

The University of Virginia Center for Politics



The Trouble with Elections: Is Public Funding the Answer?

Purpose: Many voters complain that there is a lack of choice among candidates and that the people who should run for office often do not. Should Congress reflect the socio-economic diversity of the people it serves? This lesson guides students in discussing this question as it explores the possibility of public or tax-dollar funding of national elections. A campaign simulation helps students to brainstorm unintended consequences for both sides of the public financing issue. This lesson complements the YLI lesson plan, *Special Interest Groups and Political Action Committees: Influences on the Political Process*.

Objectives:

1. Students will analyze statistical data about congressional representatives in order to draw conclusions about the accuracy of the term “representational government.”
2. Students will participate in a campaign simulation in order to determine the effects of fundraising on the political process.
3. Students will interpret arguments for and against public funding of national elections in order to debate the need for a Constitutional amendment.

Key Terms:

constituents *fundraising*

Materials:

1. Overhead: *The People*.
2. Overhead: *Statistics on Congressional Representatives*.
3. Teacher resource/simulation: *Running for Congress*.
4. Student handout: *Articles on Public Financing*.
5. Student handout: *Identifying the Pros and Cons of Public Campaign Financing*.

Procedure:

1. Warm Up/Motivation. Ask students to respond to the following questions:
 - ❖ Do you know someone who has run for public office?
 - ❖ What is “public office?”
 - ❖ What do you think a person needs to be able to run for public office?
 - ❖ Why don’t more people run for public office?

Place the teacher transparency, *The People* on the overhead and ask students to interpret the cartoon by answering the following questions:

- ❖ What is going on in the cartoon?

- ❖ How did the artist use design to demonstrate the relationship between the senator and his constituents?
- ❖ What is this illustration trying to say about congressional representation?
- ❖ Why is this a problem?

Display the teacher transparency, *Statistics on Congressional Representatives*. Direct students to work with a partner and draw 2-3 conclusions from the information on the transparency. They should be prepared to share their findings with the class.

Hint: Students should find that although being wealthy isn't a formal requirement for running for Congress most representatives are very wealthy.

- ❖ Why might having personal wealth convince a person to run for office?
- ❖ If most office seekers are wealthy, what does this mean about our democracy?
- ❖ How might we encourage less wealthy Americans to run for office?
- ❖ What incentives might improve diversity among candidates? What effect would diversity have on the effectiveness of government?

2. Prior to using this lesson read over the teacher resource/simulation *Running for Congress*. The simulation includes all instructions and handouts necessary for holding a congressional campaign in your classroom. The campaign includes four rounds. The first three rounds assign various roles and funding to the students. The final round provides public funding with new rules. Students should brainstorm about the various rounds using the debriefing questions included in the simulation. Have the students identify the pros/cons of private and public funding, unintended consequences of public funding and the effect on candidate diversity.
3. After running the simulation the students will analyze the pros/cons of public financing by reading one article on the topic. Allow students to choose the article they would like to read – they are of varying abilities to allow for differentiation according to reading ability. Distribute the student handout *Identifying the Pros and Cons of Public Campaign Financing*. The resource sheet is in the form of the K-W-L and students should identify what they already know about the topic from the previous discussions and the simulation. Then working in groups made up of students with the same article, have them record some questions they would like to find the answers to before stating an opinion on whether or not campaigns should be financed with tax dollars. Students should then read their articles and highlight any answers or supporting evidence for their questions. When they are finished reading have the group discuss the main points in the article and whether or not they agree/disagree with the author.
4. Jigsaw the students so that they are now in groups with students who read each of the other articles. Have them share the main idea and information presented in their articles. Allow students time to record the information on their resource sheets.
5. To evaluate student learning and to prepare students to vote in the Mock Constitutional Convention display the following exit statement on the overhead or board.



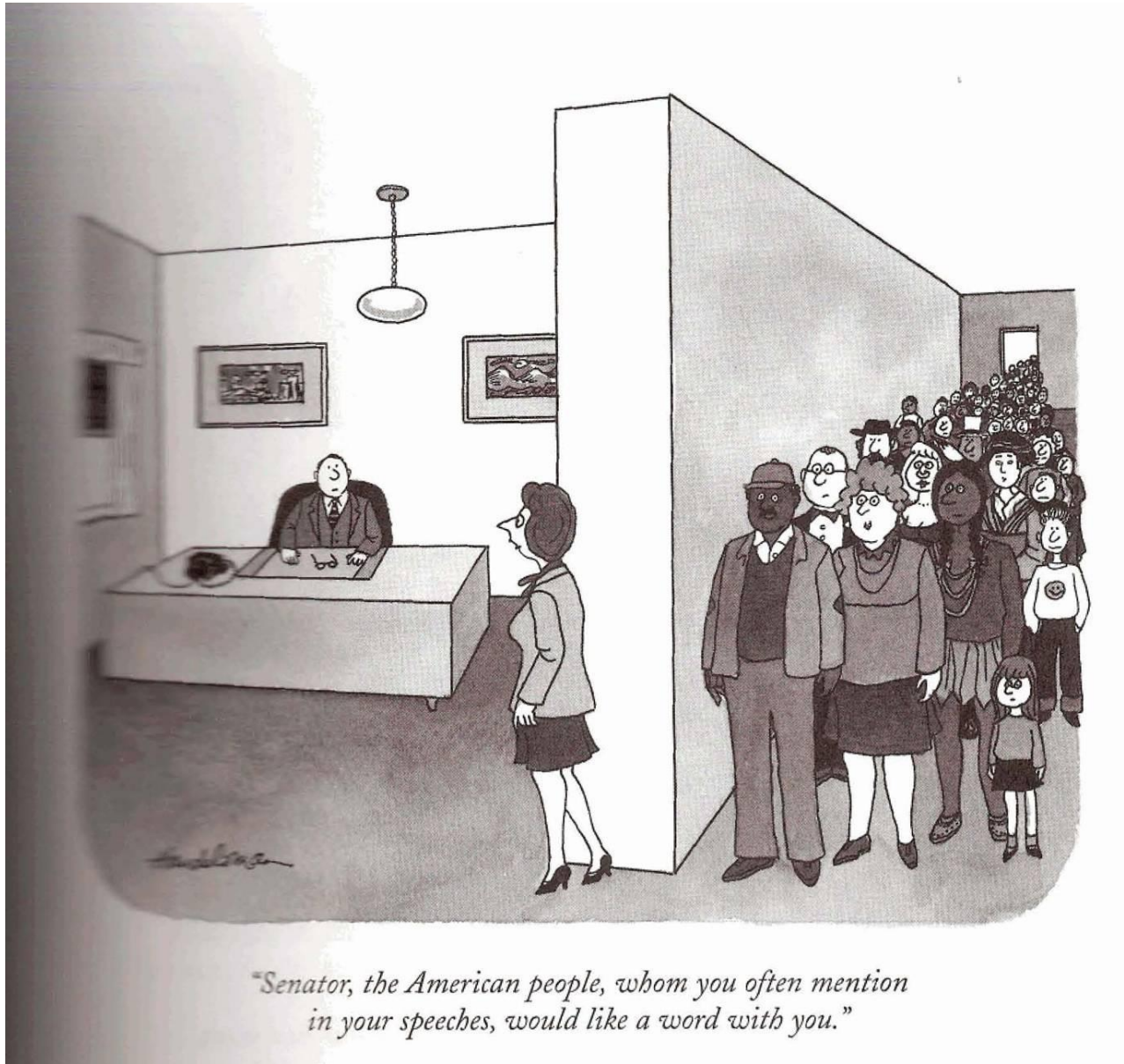
“I think that the Constitution should/should not be amended to provide for public financing of federal campaigns. I feel this way for the following reasons:”

Hint: Students should select one view and have supporting evidence from their resources sheets and reflect information found in the lesson.

