Clawson, D., Neustadtl, A. & Weller, M. (2003). Dollars and votes, in Miroff et.al., *Debating Democracy* 4th ed. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co.

Imagine the November election is just a few weeks away, and your friend Sally Robeson is seriously considering running for Congress two years from now. This year the incumbent in your district, E. Chauncey DeWitt III, will (again!) be reelected by a substantial margin, but you and Sally hate Chauncey's positions on the issues and are convinced that with the right campaign he can be beaten. Sally is capable, articulate, well informed, respected in the community, politically and socially connected, charming, good at talking to many kinds of people, and highly telegenic. She has invited you and several other politically active friends to meet with her immediately after the election to determine what she would need to do to become a viable candidate. The meeting that takes place covers a host of topics: What are the key issues? On which of these are Sally's stands popular, and on which unpopular? What attacks, and from what quarters, will be launched against her? What individuals or groups can she count on for support? How, why, and where is the incumbent vulnerable? But lurking in the background is the question that cannot be ignored: *Can Sally (with the help of her friends and backers) raise enough money to be a contender?*

This is the *money primary, the first, and, in many instances, the most important round of the contest.* It eliminates more candidates than any other hurdle. Because it eliminates them so early and so quietly, its impact is often unobserved. To make it through, candidates don't have to come in first, but they do need to raise enough money to be credible contenders. Although having the most money is no guarantee of victory, candidates who don't do well in the money primary are no longer serious contenders. . . .

How much is needed? If Sally hopes to win, rather than just put up a good fight, she, you, and the rest of her supporters will need to raise staggering amounts. (At least they are staggering from the perspective of most Americans. . . .) In order to accumulate the *average* amount for major-party congressional candidates in the general election, you will collectively need to raise $4,800 next week. And the week after. And *every* week for the next two years.

But even that is not enough. The average amount includes many candidates who were never "serious"; that is, they didn't raise enough to have a realistic hope of winning. If you and your friends want to raise the average amount spent by a *winning* candidate for the House, you'll have to come up with $6,730 next week and every single week until the election, two years away.[1]

Well, you say, your candidate is hardly average. She is stronger, smarter, more politically appealing, and more viable than the "average" challenger. You think she can win even if she doesn't raise $6,730 a week. Let's use past experience—the results of the 1996 elections—to consider the likelihood of winning for challengers, based on how much money they raised. In 1996 more than 360 House incumbents were running for reelection; only 23 of them were beaten by their challengers. The average successful challenger spent $1,045,361—that is, he or she raised an average of over $10,000 every week for two years. What were the chances of winning without big money? Only one winning challenger spent less than $500,000, 12 spent between a half-a-million and a million dollars, and 10 spent more than a million dollars. Furthermore, 13 of the 23 winning challengers outspent the incumbent. A House challenger who can't raise at least a half-million dollars doesn't have a one percent chance of winning. ...

In the Senate, even more money is needed. Suppose your candidate were going to run for the Senate, and started fundraising immediately after an election, giving her six years to prepare for the next election. How much money would she need to raise each and every week for those *six* years? The average winning Senate candidate raised approximately $15,000 per week.

For presidential candidates, the stakes are, of course, much higher: "The prevailing view is that for a politician to be considered legitimate, he or she must collect at least $20 million by the first of January 2000." Presumably any candidate who does not do so is "illegitimate" and does not belong in the race.[2]

If you collectively decide that the candidate you plan to back will need to raise $7,000 per week (for the House; $15,000 per week for the Senate), how will you do it? Suppose you hold a $10-per-person fundraiser—a barbecue in the park on Memorial Day or Labor Day. Even if 500 people attend, the affair will gross only $5,000, and net considerably less, no matter how cheap the hot dogs and hamburgers. And that takes no account of the problems of persuading 500 people to attend—just notifying them of the event is a major undertaking—or what it would mean to hold such an event every week, not just on Labor Day. In order to get through the money primary, an alternative strategy is needed, so candidates, especially incumbents, increasingly prefer to raise money at "big ticket" events. Selling 10 tickets for a $l,000-per-person fundraiser brings in more than twice as much as the 500-person barbecue in the park.

