

Influence of money and media on elections



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During elections, electoral networks drive the “ every vote counts” campaign, but the voter appeal is lost due to the high value placed in high-proficiency media and the conniving, slick interest groups that use propoganda to persuade voter turn-out. There lie many problems in the world of politics. Nasty campaigning and slamming ones opponent have become a commonplace in today’s society. The root of these distinct problems doesn’t stem directly from the candidates themselves, but rather the national committees for the Republicans and Democrats that represent them. The money which is spent by the massive institutions to their party’s candidate in each election is overwhelming, but also impacts the public persona which is seen through the exorbitant and high-priced media campaigns that seduce public interest

There are very specific rules that are governed rigidly regarding campaign financing. However the major national committees for the Republicans and Democrats have found ways around this system. The campaign financing rules are simple. Individual people are permitted to give \$1000 per candidate per election, whereas interest groups are allowed to donate up to \$5000 per candidate per election. In comparison to the hundreds of millions of dollars spent by both major parties, these are relatively small amounts of money. These national committees of the major parties use non-federal accounts to accumulate what is known as “ soft money.” There are no limits on how much a party can spend at local levels for grass roots party building. The money in the non-federal regulated accounts is funneled to states, which are used to endorse or bash one of the candidates.

Each major political party spends soft money in places where they have available seats in office and where they know they can retain them. This allows them to ensure more political influence in Congress. If a party feels they cannot steal a seat from the other party, the committee is less likely to spend soft money to keep up. The significance of this is that the candidate who spends the most money often wins. Though the large corporations and interest groups are the source of the influence, the political candidate is the face that the American people see to represent their party. This reality has caused voters to doubt whether their individual vote even counts. With each election, more Americans feel that the ultimate cause of who wins is determined by the amount of political wealth and media attention they have acquired.

The solution to the problem is simple reform of the laws which govern campaign financing. While the answer may be simple to achieve, the solution is quite a different story. The major parties control the lawmaking body of the United States. Many of these congressmen owe their political position to what is known as soft money. This soft money comes from interest groups and major corporations; leaving the legislators in a very tough position. However if they were to reform the laws, the roles of these interest groups and the money of these corporations would be greatly diminished. It would provide a level playing field in all congressional districts around the nation.

Eliminating soft money from politics would be to restore purity in a sense to the political process. Reforming the laws would ensure that political parties can not influence elections through money. It would also prevent interest groups and large corporations from controlling large aspects of today's

government. For instance, the new law could set limits on how much money can be spent on television and radio advertisement. When this amount of money has been reached, the candidates could use no more political money for this type of advertisement. By the same token any amount of money could be spent on pamphlets and brochures. Educating voters on the issues and specific candidate's stance on those issues is more alluring than oppressing and berating one's political opponent through media advertisement. This would allow the American people to decide based mainly on the issues presented, not through biased media influence.

Campaign finance reform is a very hot topic. It seems that many people are jumping on the bandwagon hoping for some good press when a law is finally passed. With our most recent 2008 election, the candidates were undoubtedly fighting for votes in a close election, since the two of them set a record in soft money spent during an election. We need to fight to make politics about prevalent issues and leadership once again and take our country back from large corporations and interest groups that have assumed control through their large resources and persuading media influence.