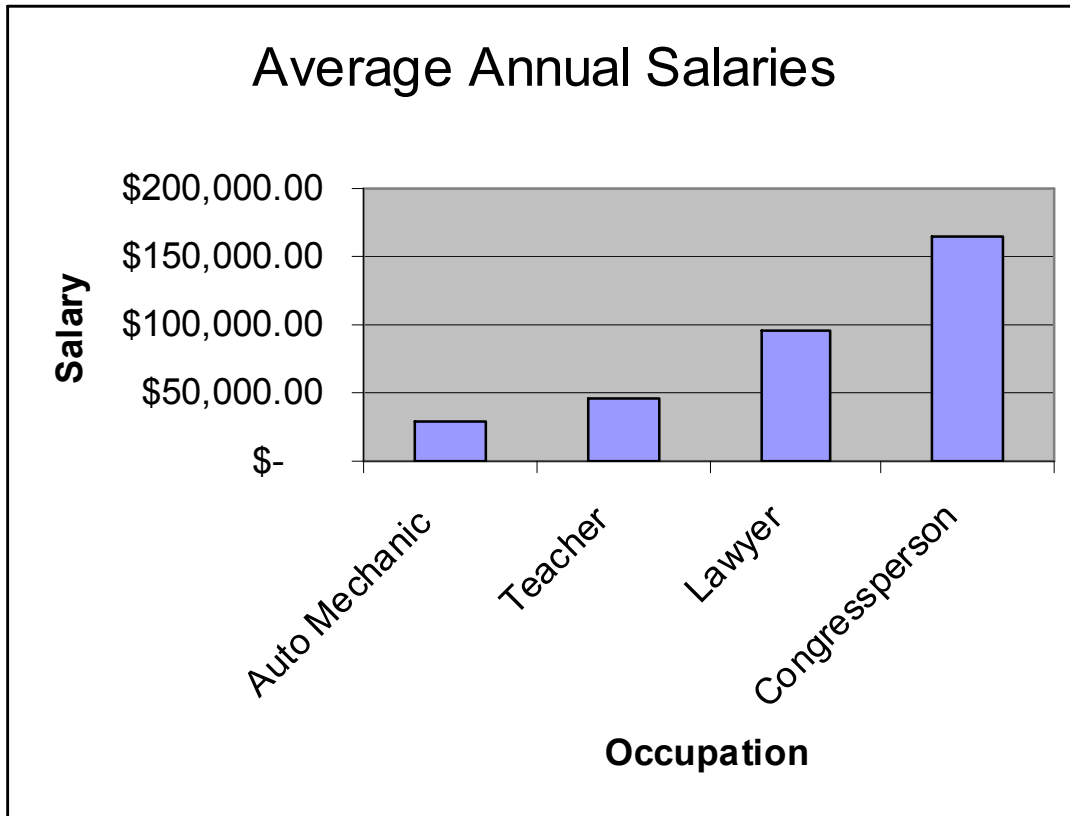
Extension Activity:

Use the SpeakOut! page of the YLI website, www.youthleadership.net to research the campaign finances of your elected officials. Use the YLI lesson plan *Learning from Elected Officials* to invite elected officials to your school to discuss public financing of political campaigns.

The People?



Statistics on Congressional Representatives



What conclusions can we draw from the information on the graph?

Things to consider:

- ❖ How might we describe the relationship between wealth and public office?
- ❖ What effect
- ❖ Socio-Economic effects of public policy

Simulation: Running for Congress

Campaign Simulation

Purpose:

The goal of this simulation is to demonstrate to students the importance of money in political campaigns. Students will be assigned the role of candidate, campaign manager, board of elections officer, or private firm. Candidates will have to run a successful campaign by reaching the most voters with the funds they are assigned. The simulation asks students to consider:

Should public funds be used to finance political campaigns?

How would using tax dollars to pay for campaigns effect:

- ❖ The diversity of candidates
- ❖ The creation of useful public policy
- ❖ The number of Congressional seats running unopposed

Goal: The goal is to reach the maximum number of voters using the money in the campaign fund. To continue in the race the candidate must reach a certain number of voters per round, or else he/she must drop out.

Directions:

1. Ask for ten student volunteers. Give each student a role card and ask them to select a campaign manager. The role card will contain the amount of funding their campaign has to spend in the election. Distribute the Campaign Financial Record sheet to the campaign manager. The campaign manager will help the candidate to make decisions and keep financial records for the campaign.
2. Assign a student to play the role of Board of Electors representative. He/she will record the registration of the candidates and keep track of donations.
3. Assign students to play the role of private firms that provide services to the candidates. You will need a Radio Station General Manager, Television Station Program Director, an Advertising Director, a Website provider, and a Promotions Provider. Give each their role card and have them read their job descriptions.
4. Once all of the roles have been assigned explain the goal of the game to the students. The candidates will have three rounds of five minutes each to purchase tools to help them reach voters in the election. During the first round they must register and pay a fee to the Board of Electors to run for office. Candidates should do all they can to reach the most voters in each round which means they will circulate around the room to the vendors and buy exposure.
5. Place the following information on the board or overhead so that students know how they can spend their money.



| Expenditure | Cost | Number of Voters Reached |
|-----------------------------|---|--------------------------|
| Registration Fee | \$5,000 | n/a |
| Radio Advertisement | Drivetime- \$100,000 Other times-\$1,000 | 10,000 1,000 |
| Television Advertisement | Primetime- \$800,000 Other- \$400,000 | 100,000 50,000 |
| Billboard and Newspaper Ads | \$300,000 | 25,000 |
| Website Services | \$50,000 | 8,000 |
| Promotional Items | \$50,000 | 10,000 |

6. Prior to the first round, give the team a minute or two to plan their campaign strategy. Candidates and Campaign managers must approach the Board of Electors and the vendors to begin their campaigns. All participants must record their transactions on their charts. Begin the round of five minutes.
7. At the end of five minutes end the campaign. Ask the campaigns:
 - ❖ Who reached 200,000 constituents or voters? Those teams that don't raise their hand will have to drop out of the election; it may be a good number of them.
 - ❖ Candidates who drop out may endorse another candidate and donate their leftover campaign funds to another campaign. Allow students a few minutes to turn over their funds to another candidate.
8. Conclude round one with the following debrief questions:
 - ❖ Why were some campaigns successful? Unsuccessful?
 - ❖ What kind of candidates are out of the race? In the race?
 - ❖ Of those who were eliminated, how did you choose whom to endorse?Write the number of teams remaining on the overhead.
I.e. / Round 1- 5 teams
Round 2- 3 teams
Round 3- 2 teams
Round 4- 10 teams
9. Conduct a second round with the remaining students. Campaigns may use the remaining funds and any donations from other campaigns. At the end of round 2 inform the campaigns that any campaign that hasn't reached 500,000 voters is eliminated. They may endorse another candidate and give them their funds. Debrief the round with the following questions:
 - ❖ What do you notice about the candidates who are remaining?
 - ❖ How does this affect voters in the upcoming election?

10. Conduct a third round with the remaining students- who will be few. At the end of the round ask the remaining campaigns how many voters they were able to reach?

