Campaign Finance City Council And State Representative Scorecard

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- **Motivation/Background of the project:**

  This project is owned by "Progressive Mass", a statewide, member-driven grassroots organization built by organizers and activists regardless of political affiliations from across Massachusetts to advocate for progressive policy.

  In continuance to the project from last semester where the students examined publicly available campaign contributions data to city council members and categorized them by industry using Bureau of Labor Statistics' Occupational Outlook Handbook and the NAICS' industry keywords to classify donor industries and scorecard the results for each city council member, we intend to dive deeper into answering questions and correlating specific industries and the donations being contributed by them.

- **Goals, Hypothesis and Outcomes:**
  - For the State representatives, analyze the following industries, in the given order:
    - Healthcare
    - Real estate
    - Law enforcement
  - Collect donation data on each of these industries and correlate them with the committees and specific individuals in key positions.

- **Approach:**
  We will work on the project in several phases -
  - Review and verification of the work done by the previous team
  - Data collection -
    - Collection of campaign donation data from a particular span of time(most of this will be provided by the supervisors)
    - Scraping the Secretary of State website to collect industry data and use it to categorize industries through fields like addresses, occupation, employer etc. Links to data source:

- http://corp.sec.state.ma.us/CorpWeb/CorpSearch/CorpSearchResults.aspx

- Collect similar data from external sources such as the ones given below -
  - https://www.sec.state.ma.us/LobbyistPublicSearch/Default.aspx
  - https://www.ocpf.us/Reports/PacReports
  - https://www.ocpf.us/Reports/GroupPoliticalSpending
  - OpenCorporates database API
  - NAIOP - The Commercial Real Estate Development Association

- Cleaning and classification of collected industry data
  - As the data will be collected from multiple sources, we will first clean and consolidate all the industry data into a standardized format.
  - Classify the companies according to the industry they belong to. This can be done by matching keywords from business description.
  - We can further refine the data by matching data from the Massachusetts Office of Campaign and Political Finance website to keywords and businesses of known industries.
  - There is a free NAICS code lookup website that will allow us to further categorize the industry of a company

- Analysis:
  - Identify average donations by industry sector per state representative
    - We will use the candidate's CPF ID# to uniquely identify an individual.
  - Identify outliers (how we define outliers by standard deviation)
  - Evaluate influence directed toward State Representatives
  - Identify and classify donations to state representatives in the key committees listed above

- **End Result:**

At the end, we will have completed a thorough analysis of the industry and donation data which will -
- ○ Identify, in a quantitative sense, the highest donors from each industry and who they donate to.
- ○ What the average amount of donation per industry is.
- ○ Find outliers who donate/receive exceptional amounts and which industries they belong to.
- ○ Expose patterns in donations, such as multiple donations done by different people of the same company to a single representative.

- **Possible Work (if time permits):**
  - ○ Draw connections between donations from specific industries that led to substantial gains for the industries, which could be through the passing of helpful legislation or contracts.
  - ○ We could possibly geotag the donations and uncover some hidden patterns there.
  - ○ If there is time we might also want to examine the energy or higher education industries.

- **Open Questions / Uncertainties :**

  - ○ What is the average donation ($) to all state representatives by industry?
  - ○ Which state representatives are the outliers i.e. larger volume of donations received? How much larger?
  - ○ Is there a pattern or insights of these individuals? E.g. time of year, donating to multiple candidates from the same companies, etc.)
  - ○ Do members of the committees most relevant to a given industry receive a significantly larger volume of donations?
  - ○ How much are PACs and Unions giving (look at this alone as well as by industry)?
  - ○ Who are the largest industry donors (include PACs, Unions, Companies, Individuals)
  - ○ What percent of Reps overall receive donations from the same firm by industry. (eg, 60% of reps receive from RE firms who make donations, while only 25% receive from Law Enf donating firms)