the U.S.

The Frat House of Representatives

WASHINGTON, D.C. – ***Politico*** -- by John Bresnahan and Rachel Bade – February 22, 2018

Naked photos. Infidelity. Secret payoffs. Pants-less octogenarians. And the infamous "Bros Caucus."

Welcome to the Frat House of Representatives.

The past year in Congress has been a lowlight reel of nonstop unethical — and, in some cases, potentially illegal — behavior. Three House members resigned over alleged misconduct. Four others announced they won't seek reelection, an option they took to head off party leaders forcing them out.

Just last week, ***Politico*** reported that Rep. Mike Turner (Ohio) is threatening to question Rep. Darrell Issa (Calif.) in his divorce case. Turner wants to know about Issa's relationship with Turner's estranged wife, though Issa has denied any improper behavior.

Incidents like these have become seemingly routine, which itself shows how far Congress' ethical standards have fallen of late.

"It's been a soap opera, but this adds another chapter," Rep. Ted Yoho (Fla.) said of the Turner-Issa drama. Yoho said he's sick of the scandals that distract from legislative business.

"Infidelity and things like that aren't felonies, but it's a lapse of character," he said. "And I think we have plenty of people you have seen in the news who show a lack of character and a lack of ethics."

"This shouldn't be normal, and it's starting to feel like it is," added Rep. John Larson (Conn.). The Senate hasn't been immune, but the House of Representatives — the people's House — has been home to the most outlandish behavior.

Before the current, 115th Congress started in January 2017, many House members voted to gut the Office of Congressional Ethics - the independent ethics watchdog - only to reverse themselves in the face of a public backlash.

The fiasco was a sign of things to come:

U.S. Rep. John Conyers (Mich.) - the "dean of the House" who was first elected when Lyndon Johnson was president — resigned in the midst of a sexual-harassment scandal. ***BuzzFeed*** reported Conyers secretly used $27,000 in taxpayer funds as a settlement with a former aide who accused him of harassment. Conyers, 88, also reportedly met with aides when he wasn't wearing pants.

Rep. Tim Murphy (Pa.), a staunch opponent of abortion rights, resigned after it was disclosed that he had asked his mistress to get an abortion.

Rep. Trent Franks (Ariz.) resigned after a former aide alleged he offered her $5 million to serve as a birth surrogate. In a bizarre resignation letter, Franks acknowledged discussing his wife's infertility with aides but denied wrongdoing. Sources told ***Politico*** that some of the women took his surrogate talk as an invitation to have sex.

Rep. Patrick Meehan (Pa.), a member of the House Ethics Committee, announced his retirement after ***The New York Times*** disclosed that his office had made a secret sexual-harassment settlement with a former female aide. The married Meehan called the staffer his "soul mate," a phrase that became an instant classic among lawmakers and staffers on Capitol Hill.

Rep. Joe Barton (Texas) announced he wouldn't run for reelection after a former girlfriend posted naked photos of the 68-year-old lawmaker. Barton sent graphic text messages, too. "I want u soo bad," said one text message.

In just his first term, Rep. Ruben Kihuen (Nev.) announced his retirement in December. According to ***BuzzFeed***, Kihuen allegedly propositioned a former aide "for dates and sex despite her repeated rejections. On two occasions, she says he touched her thighs without consent."

Rep. Blake Farenthold (Texas) announced his own retirement after ***Politico*** disclosed that a former aide had received $84,000 from his office to settle a lawsuit over sexual harassment, gender discrimination and creating a hostile work environment. Farenthold said he would repay the taxpayer payment out of his personal funds, but so far, that has not happened.

Finally, ***Politico*** reported that FBI investigators were digging into the personal life of Rep. Duncan Hunter (Calif.), who is part of a group of lawmakers informally called the "Bros Caucus", and who has a reputation for heavy drinking and keeping company with women. A federal grand jury has been hearing testimony from former staffers and subpoenaed Hunter's family about allegations that his campaign funds were used for personal meals, his children's schooling, and flying a pet rabbit cross-country, among other things.

