

# [Campaign reform](https://assignbuster.com/campaign-reform/)

Campaign Finance Reform Campaign finance has become an important issue because of the level at which many corporations were directly contributing to campaigns. This money is generally referred to as “ soft money,” and many people consider “ soft money” a way for corporations to buy candidates. The logic behind this states that the candidates agree to pass legislation in favor of these corporations in return for the money that they receive. This was a large factor in the 2000 elections, with soft money donations at their all time high. In 2002, the Bipartisan Campaign Finance Reform Act was passed, banning all use of “ soft money.” Corporations also were banned from paying for political ads. Non-profit organizations are considered corporations under this law and are therefore subject to the same rules and regulations as these other corporations. These are referred to as “ Electioneering Communications,“ or issue ads. This act amended the 1971 Federal Election Campaign Act.
The BCFR was a big step towards campaign finance reform. As a direct effect, the organizations Swift Boat Veterans for the Truth, the League of Conservation Voters, MoveOn. org, and Progress for America Voter Fund were all fined for not following the new laws.
In June of 2007, the US Supreme court found in Federal Election Commision Vs. Wisconsin Right to Life, Inc. that it was unconstitutional to apply the BCFR to ads that could be reasonably considered to be not specifically for or against a specific candidate. It will depend on the full extent of the 2008 election cycle to determine the extent to which this new ruling will affect campaign finance reform.
While the BCFR has begun the process of finance reform, many people think that there is still a long way to go in the process. For instance, many people still feel that lobbyists and special interest groups still have too much influence on politicians, yet the BCFR does not specifically deal with lobbyists. Also, some groups have begun the process of challenging the BCFR, stating that it violates free speech. Bradley A. Smith, in the book Unfree Speech: the Folly of Campaign Finance Reform, states that not only was the system that was in place before the BCFR not as corrupt as many Americans seemed to believe, but the BCFR has made the situation worse, with incumbent and wealthy candidates being much more likely to elected than previously because the BCFR discourages grassroots organizations (Smith, 2001). Smith’s main opposition to current attempts at campaign finance reform, though, is that it violates free speech.
Whether the current laws have gone about attempting to solve the problem in the wrong way, whether they have been ineffectual due to lobbyists still having as much influence, or whether it violates the First Amendment, campaign finance reform remains a controversial issue that will need further reform in order to properly deal with all of the problems involved. Whether this will actually happen remains to be seen.
Works Cited
---------- (2008) “ Soft Money.” Federal Election Commission. Available from http://www. fec. gov/pages/bcra/rulemakings/soft\_money. shtml
Smith, Bradley (2001) Unfree speech: The folly of campaign finance reform. Princeton University Press.