Who is likely to cough up a thousand bucks to attend a fundraiser? ... A disproportionate number of such contributors are corporate political action committees (PACs), executives, and lobbyists. One typical version of the $l,000-per-person fundraiser is a breakfast: The candidate and 10 to 30 PAC officers and lobbyists from a particular industry (trucking, banking, oil and gas exploration). Even with a lavish breakfast, the candidate's net take is substantial. If enough lobbyists and corporate executives can be persuaded to come, perhaps the candidate could get by on one fundraiser every couple of weeks.

Coming up with the money is a major hassle; even for incumbents, it requires constant effort. *National Journal,* probably the single most authoritative source on the Washington scene, reports that "there is widespread agreement that the congressional money chase has become an unending marathon, as wearying to participants as it is disturbing to spectators," and quoted an aide to a Democratic senator as observing, "During hearings of Senate committees, you can watch senators go to phone booths in the committee rooms to dial for dollars." . . .

Long before the 1996 election, politicians felt that they had no choice: The Senate majority leader reported that "public officials are consumed with the unending pursuit of money to run election campaigns." Senators not only leave committee hearings for the more crucial task of calling people to beg for money. They also chase all over the country, because their reelection is more dependent on meeting rich people two thousand miles from home than on meeting their own constituents. Thomas Daschle, the current Democratic leader in the Senate, reports that, in the two years prior to his election to the Senate, he "flew to California more than 20 times to meet with prospective contributors," going there almost as often as he went to the largest city in his home state of South Dakota. . . .

Not only is it necessary to raise lots of money; it is important—for both incumbents and challengers—to raise it early. Senator Rudy Boschwitz, Republican of Minnesota, was clear about this as a strategy. He spent $6 million getting reelected in 1984, and had raised $1.5 million of it by the beginning of the year, effectively discouraging the most promising Democratic challengers. After the election he wrote, and typed up himself, a secret evaluation of his campaign strategy:

"Nobody in politics (except me!) likes to raise money, so I thought the best way of discouraging the toughest opponents from running was to have a few dollars in the sock. */ believe it worked... . From all forms of fundraising I raised $6 million plus and got 3 or 4 (maybe even 5) stories and cartoons* that irked me," he said. "In retrospect,-I'm glad I had the money. ..."

The Contributors' Perspective

Candidates need money, lots of it, if they are to have any chance of winning. The obvious next question ... is who gives, why, and what they expect for it.

Contributions are made for many different reasons. The candidate's family and friends chip in out of loyalty and affection. Others contribute because they are asked to do so by someone who has done favors for them. People give because they agree with the candidate's stand on the issues, either on a broad ideological basis or on a specific issue. Sometimes these donations are portrayed as a form of voting—people show that they care by putting their money where their mouth is, anyone can contribute, and the money raised reflects the wishes of the people. Even for these contributions, however, if voting with dollars replaces voting at the ballot box, then the votes will be very unequally distributed: the top 1 percent of the population by wealth will have more "votes" than the bottom 90 percent of the population. In the 1996 elections, less than one-fourth of one percent of the population gave contributions of $200 or more to a federal candidate. PACs and large contributors provide most of the money, however; small contributors accounted for under one-third of candidate receipts.

It is not just that contributions come from the well-to-do. Most contributors have a direct material interest in what the government does or does not do. Their contributions, most of them made directly or indirectly by business, provide certain people a form of leverage and "access" not available to the rest of us. The chair of the political action committee at one of the twenty-five largest manufacturing companies in the United States explained to us why his corporation has a PAC:

The PAC gives you access. It makes you a player. These congressmen, in particular, are constantly fundraising. Their elections are very expensive, and getting increasingly expensive each year. So they have an ongoing need for funds. . . .

You know, some congressman has got X number of ergs of energy and here's a person or a company who wants to come see him and give him a thousand dollars, and here's another one who wants to just stop by and say hello. And he only has time to see one. Which one? So the PAC's an attention getter.

So-called soft money, where the amount of the contribution is unlimited, might appear to be an exception: Isn't $100,000 enough to buy a guaranteed outcome? ... It is *not,* at least not in any simple and straightforward way. PAC contributions are primarily for members of Congress; they are for comparatively small amounts, but enough to gain access to individual members of Congress. The individual member, however, has limited power. Soft money donations are best thought of as a way of gaining access to the president, top party leaders, and the executive branch. These individuals are more powerful than ordinary members of Congress, so access to them comes at a higher price. ... It does not—and is not expected to—*guarantee* a quid pro quo. . . .

Why Business?