The fallout from the scandals has yielded varied results. The House passed stringent sexual harassment rules that no longer allow secret taxpayer-funded settlements.

The scandals have come at such a rapid clip that it's hard to keep up with all of them. Some lawmakers are fed up with the relentless headlines and questions from media.

Former Alabama House majority leader sentenced to 3 months in prison

ALABAMA – ***AL.com*** – by Mike Cason – February 15, 2018

Former Alabama House Majority Leader Micky Hammon of Decatur was sentenced to three months in prison and ordered to pay $50,657 in restitution for converting campaign contributions to personal use.

U.S. District Judge Myron Thompson sentenced Hammon in Montgomery. Hammon will report to a federal facility to begin his sentence on March 29.

Hammon pleaded guilty to one count of mail fraud, and spoke in court and apologized to the court and to his family. "I just ask for everyone's forgiveness," Hammon said.

Prosecutors recommended probation and no prison time for Hammon. Assistant U.S. Attorney Jonathan Ross said Hammon accepted responsibility when he learned of the government's case and saved the government time and resources that would have been needed to bring an indictment.

Thompson said he found the recommendation for no prison time unusual. The judge indicated he thought that would send the wrong message to other public officials. He said Hammon violated the trust of those who gave to his campaign.

"I don't see how I cannot give him some time in prison," Thompson said. He ordered Hammon to serve three years of supervised probation after release.

Hammon was ordered to pay restitution to the court, which will distribute it to campaign contributors. Ross said **Alabama Power Company's** employees' political action committee indicated it did not want to receive restitution. Ross said restitution owed to any contributors that refused it would go to a crime victims' fund.

Hammon was elected to the House in 2002, was picked as the majority leader in 2010, and held that position until February 2017. His guilty plea in September automatically removed him from office.

Ross said Hammon received campaign contributions, deposited them into his campaign's bank account, and then wrote checks on that account that he deposited into his personal account. Hammon also used money directly from his campaign account for personal spending, Ross said.

Ross said the crime was mail fraud because the campaign contributions came by mail. Ross praised the U.S. Postal Inspection Services, saying its investigators "doggedly pursued this case."

Hammon was the fourth Alabama House member removed from office because of corruption charges since 2014.

The others were Reps. Greg Wren, Montgomery, who pleaded guilty to a misdemeanor and resigned; former House Speaker Mike Hubbard, Auburn, who was convicted of 12 felony ethics violations; and Rep. Oliver Robinson, Birmingham, who pleaded guilty to federal charges of conspiracy, bribery, fraud and tax evasion.

[*Former Arkansas legislator Eddie Cooper pleads guilty to embezzlement*]
ARKANSAS – ***KUAR Radio*** – by Wesley Brown -- February 13, 2018

As Arkansas lawmakers headed to Little Rock for the fiscal session, former Rep. Eddie Wayne Cooper of Melbourne pleaded guilty in federal court for his role in a conspiracy to embezzle more than $4 million from a Springfield, Missouri-based health care charity.

Timothy Garrison, U.S. Attorney for the Western District of Missouri, announced that Cooper, 51, waived his right to a grand jury and pleaded guilty before U.S. Magistrate Judge David Rush to charges of one count of conspiracy to embezzle from the nonprofit organization.

By pleading guilty, the former legislator-turned-lobbyist admitted he conspired with several executives of **Preferred Family Healthcare**, a nonprofit charity headquartered in Springfield, to use the charity's funds for unlawful political contributions, for excessive, unreported lobbying and to financially benefit himself.

Cooper received at least $387,501 from a lobbying firm and at least $63,000 in kickbacks as a result of his participation in the conspiracy. Under the terms of the plea agreement, Cooper must forfeit his gain from the conspiracy to the government.