Debrief the round by discussing the following:

- ❖ Winning team, can you describe what advantages you had that allowed your campaign to be successful?
- ❖ Would the voter benefit by having more candidate choices? Why or why not?
- ❖ What do you think happens to the diversity- cultural, socio-economic- of candidates in this campaign?
- ❖ Are the candidates remaining representative of the electorate as a whole? What does this mean for our democracy?
- ❖ Based on the simulation, can we make any assumptions about public policy created by the winner of the election?
- ❖ How might the system be changed to allow more individuals to run for public office?

11. Conduct a new race where all of the candidates receive \$2,000,000. They must reach 200,000 voters by the end of the round (five minutes.) At the end of the round debrief with the following questions:

- ❖ How many teams are remaining?
- ❖ What made this race different from the previous rounds?
- ❖ What do you notice about the number of candidates remaining?
- ❖ Do you think it would be better if elections were run with tax dollars? Or if there were caps on the amount a candidate could spend to run for office? Explain.

- To make round 4 more authentic you can add rules restricting the use of campaign money such as:
 - Restrict the amount of prime time advertising a candidate may use
 - Requiring candidates to report all spending to the Board of Electors



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| <p><i>Cash T. Wells</i> Budget: \$15,000,000</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Occupation: Former oil tycoon from Dallas, TX• Married 3 times with 5 children and 17 grandchildren.• Attended Yale University with a degree in business.• Top Campaign Issues: Increased foreign trade and family values | <p><i>Anastasia Lancome</i> Budget: \$15,000,000</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Occupation: Former CEO of a perfume corporation• Widowed, engaged to the Governor of Idaho• Left company after rumors of testing cosmetics on animals• Top Campaign Issues: Simplifying the tax code and environmental protection |
| <p><i>Bradley "B-Rad" Williamson</i> Budget: \$10,000,000</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Occupation: Recent Harvard Law grad, heir to a real estate fortune• First campaign since unsuccessful run for City Council• Top Campaign Issues: Abolishing estate tax• Owns and operates a top-notch law firm in Boston | <p><i>Frank Justice</i> Budget: \$10,000,000</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Occupation: Corporate Lawyer• Married with 2 kids and a Labrador retriever• Top Campaign Issues: Universal health care and expanding the National Endowment for the Arts• Has been active in the Sierra Club |



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| <p><i>Edward M. Page</i> Budget: \$5,000,000</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Occupation: Former mayor of New Haven, CT and owner of local bookstore chain• Divorced with 1 son• Studied Politics and graduated <i>Summa Cum Laude</i> from Yale• Top Campaign Issues: Ending gang violence and reduce government restriction on big business | <p><i>Dr. Rebecca Brazier</i> Budget: \$5,000,000</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Occupation: Surgeon• Married to high school sweetheart with 4 kids• Worked to put herself through medical school.• Top Campaign Issues: Increasing childhood literacy and restricting malpractice suits |
| <p><i>Gen. Lucas Wiley</i> Budget: \$1,000,000</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Occupation: Retired Air Force general and decorated Vietnam veteran• Married for 52 years with 3 kids and 12 grandchildren• Recipient of the Air Force Cross for an “extraordinary act of heroism” during the Vietnam War• Top Campaign Issues: Increased U.S. involvement in Iraq and Afghanistan and easier access to student loans | <p><i>Charles “Chaz” Richards</i> Budget: \$1,000,000</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Occupation: Police Chief• Recently married• Has served the community for over twenty years• Involved in the Police Athletic League supervising after-school sports for children• Top Campaign Issues: Reducing crime and developing energy and fuel alternatives |
| <p><i>Dr. Lisa Morrison</i> Budget: \$500,000</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Occupation: Professor at a local community college• Married• Has taught political science for ten years.• Top Campaign Issues: Reform “No Child Left Behind” and government ethics reform | <p><i>McDonald</i> Budget: \$500,000</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Occupation: Farmer• Married with 6 children and 23 grandchildren• Has served as city council member, county treasurer, and dog catcher• Top Campaign Issues: Subsidize ethanol uses and technology and increased federal education funding |



Registration Sheet

Candidate:

Campaign Manager:

Budget: \$ _____ Registration Fee (REQUIRED): Paid Not Paid

I agree to run a fair campaign in which I stay within my budget and report all of my expenses to the Board of Electors Secretary for approval. If the Board of Electors Secretary deems this campaign ineligible to continue to the next round, I will respectfully retire from the campaign.

Signed: _____
Candidate

Signed: _____
Campaign Manager

Signed: _____
Board of Electors Secretary

Registration Sheet

Candidate:

Campaign Manager:

Budget: \$ _____ Registration Fee (REQUIRED): Paid Not Paid

I agree to run a fair campaign in which I stay within my budget and report all of my expenses to the Board of Electors Secretary for approval. If the Board of Electors Secretary deems this campaign ineligible to continue to the next round, I will respectfully retire from the campaign.

Signed: _____
Candidate

Signed: _____
Campaign Manager

Signed: _____
Secretary Board of Electors

Vendor Sales Record Sheet

| Round | Candidate's | Type of | Cost | # of |
|-------|-------------|---------|------|------|
|-------|-------------|---------|------|------|



Campaign Record

Candidate's Name: _____

Campaign Manager: _____

Campaign Budget: _____

| Round | Purchased | Cost | Voters reached |
|-------|-----------|------|----------------|
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Round 1 Total voters reached: _____

Money Remaining: _____

Endorsement: _____

| Round | Purchased | Cost | Voters reached |
|-------|-----------|------|----------------|
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Round 2 Total voters reached: _____

Money Remaining: _____

Endorsement: _____



| Round | Purchased | Cost | Voters reached |
|-------|-----------|------|----------------|
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Round 3 total voters reached: _____

Money Remaining: _____







Endorsement: _____



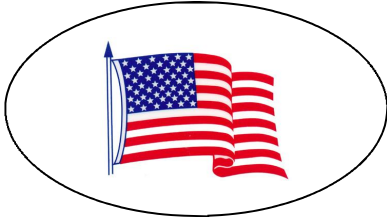
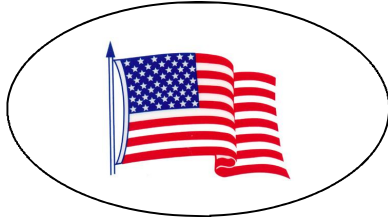
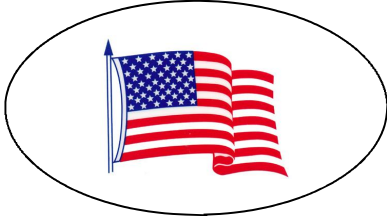
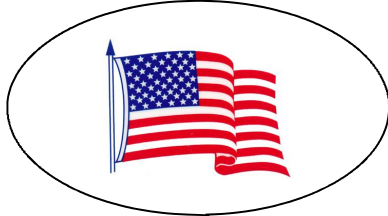
| Round | Purchased | Cost | Voters reached |
|-------|-----------|------|----------------|
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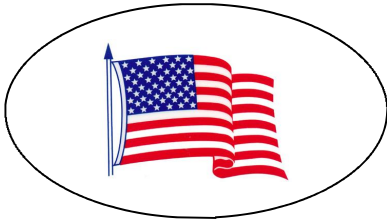
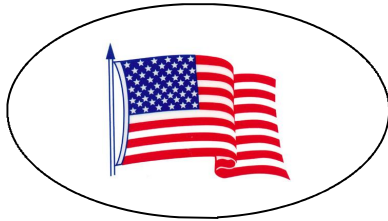
Round 4 Total voters reached: _____