In business-government relations most attention becomes focused on instances of scandal. The real issue, however, is not one or another scandal or conflict of interest, but rather the *system of* business-government relations, and especially of campaign finance, that offers business so many opportunities to craft loopholes, undermine regulations, and subvert enforcement. . . .

Business and the way it uses money and power . . . subverts the democratic process. This runs counter to the conventional wisdom, which treats all campaign contributions as equally problematic. A "balanced" and "objective" approach would, we are told, condemn both business and labor; each reform that primarily restricts business should be matched by one that restricts labor. We've heard these arguments, thought them over, and rejected them. They assume that what we have now is "balance" and that all changes should reinforce the existing relations of power. We see no reason to accept that as an a priori assumption.

Why are business campaign contributions more of a problem than contributions by labor (or women, or environmentalists)? First, because business contributes far more money. According to a study by the Center for Responsive Politics, in [1996] business outspent labor by an 11 to 1 margin.[3] Most reports about campaign finance give the impression that labor contributes roughly as much as business—a distortion of the reality.

Second, . . . beyond the world of campaign finance, business has far more power than labor, women's groups, or environmentalists.

Third, business uses campaign contributions in a way few other groups do, as part of an "access" process that provides corporations a chance to shape the details of legislation, Grafting loopholes that undercut the stated purpose of the law. Other groups do this on rare occasions; business does so routinely. Businesses are far more likely than other donors to give to *both* sides in a race; nearly all the soft money donors who gave to both sides were corporations. . . .

Fourth, there is a fundamental difference between corporate and labor PAC contributions. That difference is democracy; unions have it, corporations don't. This overwhelmingly important distinction is concealed by almost all public discussion. No one talks about it, no one seems to take it seriously. There is a virtual embargo on any mention of this fact, but it merits serious consideration.

The original legislation ratifying the creation of PACs, passed in 1971 and amended in 1974 after Watergate, intended that corporations and labor unions be treated in parallel fashion. In each case, the organization was permitted a special relationship to the group that democratically controlled it—stockholders in the case of corporations, members in the case of labor unions. The organization was permitted to communicate with those individuals and their families on any issue (including political issues), to conduct registration and get-out-the-vote campaigns, and to ask those people for voluntary contributions to a political action committee.

In the 1975 SUN-PAC decision, the Federal Election Commission, for almost the only time in its existence, took a bold step. In fact, it essentially threw out a key part of the law and then rewrote it, permitting corporations to solicit PAC contributions not just from their stockholders but also from their managerial employees. This had two consequences. First, corporate PACs—but no others—are able to coerce people to contribute. Second, corporate PACs are not, even in theory, democratically controlled. Each of these consequences needs to be examined.

Neither stockholders nor union members can be coerced to contribute— the organization doesn't have power over them, they have power over the organization. Managers, however, can be coerced. As a result, virtually all corporate PAC money comes from employees rather than stockholders. If your boss comes to you and asks for a contribution, saying he or she hopes that all team players will be generous, it's not easy for you, an ambitious young manager, to say no. Some companies apparently do not pressure employees to contribute, but others do. For example, at one company we studied, the head of government relations told us that each year he and the company's lobbyist go to each work unit and hold an employee meeting: "We talk about the PAC and what it means to the company and what it means to them as individuals, and we solicit their membership; if they are members, we solicit an increase in their gift." Then the employees' boss is asked "to get up and say why they are members and why they think it's important for an employee to be a member." The upper-level manager clearly has no confidentiality, which in itself sends a key message to others. A number of coercive elements converge in this solicitation: The meeting is public, employees are to commit themselves then and there in the public meeting, the boss recommends that subordinates contribute, and an impression is probably conveyed that the boss will be evaluated on the basis of his or her employees' participation rate. . .. No one is told they will be fired for failing to contribute, but it seems probable that they will assume their boss will be disappointed and that their contribution or noncontribution will be remembered at promotion time.

The second consequence of the 1975 SUN-PAC decision is even more important. Corporate PACs are *not* democratic. Many corporations have steering committees that vote to decide to whom the PAC will contribute, but the committees are appointed, the corporate hierarchy selects individuals who are expected to take the corporate purpose as their own, and managers know that they will be evaluated on their performance on the committee. As one senior vice president explained: "Policy is made by the top of the company, and it filters down. They tell you what they want, and you do it."

The internal functioning of corporate PACs suggests how they relate to and value democracy. Most aspects of the political system are beyond the *direct* control of corporations, but they *can* determine how their PACs operate and make decisions. As a result, in all but a handful of corporate PACs democratic control is not even a theoretical possibility. . . .