Cooper was an Arkansas lawmaker from 2006 through January 2011, and a lobbyist beginning Jan. 20, 2011. On April 20, 2009, Cooper was hired to the full-time position of regional director for **Preferred Family Healthcare**. Cooper's employment with the charity ended on April 26, 2017. Cooper was a member of the charity's board of directors from October 2009 through April 2015, and also worked as a lobbyist.

Under federal rules, Cooper is subject to a sentence of up to five years in federal prison without parole.

Cooper's guilty plea comes nearly two weeks after Sen. Jake Files, Fort Smith, pleaded guilty to one count of wire fraud, one count of money laundering and one count of bank fraud, with part of the activity including use of money from Arkansas' "General Improvement Fund" (GIF).

Files resigned earlier this month ahead of the 2018 fiscal session. Files, who served as chairman of the Senate Revenue & Tax Committee, also admitted to submitting a materially false loan application in November 2016 as part of a scheme to secure approximately $56,700 from **First Western Bank**.

General Improvement Funds were at the root of another investigation involving former Sen. Jon Woods, Springdale, and former Rep. Micah Neal, Springdale. Neal has confessed to a kickback scheme involving GIF money, while Woods is fighting the charges.

Cooper's case is also related to a federal case made public on Dec. 18, citing an "unnamed former Arkansas legislator" and a Northwest Arkansas businessman as accomplices in a scheme with a New Jersey political consultant and several executives of a Springfield, Mo., charity to spend nearly $1 million on illegal political activity and kickbacks to co-conspirators.

[*Ethics panel finds Baltimore Del. McCray breached legislature's conduct standards*]

MARYLAND -- ***Baltimore Sun*** -- by Lloyd Fox – January 24, 2018

The General Assembly's ethics committee has determined that a Baltimore delegate "breached the standards of conduct expected of a member" of the legislature last year in an angry outburst at an advocate for a nonprofit group.

The Joint Commission on Legislative Ethics found unanimously that it lacked the legal authority to recommend that Del. Cory McCray face punishment by the House of Delegates. But the panel decided the misconduct by the first-term legislator was serious enough to refer the matter to House Speaker Michael E. Busch.

The ethics committee's decision, which came in April but was not publicized, followed a complaint by Nicole Hanson, executive director of **Out for Justice**, an advocacy group for ex-offenders.

In an interview with ***The Baltimore Sun***, Hanson said McCray lost his temper and threw a chair against a wall during an argument with her in the House office building March 28. She said she felt physically threatened.

Hanson said she decided to file a complaint with the ethics committee a week after the incident, after McCray rejected overtures seeking an apology. Her account was corroborated by another advocate, Caryn York of the **Job Opportunities Task Force**.

The ethics committee said it conducted a "thorough review" of Hanson's complaint that McCray's behavior was "outside the accepted bounds of civility and decorum for members of the House of Delegates."

Among those who acknowledged talking with ethics investigators were York, McCray and Del. Antonio Hayes, who shares an office with McCray and who, according to Hanson, tried to act as a peacemaker.

Hanson said that on the day of the outburst, she, McCray, York and Hayes were having a spirited discussion of the causes of poverty — a concern in McCray's 45th District in East Baltimore. Hanson characterized the discussion as "passionate" but not heated until McCray lost his composure, began using obscenities, picked up a chair and threw it against a wall.

"The incident was extremely upsetting to me," Hanson said.

McCray told ***The Sun*** he remembers the incident differently. For instance, he denies throwing a chair.

"In no way did I feel as though I intimidated anyone in a physical way," McCray said. But he acknowledged that his language and volume were unacceptable.

"I know I was wrong,' he said. "It was an extreme learning experience."

Ski passes, newspaper ads and meals: A look inside lobbyist spending during the session

NEW MEXICO – ***New Mexico In Depth*** – by Anthony Jackson -- January 29, 2018

What do ski passes, meals, and newspaper ads all have in common? Lobbyists or their employers have purchased them in recent weeks as part of their ongoing efforts to build relationships with or bring lawmakers around to their perspectives on issues.