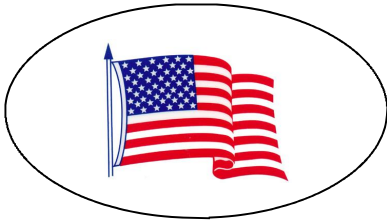
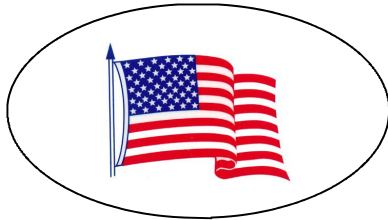
Money Remaining: _____

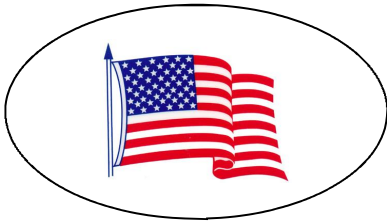
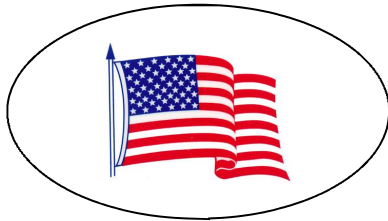
Endorsement: _____

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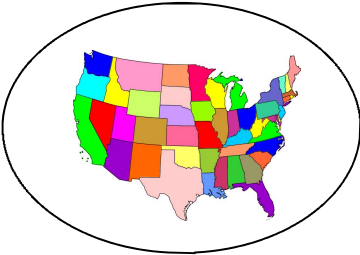
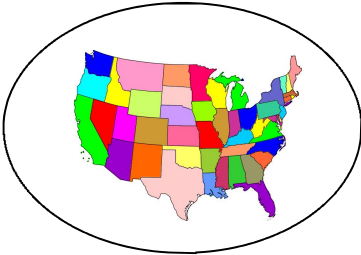
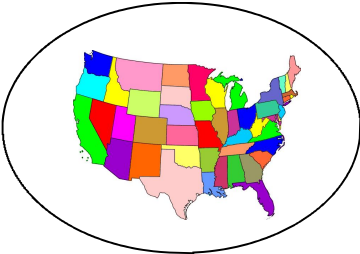
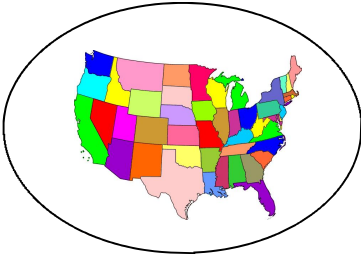
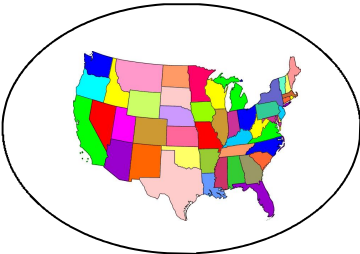
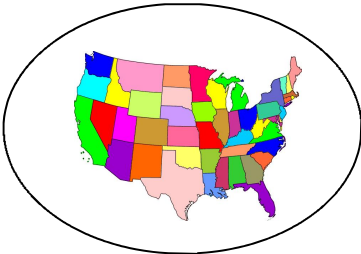


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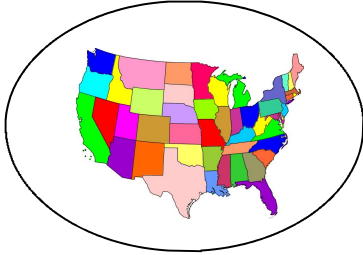


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\$10,000

Youth Leadership Initiative

\$10,000



\$10,000

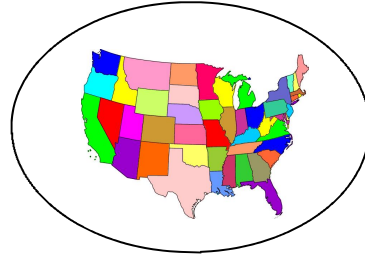
Campaign Bucks

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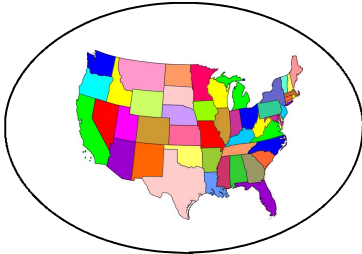
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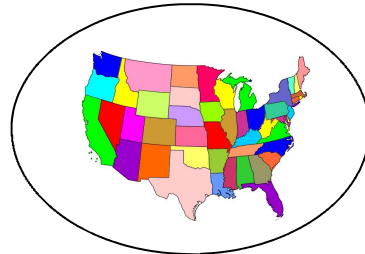
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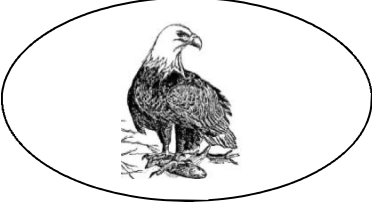
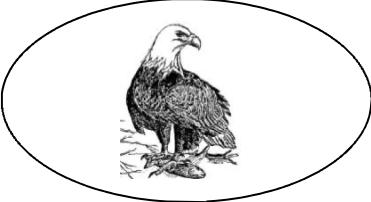

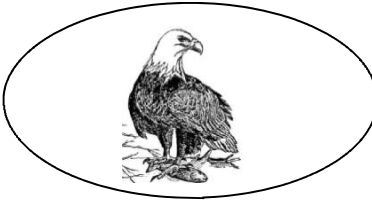
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\$10,000

Campaign Bucks

\$10,000

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Article A: Articles on Public Financing**CLEAN ELECTIONS**

October 30, 2002

TED ROBBINS: Matt Salmon is a politician who raises money the old-fashioned way, he asks for it.

MATT SALMON: That's why you're here today. You voluntarily came, to contribute to my campaign.

TED ROBBINS: Salmon is the Republican candidate for governor of Arizona. A former Congressman, he is running a traditional campaign, holding on average one fundraiser every other evening.

SPOKESPERSON: Perfect.

TED ROBBINS: This one at a phoenix home is with Sportsman for Salmon, a hunting and fishing group.

SPOKESMAN: Are you a member of the NRA?

SPOKESMAN: I am. I am.

TED ROBBINS: Salmon's opponent, Janet Napolitano, spends no time fundraising, just campaigning.

JANET NAPOLITANO: What do you think are the key challenges you're confronting right now, and how can the governor help?

TED ROBBINS: This is a meeting with school superintendents from around the state. Napolitano is the Democratic candidate for governor, and the state's current attorney general. She is running under Arizona's clean election law.

Once candidates choose to run so-called "clean" campaigns, they are forbidden from fundraising. Arizona's voters passed the Citizens Clean Elections Act four years ago, following a decade of political scandal, including one governor who was impeached, and another who resigned following a felony fraud conviction. Arizona is one of four states with clean elections laws; more than 30 states and cities are considering them. The law's intent seems simple, to lessen the influence on candidates of big money and special interest by publicly funding campaigns. But so-called clean elections candidates still need to find donors to qualify; small donors, and lots of them.



JANET NAPOLITANO: The bookkeeping: You're collecting \$4,000 five dollar contributions. You have a form in triplicate...

TED ROBBINS: A candidate for governor must collect 4,000 contributions of five dollars each, and submit this form for each one.

JANET NAPOLITANO: The overwhelming majority of our five dollar contributions came from two sources: One is people who had given to me in the past, and I wrote all of my previous donors and asked if they could give five dollars and fill out the form; and the second was a series of house parties all around Arizona, but that's also a way to start campaigning and getting your message out.

TED ROBBINS: Napolitano says running this clean campaign has been easier than her previous one.