The only corporation that reported having *some* contested elections agreed that, in general: "It is an elected-appointive; it's kind of a pseudo-election I guess is what it amounts to."

We might expect those ideological corporations that stress general principles of support for democracy and the "free" enterprise system to be exceptions to the undemocratic organization of corporate PACs. Not at all. At one corporation that boasted about its wholehearted support of the "free enterprise system," the chair of the PAC Committee matter-of-factly noted: "If our [company] chairman said we are going to have a certain kind of PAC, then we'd have an option of resigning or doing it the way he wanted." . . .

The nondemocratic character of corporate PACs is consistent with the principles guiding the corporation as a whole. Corporations are not run on democratic principles; employees don't vote on corporate leadership or policies. Many corporate executives are dubious about democracy in general. Leonard Silk and David Vogel attended a set of meetings organized by the Conference Board for top executives. They concluded:

While critics of business worry about the atrophy of American democracy, the concern in the nation's boardrooms is precisely the opposite. For an executive, democracy in America is working all too well—*that is the problem.*

Campaign contributions are (part of) the solution to the "problem" of democracy. .. .

Business Is Different

Power, we would argue, is not just the ability to force someone to do something against their will; it is most effective (and least recognized) when it shapes the field of action. Moreover, business's vast resources, influence on the economy, and general legitimacy place it on a different footing from other campaign contributors. Every day a member of Congress accepts a $1,000 donation from a corporate PAC, goes to a committee hearing, proposes "minor" changes in a bill's wording, and has those changes accepted without discussion or examination. The changes "clarify" the language of the bill, legalizing higher levels of pollution for a specific pollutant, or exempting the company from some tax. The media do not report this change and no one speaks against it. On the other hand, if a PAC were formed by Drug Lords for Cocaine Legalization, no member would take their money. If a member introduced a "minor" wording change to make it easier to sell crack without bothersome police interference, the proposed change would attract massive attention, the campaign contribution would be labeled a scandal, the member's political career would be ruined, and the changed wording would not be incorporated into the bill. Drug Lords may make an extreme example, but approximately the same holds true for many groups: At present, equal rights for gays and lesbians could never be a minor and unnoticed addition to a bill with a different purpose.

Even groups with great social legitimacy encounter more opposition and controversy than business faces for proposals that are virtually without public support. One example is the contrast between the largely unopposed commitment of tens or hundreds of billions of dollars for the savings and loan bailout, compared to the sharp debate, close votes, and defeats for the rights of men and women to take *unpaid* parental leaves. The classic term for something non-controversial that everyone must support is "a motherhood issue," and while it costs little to guarantee every woman the right to an unpaid parental leave, this measure nonetheless generated intense scrutiny and controversy—going down to defeat under President Bush, passing under President Clinton, and then again becoming a focus of attack after the 1994 Republican takeover of Congress. Few indeed are the people publicly prepared to defend pollution or tax evasion. Nonetheless, business is routinely able to win pollution exemptions and tax loopholes. . . .

Corporations are unlike other "special interest" groups not only because business has far more resources, but also because of its acceptance and legitimacy. When people feel that "the system" is screwing them, they tend to blame politicians, the government, the media—but rarely business. In terms of campaign finance, while much of the public is outraged at the way money influences elections and public policy, the issue is almost always posed in terms of politicians, what they do or don't do. This is part of a pervasive double standard that largely exempts business from criticism. We, however, believe it is vital to scrutinize business as well. . . .

. . . Corporations are so different, and so dominant, that they exercise a special kind of power, what Antonio Gramsci called hegemony. Hegemony can be regarded as the ultimate example of a field of power that structures what people and groups do. It is sometimes referred to as a worldview, a way of thinking about the world that influences every action, and makes it difficult to even consider alternatives. But in Gramsci's analysis it is much more than this, it is a culture and set of institutions that structure life patterns and coerce a particular way of life. . . .

. . . Today business has enormous power and exercises effective hegemony, even though (perhaps because) this is largely undiscussed and unrecognized. *Politically,* business power today is similar to white treatment of blacks in 1959—business may sincerely deny its power, but many of the groups it exercises power over recognize it, feel dominated, resent this, and fight the power as best they can. At least until very recently, *economically,* business power was more like gender relations in 1959: Virtually no one saw this power as problematic. The revived labor movement is beginning to change this, and there are signs that a movement is beginning to contest corporate power. Nonetheless, if the issue is brought to people's attention, many still don't see a problem: "Well, so what? How else could it be? Maybe we don't like it, but that's just the way things are." . . .

