

Candidates spend \$67 million on TV primary ads

*By CNN Senior Political Editor Mark Preston
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Washington (CNN) - A handful of candidates vying for governorships and Senate seats in four states Tuesday have spent north of \$67 million on campaign television commercials with one Republican accounting for nearly half of that total.

Former eBay CEO Meg Whitman put \$31 million of ads on TV to promote her candidacy for California's GOP gubernatorial nomination, according to a new analysis by Campaign Media Analysis Group, CNN's consultant on political television ads.

Whitman's opponent, Silicon Valley multi-millionaire-turned Insurance Commissioner Steve Poizner, has spent \$19 million on TV in an effort to try and convince Republican voters he is the most qualified candidate to compete against Attorney General Jerry Brown in November.

Meanwhile, former Hewlett-Packard CEO Carly Fiorina has spent \$3.2 million on TV to try and win California's GOP Senate nomination. Fiorina's opponents, former Rep. Tom Campbell has dedicated \$352,000 to commercials, while Assemblyman Chuck DeVore was only able to put \$52,000 worth of campaign ads on the air. The three Republicans are seeking the right to challenge Sen. Barbara Boxer in the general election.

In Arkansas, Sen. Blanche Lincoln has spent more than \$2.5 million on commercials, while her opponent Bill Halter put \$1.8 million worth of ads on TV in this battle for the Democratic Senate nomination. Lincoln and Halter met last month in the primary, but since neither candidate achieved 50 percent it triggered Tuesday's runoff.

Unions and liberal interest groups have been pouring millions of dollars into Arkansas in an effort to try and defeat Lincoln. Service Employees International Union's SEIU COPE has spent \$900,000 on commercials, while the union-backed organization Arkansans for Change has spent an additional \$915,000 on TV. In all, about \$6.8 million has been spent on TV ads in this race. Rep. John Boozman won the Republican nomination last month.

The battle for the Republican gubernatorial nomination in South Carolina has spurred nearly \$3.4 million in television ad spending with Rep. Gresham Barrett accounting for \$1.1 million, Attorney General Henry McMaster another \$850,000 and Lt. Gov. Andre Bauer an additional \$800,000. Frontrunner Nikki Haley, a state legislator, has spent \$360,000 on TV ads.

In Nevada, former state Republican Party Chair Sue Lowden dedicated \$1 million to campaign commercials, 10 times more than Tea Party favorite Sharron Angle. Businessman Danny Tarkanian spent an additional \$270,000 to promote his campaign.

"The races on Tuesday are foreshadowing of things to come, big spending on ads by candidates and groups, rhetoric fueled with healthcare, bailouts and news of the day and of course a lot of attack ads," said CMAG President Evan Tracey.