JANET NAPOLITANO: Well, I campaign... when I ran for attorney general the old-fashioned way, where you basically spend two-thirds of your time raising money. And I will tell you, now I get to spend my time out actually talking with voters, as opposed to raising money. It's just is a different dynamic altogether.

TED ROBBINS: Matt Salmon also spends plenty of time with voters. Here he attends a candidate forum for business owners.

MATT SALMON: I will not raise taxes.

TED ROBBINS: Salmon says he chose to run a traditional campaign because he opposes the principle of public campaign funding.

MATT SALMON: The reason that I decided not to take... to participate in this government giveaway of tax dollars for campaigning, was really because I believe that it's unconstitutional for a taxpayer to fund political speech they disagree with.

TED ROBBINS: The Arizona Supreme Court recently ruled that the Clean Elections Act is constitutional. The court said taxpayers frequently pay for speech they may not agree with. Taxpayers pay all state legislators' salaries, for instance, regardless of whom they voted for. Here's where money for Arizona's clean elections comes from: A voluntary check-off on the state income tax form, and a 10% surcharge on criminal and civil fines, largely traffic tickets, which account for about two-thirds of the funding. And here's how the money is distributed: For the governor's race, so-called "clean candidates" get a maximum of \$1.8 million. The first \$600,000 comes right off the bat. The rest of the money is matched dollar for dollar if, and when, a traditionally-funded opponent raises more than the \$600,000 threshold. In the last month of the campaign, traditional candidates must report contributions daily.

SPOKESPERSON: Great, that's it. We will target for this event.



SPOKESMAN: We thank you for being here and supporting our campaign for Arizona's future.

TED ROBBINS: When President Bush came to phoenix to campaign for matt salmon at a \$700-a-plate fundraiser, Salmon passed the threshold, and Napolitano got matching funds.

JANET NAPOLITANO: I was very grateful the President came to campaign for Matt. (Laughter) in fact, I told Matt, I said, "let me sell tickets, come on," you know, "this is great."

TED ROBBINS: Salmon grouses that Napolitano got more public money just because he raised more private money.

MATT SALMON: We raised several hundred thousand dollars but had to subtract from that the cost of the invitations, the cost of the dinners that we paid for. So if we make several hundred thousand, but we have to pay \$50,000 in expenses, my opponents get that extra \$50,000 as well, and I just don't see the fairness in that.

JANET NAPOLITANO: Matt chose to run the old- fashioned way, and raise money primarily from special interest. And that was his choice. Everybody knew the rules going into this election cycle. We made our choice; I'm happy with it.

TED ROBBINS: But in the long run, Salmon can raise and spend as much money as he wants. Campaign aides say they hope to raise at least \$2 million.

SPOKESPERSON: Present attorney general Janet Napolitano...

JANET NAPOLITANO: Hey, Burt. How are you?

TED ROBBINS: Napolitano is limited to running her campaign on the \$1.8 million public money maximum.

COMMERCIAL: It's time for new leadership and honest change in Arizona.

TED ROBBINS: So far, both major party candidates have had ample funds for costly TV ads.

COMMERCIAL: ...Arizona is losing jobs. In Congress, I cut wasteful spending, apply for middle- class tax relief, help pass a balanced budget.

COMMERCIAL: There is a difference. As our attorney general, Janet Napolitano, took on Qwest to stop the fraudulent billing of Arizona customers. But Matt Salmon was a paid lobbyist for Qwest-- even while running for governor.

TED ROBBINS: he clean elections law regulates only funding, not speech, so Napolitano can run ads, like this one, attacking her opponent. The real question may be whether the law



is accomplishing its goal, whether it reduces the influence of special interests and big money in government.

SPOKESPERSON: Right, right.

TED ROBBINS: Darcy Olson says it doesn't. She heads the conservative Goldwater Institute, based in Phoenix. The institute studied the effect of the clean elections law on legislative voting records.

DARCY OLSEN, Goldwater Institute: You can predict along party lines whether they vote for the legislature favored by the Sierra Club or the National Rifle Association or any number of these groups, but it is the party ideology, which is correlated to that, and there is no relationship at all to how they finance their campaigns.

SPOKESPERSON: What's the group that you're meeting with tomorrow in California?

TED ROBBINS: Cecelia Martinez heads the Clean Elections Institute, a group that advocates for the law. Martinez says legislators who won using public funds tell her the law does have an effect.

CECELIA MARTINEZ, Clean Elections Institute: And I heard from one candidate who said to me, "you know, one of my colleagues has a debt of \$10,000," and a lobbyist said, "I can get rid of that debt in one night." And, you know, there is no way that a person, even the best person in the world, can't somehow feel indebted to a lobbyist who says, "I'll take care of your debt in one night."

TED ROBBINS: Arizona's had only one previous election under the Clean Elections Act, and none for statewide offices before this year. So the law's long-term influence is still hard to judge. In the short run, Matt Salmon keeps collecting checks, knowing Janet Napolitano is keeping pace with public money, but hoping he can raise more than her limit. And money could make the difference.

SPOKESPERSON: I'm on your team.

TEDD ROBBINS: Most polls say the race is still a tossup.

http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/politics/july-dec02/arizona_10-30.html

Transcript from NewsHour with Jim Lehrer

Article B: Articles on Public Financing**Clean Money Campaign Reform**

This selection was excerpted from www.publiccampaign.org.

Special interest money smothered Washington in the 1996 elections, shattering all the records for fundraising in the contest for the presidency. Since that election, the public has been bombarded with revelations about the flagrant abuse of loopholes, systematic influence-peddling, and political favors granted to special interests in Washington and state capitals across the country. Nevertheless, even as voters clambered for change (and won some victories at the state level), the U.S. Congress failed repeatedly to act on even modest reform proposals.

Then came the 1998 elections, which broke the billion-dollar mark even as fewer candidates ventured forth to run for office. The political parties championed more millionaire candidates who could finance their own campaigns. More new tactics emerged for getting around campaign finance laws, such as issue advertising, on which an estimated \$275 million was spent during the 1998 cycle. By mid-1999, it was clear that fundraising for the 2000 races was over the top. One presidential frontrunner had already amassed so much private cash that he decided to ignore the partial public funding system so that he wouldn't have to bother with spending limits. House incumbents took in 47 percent more than had in a comparable period before the 1998 elections; even Senators who weren't up for re-election were fundraising heavily. Huge, unregulated soft money contributions from corporations, unions and individuals continued on, unfettered. Analysts projected that by November 2000 soft money totals would top \$500 million. Overall campaign spending could hit \$3 billion.

Media coverage of individual scandals focuses public attention on possible illegalities, but the bigger scandal is that so much of the money changing hands is completely legal. What President Lyndon Johnson observed some 30 years ago is still true today: the system is more loophole than law. It is clear that the system of laws governing campaign financing has been rendered meaningless and requires fundamental changes that will provide new options for candidates.

While Congress and most state legislatures appear far from any consensus on the problem, much less a solution, the voters are far ahead of the politicians. In November 1996, in Maine, they approved a Clean Money Campaign Reform initiative, by a 56 to 44 percent margin, that does something that no state or federal legislation had ever done. It offers full public financing to candidates for state office who reject special-interest contributions and agree to campaign spending limits. Those who discounted the Maine law as a one-state wonder were proved dramatically wrong in the next two years. In June 1997, the Vermont legislature voted overwhelmingly to create such a system for their state. In November 1998, voters in both Arizona and Massachusetts adopted new Clean Money systems via ballot initiatives.

The Problem



Voters say:

- Campaigns are too expensive;
- Special interests have too much influence;
- Good candidates without money or connections to special interests don't have a fair chance of competing for office; and,
- Politicians spend too much time raising campaign money instead of devoting their full energies to the duties of public office.