Everyone is talking about campaign finance reform. But what kind of reform? The answer varies. If the problem is occasional abuses by renegade fundraisers, then the only change needed is a system of improved enforcement. ... If the problem is that the public has (momentarily? irrationally?) lost faith in the system, and now sees democracy for sale, then the solution is to address the most visible symbol of this—soft money—and make cosmetic changes elsewhere, loudly proclaiming that this is a thorough reform. For campaign finance insiders—a tiny fraction of the population, but crucial for policy decisions—the problem is that politicians are having to work too hard to raise money. The solution is to find some way to reduce the cost of campaigns (typically, through limited free television time), while seeing to it that the margin of success continues to depend on campaign contributions from big-money donors, which is, after all, the system that put these politicians into office. Most campaign finance experts analyze the issue in ways generally similar to the political insiders. Academic "expertise," and certainly media punditry, generally depends on possessing views certified as "reasonable" by those with power—that is, by politicians, the media, business, and big-money campaign contributors. For most members of the American public—and for us—the problem is an entire system that is institutionally corrupt," that coerces politicians to put dollars over voters, that buys off democracy. The solution, therefore, must be a complete overhaul and the introduction of a fundamentally new system. . . .

Public Financing

... As long as our society continues to have vast inequalities of wealth, income, and power, the people with the most money will be able to find ways around restrictive rules. Virtually all current [reform] proposals are intended to limit the ways in which money can be funneled into campaigns. It is extremely difficult to impose limitations, because however many rules and barriers are erected, the ingenuity of the rich, or their hirelings, will always find ways to evade the regulations. Clinton's Deputy Chief of Staff Harold Ickes explains, "Money is like water. ... If there is a crack, water will find it.

Same way with political money." Moreover, virtually no meaningful penalties are imposed on those caught violating the rules. As a result, the regulators are always one step behind the evaders and shysters.

The alternative approach is to cut the Gordian knot of restrictions by instituting public financing of election campaigns. In the early 1990s, such proposals seemed Utopian. In 1992, we argued that Congress and the president would not institute public financing unless a popular movement put a gun to their heads. As we predicted, Washington didn't budge, but state-level referendum campaigns may do what Congress would never do. In 1996, Maine voters adopted a public financing system, and Public Campaign, a new organization dedicated to taking special interest money out of elections, is spearheading a movement around the country to bring about public campaign financing, one state at a time, if necessary. Real reform, with full public financing, is no longer a Utopian dream—it's on today's political agenda. Other proposals are of course possible, but Public Campaign's model law is an excellent framework, *and* it has helped mobilize and coordinate a major grassroots campaign. Our discussion therefore focuses on this proposal.

Public Campaign, and its Clean Money Campaign Reform (CMCR), are— at least for now— bypassing Congress, which has shown an amazing ability to sidetrack and frustrate reform efforts, and focusing instead on state-by-state efforts, most notably by putting referendum questions on the ballot. By taking the issue directly to the voters in a ballot referendum, it's possible to pass a full reform proposal. The normal legislative process is highly likely to bury reform in committee and then change "just a few" details in order to make the proposal "more realistic"—that is, to be sure that special interest money continues to provide a decisive margin in most contests.

State-level campaigns necessarily mean that there will be minor variations from one place to another. And any effort to present a campaign finance proposal confronts a dilemma: Readers want enough detail to be sure the proposal is viable—that it won't encounter an insoluble contradiction—but don't want to be bogged down in minor provisions of interest only to technocrats and political junkies. In its broad outlines, Clean Money Campaign Reform limits campaign spending, prohibits special interest contributions to those candidates who participate in the system, provides public financing for participating candidates, and guarantees a level playing field. The system is completely voluntary. . . .

The arguments in favor of [public financing of campaigns] are ... powerful. . . . Elections would be far more competitive. Although challengers would still have less name recognition than incumbents, they would have enough money to mount credible campaigns, and for the first time challengers as a group would have as much to spend as incumbents.