According to mandatory reports filed since January 17th, lobbyists or their employers have spent more than $75,111 so far this session, slightly more than $68,000 spent by this time last year.

About half the expenses were in the form of meals at restaurants in and around the Roundhouse, mostly larger events to which all legislators were invited.

Lobbyist Natasha Ning told ***New Mexico In Depth (NMID)*** she was lobbying to establish a new scholarship at New Mexico Military Institute (NMMI), called the New Mexico Opportunity Scholarship. House Bill 68, would allow NMMI to transfer $500,000 each year to the new scholarship fund from the institute's existing budget balances.

"It's annual scholarship money and we want to earmark it for New Mexico students," said Ning. Ning spent more than $3,700 for a breakfast on January 23 at the Inn and Spa at Loretto in Santa Fe. All New Mexico legislators were invited, but some didn't attend, she said.

George Brooks, the Executive Director of **Ski New Mexico**, lobbied the Round House to promote the in-state ski industry. Brooks gave House and Senate lawmakers VIP day passes to "learn and experience" the industry. These ski passes have become almost an annual tradition, showing up on the lobbying reports year in and year out, with Brooks saying it's "something done for a long, long time and it's more goodwill than lobbying."

"We're hoping they will come up and see what our industry is so they know part of what the tourism industry is," Brooks told ***NMID***. He wants the legislature to support the Department of Tourism budget to improve all tourism in New Mexico, not just skiing, he said.

Other lobbyists spent money to thank legislators for their actions.

Mary Jessa Bunker, a lobbyist for **Catholic Health Initiatives** spent more than $3,300 for ads in the ***Santa Fe New Mexican*** and ***Las Cruces Sun***.

The ads thanked House representatives for voting in favor of House Joint Resolution 1 in 2017, which would have allowed voters to decide whether to tap the state's Land Grant Permanent Fund for additional funds to provide early education programs.

Sarah Hoffman, lobbyist for the **Rocky Mountain Synod**, spent $1,972 on a luncheon on Jan. 22 and awarded advocacy awards to religious groups doing charity work.

Any lobbying expenditure of $500 or more during the session must be reported within 48-hours of being made. In 2017, lobbyists reported expenses of $292,000 within 48-hours of making them.

Ex-Sen. Griego gets 18 months, $47,000 in fines

NEW MEXICO -- ***Albuquerque Journal*** -- By Dan Boyd -- February 16, 2018

Santa Fe – Phil Griego's fall from Roundhouse deal-maker to felon will end with the former state senator behind bars.

A district judge sentenced Griego, who was convicted last fall of fraud, bribery and other public corruption charges, to 18 months in prison and more than $47,000 in fines.

In a courtroom packed with Griego relatives and friends, District Judge Brett Loveless said he decided to impose a prison sentence after much reflection and a careful reading of New Mexico's Constitution. Prosecutors had sought a 10-year sentence, while Griego's attorney had requested probation and no prison time.

"It's a sad day, because you were given such a great responsibility and trust," Loveless said. "When people don't have trust in their government, they feel disenfranchised … and you, quite frankly, are part of the problem."

Prosecutors described Griego as a cunning con artist who had stealthily pushed for legislation authorizing the 2014 sale of a historic state-owned building near the Roundhouse, concealed his involvement in the deal and ultimately pocketed a $50,000 commission as a real estate agent for the buyer.

"It was a calculated, well thought-out plan that played out slowly over 18 months," Assistant Attorney General Zach Jones said during the sentencing hearing. "He chose to press on always toward his payday."

Griego, who lives on a family ranch in rural San Miguel County, was also ordered to complete five years of supervised probation after his release from prison and to perform 1,000 hours of community service.

Addressing the court before he was sentenced, Griego said he had brought a stain to his family's name. But he also contended he had never used his elected office to harm anyone, saying, "I genuinely believe I am not a criminal."