But voters aren't the only ones who are disgusted with the current system -- even lawmakers are getting fed up with it. In fact, some elected officials are so tired of the money chase that they are leaving politics. When Senator Frank Lautenberg (D-N.J.) announced he would not run again in 2000 he said, "I do not want to sit there all these hours of each day asking for money when in fact there is good solid work to be done. It would distract me from the job I was sent to Washington to do." As experienced politicians and gifted potential candidates chose not to run rather than face the arduous task of raising this much money, we will experience a loss of the best leadership. That is, unless we can muster the national will to pass Clean Money reforms.

Clean Money Campaign Reform addresses the most serious problems that concern voters and lawmakers:

| Problem | CMCR Solution |
|--|---|
| Campaigns are too expensive | Provides constitutionally acceptable spending limits |
| Too much special-interest influence | Participating candidates do not take special interest money |
| Candidates and lawmakers spend too much time chasing money | Eliminates need for fundraising |
| Good people don't have a fair chance to compete | Provides a financially level playing field |
| Too many loopholes | Comprehensive package tightens loopholes |

Student Resource

Article C: Articles on Public Financing

Clean Money Campaign Reform: The Most Comprehensive Solution



The success of the Maine, Massachusetts, and Arizona ballot initiatives has given greater energy and focus to campaign finance reform efforts in more than a dozen states, including Missouri, Oregon, Michigan, and Idaho. In much the same way, the passage of the "Vermont Campaign Option" by the Vermont legislature in June 1997 has since inspired state legislators around the country to come out in support for such reforms in such places as Connecticut, New Mexico, North Carolina, and Wisconsin. It has also galvanized federal lawmakers to introduce CMCR bills in the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives.

CMCR is strictly voluntary, in keeping with Supreme Court rulings. While no two CMCR bills are exactly the same, this approach sets up an alternate system that provides strong incentives for candidates to participate — they receive a set amount of Clean Money from a publicly financed fund if they agree to reject private money and limit their spending. Clean Money Campaign Reform represents the most comprehensive and far-reaching approach to election finance.

Clean Money Campaign Reform is a package of measures that:

- gives candidates the option to reject private contributions if they agree to participate in the CMCR system,
- reduces campaign spending,
- protects candidates' integrity and the integrity of the lawmaking process,

- bans the use of "soft money" to influence elections,
- makes available free or discounted television time for federal candidates and requires candidate debates
- addresses the problem of electioneering efforts that masquerade as non-electoral "issue campaigns,"

- provides additional funding to Clean Money candidates targeted by independent expenditures,
- deepens disclosure and toughens enforcement.

Clean Money Campaign Reform has the greatest potential to bring about change because it:

Allows the greatest reduction in the cost of campaigns — Since it eliminates the need for fundraising expenses and provides (to federal candidates) a substantial amount of free and discounted TV and/or radio time, CMCR requires candidates to spend less on campaigns than under any other reform proposal.

Combines the best candidate support with the most competitive and fair election financing — A CMCR system provides limited but sufficient and equal funding for qualified candidates. Many candidates worry that if an opposing candidate opts out of the Clean Money system and runs on private money, he or she will have an advantage. CMCR recognizes this potential problem and provides additional funding for CMCR candidates if they are outspent by non-participating opponents. Thus, CMCR enables qualified individuals to run for office on a financially level playing field regardless of their personal economic status or access to large contributors.



Ends the money chase and provides stronger enforcement mechanisms — Clean Money Campaign Reform frees candidates and elected officials from the burden of continuous fundraising and thus allows them to spend their time on their real duties. It may, in effect, shorten the length of campaigns and lessen the bombardment of broadcast ads and mass mailings, by limiting the period during which candidates receive their funding. Moreover, it strengthens the enforcement and investigative authority of election commissions.

Holds up under constitutional scrutiny — In recent years, a variety of well-meant reforms have been proposed or passed at the state and local level, such as restricting contributions to \$100 or setting spending limits. Although some of these reforms address the problem (or at least part of it), they do not withstand the legal challenges inevitably brought by campaign finance reform opponents. In contrast, Clean Money Campaign Reform fits comfortably within constitutional bounds principally because it is an alternate and voluntary system. Candidates choose to participate and thus choose to agree by such provisions as the spending limits.

How Clean Money Campaign Reform Works

The CMCR approach is designed to provide a clear alternative to the current system of raising and spending largely special-interest money to finance election campaigns. It allows qualified candidates to run for public office without compromising their independence, since they won't have to ask for money from those with a vested interest in public policy. The system is completely voluntary and candidates who do not wish to participate are able to raise and spend private money for their campaigns, as they do today.

Qualification — Candidates first must meet ballot access requirements, and then must meet the eligibility threshold for Clean Money funding. Most CMCR proposals require candidates to collect, during a pre-defined qualifying period, a prescribed number of signatures and \$5 qualifying contributions from registered voters in their state or district. To cover minor costs during the qualifying period, candidates are permitted to raise a limited amount of seed money from private sources in amounts not exceeding \$100 per contributor.

Primary funding — Candidates who meet CMCR requirements and agree not to raise or spend private money during the primary and general election campaign periods receive a set amount of money from the Clean Money fund. Federal candidates also receive a prescribed amount of free and discounted TV and/or radio time.

General election funding — Candidates who win their party primaries and qualifying independent candidates who agree to the voluntary restrictions receive a set amount of general election funding from the Clean Money fund, as well as additional free and discounted TV and/or radio time.

Non-participating candidates and independent expenditures — In order to maintain a financially level playing field, Clean Money candidates who are outspent by privately financed opponents, or targeted by independent expenditures, are entitled to a limited amount of matching funds.



Who Supports Clean Money Campaign Reform?

The answer, in brief, is: a range of people cutting across political, social, ethnic, and economic lines. Conservative political analyst Arianna Huffington calls Clean Money Campaign Reform "a much-needed response to the takeover of our political system by special interests that are not only driving Mack trucks through the loopholes in the existing laws, but also determining much of our national agenda." Antonia Hernandez, executive director of the Mexican American Legal Defense and Education Fund, notes the potential for bringing more people back into the system. "Our current system of financing political campaigns excludes many people, including Latinos, from fully participating in the political process because they do not have vast financial resources," says Hernandez. "Clean Money Campaign Reform will help to change this, and enhance democracy for all of us."

Dr. Gwen Patton, an African-American scholar and voting rights advocate, also sees reform as essential in giving people a real choice at the voting booth. "What's the use of voting if there's no one to vote for? Getting private money out of politics is the unfinished business of the voting rights movement."

One reflection of the breadth of support for the Clean Money approach is found in Public Campaign's National Advisory Board. More than 100 individuals have signed on to the board as a show of their support for this far-reaching reform. They include 27 former members of Congress (12 Republicans and 15 Democrats), six former presidential candidates, six former lieutenant governors, and a long list of high-profile academics, clergy, businesspeople, legal scholars, political activists, and civil rights leaders.

The most important show of support, however, is from the public. Clean Money Campaign Reform has never been voted down in a ballot initiative. In fact, voters have always given their resounding approval, with three wins in as many years in state ballot initiatives. Evidence of widespread public support also comes from a number of opinion polls. A Mellman Group survey, carried out in August 1996 for the Center for Responsive Politics, found that 68 percent of Americans support a system modeled after the Maine proposal. Gallup's October 1996 poll reported that 64 percent of voters nationwide support a system in which the "federal government provides a fixed amount of money for the election campaigns of candidates for Congress ... and ... all private contributions [are] prohibited."