Special interests could no longer use campaign money to increase their access and win benefits for themselves. It is not only that a member would not be indebted for a past donation. Members would also know they would never need to depend on a future donation and could never gain a campaign advantage by soliciting or accepting such a donation. Corporations would continue to have substantial clout based on their wealth, power, and respectability, their ability to maintain a staff of lobbyists, their advocacy advertising, their networks, connections, and friendships. But *one* of their major special interest weapons would have been eliminated.

The guarantee of public funding for campaigns would give members of Congress more time to spend on legislation and on keeping in touch with constituents who are *not* campaign contributors. . . .

People sometimes argue that such reforms only make the system more stable and resistant to change. Perhaps that is true in some instances. In other instances, what Andre Gorz called a "nonreformist reform" provides immediate benefits to people *and* makes it easier to win future reforms. Did the auto safety campaign Nader launched produce a significant change in the way people think about business? Yes. Did it make people more or less willing to consider additional reforms? Obviously, much more willing.

We would argue that Clean Money Campaign Reform is also a "nonreformist reform." It proposes a reform that can be won, and one that if won will substantially weaken business power. By itself, will it transform American society? No. Will it have an impact? Yes. Will the end of corporate campaign contributions and the emergence of public financing make it easier or more difficult to make future political changes? Clearly, easier. Will continued struggle be necessary to elect good people and to fight business power? Certainly. Will electoral politics be enough? No. Business exercises power on many different fronts and that power must be opposed on every front.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Smith claims that campaign contributors don't buy favors or votes from candidates but that contributions simply register support for candidates' political positions. How would Smith deal with the contention that contributions buy privileged access to candidates and that to get access requires contributions?

2. In *Buckley v. Valeo* (1976), the U.S. Supreme Court seemed to agree with Smith's idea that campaign contributions are protected by the First Amendment as free speech. Are proposals for public financing of campaigns such as those submitted by the authors of "Dollars and Votes" a violation of free speech?

3. In 1999 and 2000, the House leadership blocked campaign reform initiatives from coming to a vote. If money is such a corrupting influence in campaigns, why aren't voters more supportive of the kinds of initiatives proposed to limit its effects? What are the obstacles to forming a grassroots movement that supports campaign finance reform?

4. Assuming that money has become crucial in modern campaigns, devise a plausible campaign strategy for a cash-poor but volunteer-rich candidate for a House seat. Could volunteers be used to balance the high-tech campaign? Under what circumstances?

SUGGESTED READINGS AND INTERNET RESOURCES

A comprehensive look at campaign finance reform is provided by Trevor Potter, Anthony Corrado, and Daniel Ortiz, *The New Campaign Finance* Sourcebook (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2001). For a skeptical account of the effects of campaign finance reform, see Michael Malbin and Thomas Gais, *The Day After Reform* (Albany, N.Y.: Rockefeller Institute Press, 1998). A devastating look at money in politics is Charles Lewis, *The Buying of the President 2000* (New York: Avon Books, 2000). A short and effective set of proposals for public financing of campaigns can be found in David Donnelly, Janice Fine, and Ellen Miller, *Money and Politics* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1999).

Federal Election Commission (FEC)
www.fec.gov
The FEC's site provides access to the financial reports of all candidates for federal offices and press releases summarizing monthly trends in campaign fundraising.

Center for Responsive Politics
www.opensecrets.org
This is the most comprehensive site for data and analysis of FEC data, with a concentration on the role of monied interests and their effects on the political process.

Public Campaign
www.publiccampaign.org
Here are news and views from the major advocacy organization favoring public financing of political campaigns.

Democracy Network
www.dnet.org
This League of Women Voters-sponsored site provides state-by-state access to candidate information and ways to contact and interact with campaign organizations.

Campaign Finance Institute
www.cfinst.org
This nonpartisan institute's mission is to assess the effectiveness of campaign finance reform. The institute's web site features reports on pending legislation, easy access to donor lists, and news of key congressional races where money is the chief factor.

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1. Smith is writing about allegations regarding the Clinton White House's fundraising practices during the 1996 election.

2. Opposition from Senate Republicans and Senate Majority Leader Trent Lott (R-Mississippi) prevented the McCain-Feingold bill from reaching the Senate floor in 1998. In early 2002, a modified version of McCain-Feingold was passed by Congress and signed by President Bush.

1. In 2000, the figure was around $9,000.

2. Each of the major candidates had raised more than $30 million by January 2000. George W. Bush alone raised $67 million by January 2000.

3. The disparity was 14 to 1 in 2000.