"This is not the story of my life," Griego added. "My past is not littered with violations, but with honest effort."

An Attorney General's Office spokesman confirmed that prosecutors still plan to proceed with separate charges against Griego – including perjury, fraud and embezzlement – for allegedly pocketing money from his campaign account and lying about it on required reports.

Griego represented a sprawling Senate district for 18-plus years before resigning in 2015 instead of facing possible disciplinary action stemming from an internal ethics investigation.

[Taxpayers reimbursed former lawmaker for rooms linked to prostitution allegations]

UTAH -- ***The Spectrum*** –by David DeMille – February 12, 2018

Former Utah Rep. Jon Stanard, who represented the St. George area before he abruptly resigned his position last week ahead of reports that he had paid a prostitute for sex at least twice last year, was reimbursed with taxpayer money for the costs of the hotel rooms allegedly used for the illicit rendezvous.

Stanard, 43, quit the Legislature two days before British tabloid ***The Daily Mail*** published an article accusing him of meeting up twice with a call girl named Brie Taylor, with screen shots of what appear to be text exchanges between the two setting up appointments and naming a price — $250 per hour.

Receipts from expense reports Stanard provided to the Utah House show he was reimbursed about $225 for hotel room stays in Salt Lake City at two separate hotels in June and August of last year while he was attending legislative meetings, at locations and on dates that correspond with the text messages included in the ***Daily Mail*** article.

Stanard's 2017 campaign finance report showed more than $1,500 in expenses for stays at the "Marriott Residence" hotel, as well as several stays at other locations.

Stanard has not returned messages requesting comment, although his attorney, Walter Bugden, is quoted in the ***Daily Mail*** as saying "Given the current climate in this country with misconduct allegations and the way things are happening in the media right now, there isn't any explanation that my client could give that would overcome the shadow of these allegations."

Stanard was elected in 2012 to represent Utah's 62nd District, which covers the east side of St. George and Washington City. He is the only person to have served in the current district, which was redrawn after the 2010 census showed the need to create a new district in southwestern Utah.

A business owner whose best known local product was Dixie Direct, a coupon guide he sold in 2008, Stanard won his first race with 74 percent of the vote. He was reelected in 2014 with 81 percent of the vote and ran unopposed in 2016.

A member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and a married father of three, Stanard had run as a conservative on social issues, campaigning as a "strong advocate for conservative family values," and as an opponent of abortion and same-sex marriage.

Stanard voted last year in support of stricter state prostitution laws, including an increased penalty for people who are convicted twice of solicitation. The new law raised solicitation from a class B misdemeanor to a class A misdemeanor.

House Chief of Staff Greg Hartley said he didn't know whether Stanard would be asked to pay back the costs of the hotel rooms because he was staying in the rooms and attending legislative business and House hotel policy doesn't address what activities are allowed inside a lawmakers' room. However, he said lawmakers could ask for a refund anyway.

Opioid makers gave $10M to advocacy groups amid epidemic

WASHINGTON, D.C. -- ***Associated Press*** – by Matt Perrone & Geoff Mulvihill **--** February 12, 2018

Companies selling some of the most lucrative prescription painkillers funneled millions of dollars to advocacy groups that in turn promoted the medications' use, according to a report released by a U.S. senator.

The investigation by Missouri's Sen. Claire McCaskill sheds light on the opioid industry's ability to shape public opinion and raises questions about its role in an overdose epidemic that has claimed hundreds of thousands of American lives. Representatives of some of the drugmakers named in the report said they did not set conditions on how the money was to be spent or force the groups to advocate for their painkillers.

The report from McCaskill, ranking member of the Senate's homeland security committee, examines advocacy funding by the makers of the top five opioid painkillers by worldwide sales in 2015. Financial information the companies provided to Senate staff shows they spent more than $10 million between 2012 and 2017 to support 14 advocacy groups and affiliated doctors.