The kind of sentiment is equally apparent in the states. August 1999 polling of likely caucus participants in Iowa showed that clear majorities from both parties would support campaign finance reform as extensive as Clean Money Campaign Reform (72 percent of Democrats, 63 percent of Republicans). A September 1998 poll in eight states found similarly stunning voter support for Clean Money. At least 60 percent of voters and as many as 74 percent supported a Clean Money system (74 percent in New Hampshire, 70 percent in Missouri, 66 percent in North Carolina, 66 percent in Ohio, 65 percent in New York, 64 percent in Mississippi, 63 percent in Colorado and 60 percent in Indiana). Support was equally strong among Democrats, Republicans, and Independents.



Clean Money Campaign Reform appeals to so many people because they know they are the losers under the current system. "The American people instinctively know that when big money rules, ordinary voters are left out in the cold," says John Anderson, former congressman and presidential candidate, and a founding co-chair of Public Campaign's National Advisory Board. "Our mission is nothing less than to restore our faith in government and to strengthen our national institutions so that they may endure and be passed on in good health to our children."

Article D: Articles on Public Financing

April 6, 2005

Tax Dollars Have No Place In Political Campaigns

By Mark Brnovich |

Connecticut should not follow the lead of Arizona and allow politicians' campaigns to be funded by taxpayers.

Connecticut Senate President Pro Tem Donald E. Williams Jr. recently declared that "public financing is the cornerstone of election reform." Thomas Jefferson disagrees. So do I.

It's unfortunate to hear so many elected officials react to recent political scandals in Connecticut by calling for taxpayers to fund political campaigns. One state that has been considered a model for such reform is Arizona. Speaking from firsthand experience, I must warn residents of Connecticut: Moving from a traditional system of financing campaigns to a system where tax dollars pay for political campaigns doesn't deliver the laudable goals that proponents of such a system promise.

Connecticut taxpayers should ask themselves if their tax dollars should be used for political welfare. During Arizona's 2002 election cycle, nearly \$13 million was given to Arizona politicians to finance their political campaigns. In Connecticut, estimates range between \$10 million and \$20 million per year for taxpayers to pay for politicians' campaigns.

Should taxpayers really have to subsidize political candidates or ideas with which they may disagree? According to Thomas Jefferson, "to compel a man to furnish contributions of money for the propagation of opinions which he disbelieves is sinful and tyrannical."

Over the past several years, Arizona politicians have spent taxpayer money in increasingly outlandish ways. Three Libertarian Party candidates hosted voter-registration parties at chic night clubs and upscale restaurants, often outside of their district. One candidate paid thousands of dollars to her mother to help on her campaign. Of course, tax revenues are often misused, so why would we expect taxpayer-funded political campaigns to be any different?

Further, statistics show that Arizona's system, known as Clean Elections, has not significantly affected voter participation. A 2003 Government Accounting Office study of the Arizona campaign finance system found that the system's goal of increasing voter participation was not achieved. The GAO concluded that voter turnout in Arizona's 2000 election "did not significantly differ from prior presidential election years," when campaigns were not taxpayer-subsidized.

Likewise, taxpayer-funded political campaigns have not significantly increased candidate participation. In 1998, the last election before the start of Arizona's taxpayer-funded system,



there were 199 legislative candidates. That total has been exceeded just once in the past three statewide elections. In 2004, there were fewer legislative candidates than in 2002.

Campaign reform advocates in Arizona also claim that Arizona's Clean Elections system increases the number of female political candidates. The numbers show otherwise. In 1998, there were 31 female candidates for the Arizona legislature. That total has not been matched since implementation of the taxpayer-financed system. Ironically, Arizona made national news in 1998 when the five top statewide elected officials were all female. Currently, there are only two.

Despite proponents' claims to the contrary, a taxpayer-financed political system will not remove unwanted influences or special interest groups. In Arizona, unions and other special interests still flex their muscles by acquiring the thousands of necessary qualifying signatures and \$5 contributions for politicians seeking statewide office. However, under the Clean Elections system, such political back-scratching does not appear in any finance report and is not subject to public scrutiny.

Most important, a 2001 Goldwater Institute analysis of legislative voting records shows that regardless of the source of individual campaign contributions, voting still breaks down along party lines. When the debate about whether taxpayers should finance political campaigns heats up this legislative session, Connecticut voters should ask whether the millions of dollars that will be used by politicians to fund political campaigns could be better spent elsewhere.

Mark Brnovich is director of the Goldwater Institute's Center for Constitutional Government.

Article E: Articles on Public Financing

Keeping elections clean

This selection was excerpted from CNN, dated October 11, 2004.

(CNN) -- In addition to choosing a U.S. president, the 2004 election is a referendum on the success of the McCain-Feingold reforms, otherwise known as the Bipartisan Campaign Finance Act of 2002.

But as campaign finance reforms have faced their first test on a federal level, several states have an established record of running elections under even broader reforms.

Voters in Arizona and Maine approved "Clean Elections" laws in the late 1990s, allowing candidates for state-level offices to receive full public funding for their campaigns. The goal of these systems is to give more average citizens a political voice and allow them to forgo private fund-raising and its negative associations with special interest groups.

To qualify for public funding, a candidate would have to agree not to raise private funds, to limit spending of public funds and to prove he is not a fringe candidate by raising a number of very small (often \$5) donations. If outspent by a privately funded opponent, a "clean" candidate would receive matching public funds.

Maine and Arizona had a chance to test their systems in 2002, proving that candidates can run successful campaigns on full public spending. In that year, 39 of Arizona's elected candidates were "clean" -- 22 Republicans and 17 Democrats. The state's voters elected the first governor with no financial ties to special interests, Democratic Gov. Janet Napolitano. And voter turnout went up 10 percent. In Maine, three-quarters of the state Senate and half of the state House are elected officials who received public funding.

Four other states -- New Jersey, New Mexico, North Carolina and Vermont -- have adopted limited versions of the Clean Elections program, providing funding for certain state races. West Virginia and Minnesota have passed Clean Elections bills in committees. And similar bills stand a good chance of passing in Connecticut and Hawaii, said Nick Nyhart, executive director of Public Campaign, a campaign-finance reform organization.

In Connecticut, outrage over the finance scandals clouding former Gov. John Rowland is driving public interest in the reforms, Nyhart said. A similar phenomenon is unfolding among citizens in California, which also has a Clean Elections bill in play. Former Gov. Gray Davis, despite a lack of personal wealth, "really learned the fund-raising game," Nyhart said. "If you wanted to have



the governor's backing, you needed to make campaign contributions in a big way. I think that's part of the reason he was recalled: not standing for anything but the need to raise money."

Some of the public funds for Clean Elections candidates come from check boxes on state income tax returns. Other funding comes from surcharges on civil and criminal fines, as in Arizona, and from the state General Fund, as in Maine. Opponents of Clean Elections laws argue that this is a waste of taxpayer money, particularly as states struggle with budget deficits.

Earlier this year, a group called No Taxpayer Money for Politicians mounted an effort to persuade voters to overturn Arizona's Clean Elections law. The issue went to the Arizona Supreme Court, which struck down the counter-initiative. It will not be on the November 2 ballot. Another group filed a lawsuit asking the state to bar the payment of matching funds to public candidates, claiming the payments were unconstitutional because they chilled free-speech rights. A superior court judge refused to stop the payments.

"It's pretty hard to make the argument that public financing chills speech," Nyhart said. "Our law gives speech to people who don't have their own money or don't want to raise it from special interests. We actually expand speech."