The findings follow a similar investigation launched in 2012 by a bipartisan pair of senators. That effort eventually was shelved and no findings were ever released.

While the new report provides only a snapshot of company activities, experts said it gives insight into how industry-funded groups fueled demand for drugs such as OxyContin and Vicodin, addictive medications that generated billions in sales despite research showing they are largely ineffective for chronic pain.

"It looks pretty damning when these groups were pushing the message about how wonderful opioids are and they were being heavily funded, in the millions of dollars, by the manufacturers of those drugs," said Lewis Nelson, a Rutgers University doctor and opioid expert.

The findings could bolster hundreds of lawsuits that are aimed at holding opioid drugmakers responsible for helping fuel an epidemic blamed for the deaths of more than 340,000 Americans since 2000.

McCaskill's staff asked drugmakers to turn over records of payments they made to groups and affiliated physicians, part of a broader investigation by the senator into the opioid crisis. The request was sent last year to five companies: **Purdue Pharma**; **Insys Therapeutics**; **Janssen Pharmaceuticals**, owned by **Johnson & Johnson**; **Mylan**; and **Depomed**.

Fourteen nonprofit groups, mostly representing pain patients and specialists, received nearly $9 million from the drugmakers, according to investigators. Doctors affiliated with those groups received another $1.6 million.

Most of the groups included in the probe took industry-friendly positions. That included issuing medical guidelines promoting opioids for chronic pain, lobbying to defeat or include exceptions to state limits on opioid prescribing, and criticizing landmark prescribing guidelines from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

"Doctors and the public have no way of knowing the true source of this information and that's why we have to take steps to provide transparency," said McCaskill in an interview with ***The Associated Press***. The senator plans to introduce legislation requiring increased disclosure about the financial relationships between drugmakers and certain advocacy groups.

A 2016 investigation by the ***AP*** and the **Center for Public Integrity** revealed how painkiller manufacturers used hundreds of lobbyists and millions in campaign contributions to fight state and federal measures aimed at stemming the tide of prescription opioids, often enlisting help from advocacy organizations.

Bob Twillman, executive director of the **Academy of Integrative Pain Management**, said most of the $1.3 million his group received from the five companies went to a state policy advocacy operation. But Twillman said the organization has called for non-opioid pain treatments while also asking state lawmakers for exceptions to restrictions on the length of opioid prescriptions for certain patients.

"We really don't take direction from them about what we advocate for," Twillman said of the industry.

The tactics highlighted in the report are at the heart of lawsuits filed by hundreds of state and local governments against the opioid industry.

The suits allege that drugmakers misled doctors and patients about the risks of opioids by enlisting "front groups" and "key opinion leaders" who oversold the drugs' benefits and encouraged overprescribing. In the legal claims, the governments seek money and changes to how the industry operates, including an end to the use of outside groups to push their drugs.

U.S. deaths linked to opioids have quadrupled since 2000 to roughly 42,000 in 2016. Although initially driven by prescription drugs, most opioid deaths now involve illicit drugs, including heroin and fentanyl.

Purdue Pharma, the maker of OxyContin, contributed the most to the groups, funneling $4.7 million to organizations and physicians from 2012 through last year.

In a statement, the company did not address whether it was trying to influence the positions of the groups it supported, but said it does help organizations "that are interested in helping patients receive appropriate care." **Purdue** announced it would no longer market OxyContin to doctors.

Insys Therapeutics, a company recently targeted by federal prosecutors, provided more than $3.5 million to interest groups and physicians, according to McCaskill's report. Last year, the company's founder was indicted for allegedly offering bribes to doctors to write prescriptions for the company's spray-based fentanyl medication.

Insys contributed $2.5 million last year to a **U.S. Pain Foundation** program to pay for pain drugs for cancer patients.

"The question was: Do we make these people suffer, or do we work with this company that has a terrible name?" said **U.S. Pain** founder Paul Gileno, explaining why his organization sought the money.