Proponents hope to move beyond McCain-Feingold to bring Arizona and Maine's campaign-finance reforms to a national level. The Clean Money, Clean Elections Act, a model bill put before the House and Senate last year, will likely be reintroduced next year, Nyhart said. "I suspect that when you combine the success at the state level with an increasingly money-dominated federal system, the attractiveness of the bill will grow."

Article F: Articles on Public Financing

More Money, No Problem

The death of taxpayer-financed campaigns

David Weigel | May 2007

The first time I covered Sen. John McCain (R-Ariz.) he was enjoying the raucous cheers of liberal college students. It was 2001, and McCain and Sen. Russell Feingold (D-Wis.)-the anti-war Sam Gamgee to McCain's Frodo Baggins-were on a stumping tour of universities to drum up support for their eponymous campaign finance reform law. Almost none of the students they encountered at Northwestern University had voted for George W. Bush. Almost all of them were in love with John McCain.

"Russ and I are committed to one fundamental principle," McCain promised. "Take the government out of the hands of special interests, and give it back to the people." He argued that banning unlimited "soft money" donations -contributions for "party-building" activities, which weren't covered by campaign finance laws-would prompt politicians to ditch their multimillion-dollar diving sessions for barbecues and barn raisings; office seekers would rub elbows with average Americans in Peoria and Biloxi instead of donors in Georgetown and on K Street. "Without soft money," McCain announced, "we'd go back to campaigns as we knew it [sic]."

Less than a year later, McCain and Feingold got rid of soft money as we knew it. The outcome: McCain, the on-and-off front-runner for next year's Republican presidential nomination, has cut back on those small-money barbecues and come crawling to the deep-pocketed donors who helped Bush clobber him in 2000.

In 2004 soft-money donors used Section 527 of the Internal Revenue Code to fund groups that could run TV ads without flouting the restrictions of McCain-Feingold. One such group was Progress for America, which the Federal Election Commission subsequently charged with violating campaign finance restrictions. (Ultimately they were fined \$750,000.) At the time, McCain contributed an amicus curiae brief to the FEC's defense of its ruling. Now he has hired Univision mogul A. Jerrold Perenchio, who gave \$4 million to Progress for America, to co-chair his finance committee.

McCain did something else that shattered the hearts of his former admirers: Like Rudy Giuliani, Mitt Romney, Hillary Clinton, Barack Obama, and John Edwards, he decided to forgo public campaign subsidies. Under this system, established in 1974, each taxpayer can allocate a few dollars of his taxes to a massive campaign pot; candidates can draw on it for matching funds if they agree to caps on their fund raising and their private campaign spending. This is the first year that every leading candidate for the presidency has opted out of the system.

"It's become obsolete," Michael Toner, an FEC commissioner (and former chairman), says of presidential campaign public financing. "This election is basically the end of the old system."

Public financing was never truly popular. Its support hovered in the mid-60s when it started; in polls taken since then it has tumbled into the 20s. Support wavered as fringe candidates like Lyndon LaRouche collected government money to run campaigns that had almost no grassroots support. It was wobbly enough in 2000 that George W. Bush could break the spending limit and experience no blowback stiffer than the wind from a few angry pundits. In February 2007, after Hillary Clinton ditched the system, Rasmussen Reports found 38 percent of voters would be *more* likely to vote for a candidate who turned down public financing, compared to 25 percent who would be less likely.



There's another reason candidates are opting out. The final version of McCain-Feingold included a sweetener for politicians who would lose the benefits of soft money. The maximum contribution an individual could give a candidate, which had been \$1,000 for the primary and another \$1,000 for the general election, was doubled and pegged to rise in each subsequent campaign cycle. In 2008 the limit is \$2,300 for the primary and another \$2,300 in the general election. In other words, candidates can now ask every donor for \$4,600, which makes the potential payoff of \$50 million to \$70 million in public financing seem almost Lilliputian.

Public financing still has its true believers, including a great number of "good government" groups and, in their weak moments, most politicians. In February Barack Obama, the second Democrat to ditch public financing for the 2008 primary, stroked Beltway activists by proposing a cap on spending for the general election. And he mulled giving public financing one last shake after the primary, as did McCain a few weeks later. Campaign finance reform boosters were quick to offer praise, though it had a certain fatalistic quality.

"What Obama did was promising," says Mary Boyle of Common Cause, one of the most muscular pro-public financing groups. "But that said, the system is broken. When one candidate makes the intention to drop out of it and no longer has to abide by the restrictions, the ball starts rolling downhill."

That's the standard reaction to the death of public financing. Taking the money out of campaigns is supposed to clean up politics; the fact that 2008 might become the first \$1 billion presidential campaign is considered a sign of a broken democracy. In late February former Iowa Gov. Tom Vilsack dropped out of the Democrats' race and made a glum tour of the pundit circuit, bemoaning how he had to end his quest for a promotion because he couldn't raise money. The implication: An unassuming Midwestern politician who was polling third or fourth in his own state, long before any TV ads started running, deserved as much money as Hillary Clinton. And if taxpayers had to provide that money, so be it.

This is, to put it bluntly, sour grapes. Another governor from a small state, Vermont's Howard Dean, surged far ahead of his 2004 rivals in fund raising simply because the threshold for donations had gone up and the Internet made it inexpensive-almost free, compared to the costs of direct mail or fundraisers-to reach out to donors.

In November 2003, Dean broke a pledge and exited the public financing system for the right to raise more money from donors who were itching to reopen their wallets. And while Dean ultimately lost, other candidates who followed his path have come out on top. Virginia Democrat Jim Webb, who won his Senate race by less than 9,000 votes, raised almost \$900,000 from online donors and defeated the vastly better-funded GOP Sen. George Allen. From the liberal MoveOn.org to the pro-war Victory Caucus, grassroots groups are using the Internet to collate their cash and level the electoral playing field.

The reason groups like Common Cause want all candidates to draw from a trough of taxpayer money is that they consider fund raising an unfair process that corrupts candidates. But if candidates are accountable to the people paying their way in the race, the rise of Dean-style online fund raising means more candidates are appealing to average, small-money donors. Maybe public financing is crumbling because campaigns are becoming *more* democratic. The shift from Eugene McCarthy's millionaire-funded insurgency of 1968 to Howard Dean's small-donor-driven campaign in 2004 suggests that it might be time to adjust our idea of electoral fairness.

"You could argue that presidential fund raising is more inclusive than ever, thanks to the Internet," says Toner, the FEC commissioner. "I think it's for the best." Toner wants to salvage some version of public financing, but he opposes efforts to extend McCain-Feingold's limits to Internet activism. "I want Congress to reform the whole system, but it would be a mistake for reformers to pull the plug on Internet fund raising."

But if the Net is binding voters closer to their candidates, what's the argument for salvaging public financing? If it doesn't work, and if elections don't suffer when it doesn't work, why try to preserve it?



The most important reason: political advantage. "Several years ago, when John McCain wasn't getting huge donations, it served him well to take these reform positions," says Timothy Lee of the Center for Individual Freedom, which opposes public campaign financing. "I don't question his sincerity at the time. But he needs to admit that the system needs to be killed off, or that the Straight Talk Express has taken a U-turn."

David Weigel is an associate editor of Reason.



Identifying the Pros and Cons of Public Financing

Question: **Should political campaigns be financed through tax dollars?**
Should the Constitution be amended to allow publically funded campaigns?

| Know- What Do I already know about this topic? | W- What do I want or need to know to form an opinion on the question? | L- What have I learned about this topic as a result of my research? |
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Based on what I have learned, political campaigns (should/should not) be financed with tax dollars. The following evidence supports my statement...