

How money impacts american political campaigns

[Economics](#), [Money](#)



Money in Campaigns

The American political system leaves a lot of room for corruption. Lobbyists are paid lots to influence politicians stance on issues, organizations, interest groups, and companies use money and power to influence politicians, and politicians exchange favors for more favors. Large companies donate large amounts of money to contribute to campaigns for candidates they hope will favor things in a way that will help themselves. Instead of voting for people who will do the best job overall, voters vote for people who will do the best job in their favor.

Donors of campaign money rely on one thing according to [opensecrets.org](https://www.opensecrets.org/): influence. Interest groups, lobbyists, political action committees, and organizations all use their money and power to influence campaigns in a way to favor themselves.

While browsing through the interest group section of the website, I found it especially interesting, yet unsurprising, that the energy and natural resources interest group so strongly donated republican when contributing to campaigns. The oil and gas industry has the biggest influence, and it almost exclusively puts money towards republican campaigns. It makes sense that this group would vote this way because republicans tend to focus more on the money aspect of energy and natural resources, whereas democrats tend to be more environmentally conscious and might do things that affect how much money these groups make. The website states that a lot of energy companies focus on putting their money into lawmakers from fossil-fuel producing states, which makes sense because they want to keep making

money off resource-depleting fossil-fuels, so they would need to work to keep people in office that are wanting to make money rather than protect the environment.

Also under the influence and lobbying section was 527s. I had never heard of this group before, so it was interesting to learn that they weren't allowed to tell the public to vote for a specific candidate or party until 2010, but it has now changed and they use their influence to sway votes in a specific direction.

Recipients of campaign money can use the money in anything that helps further their campaign and potentially leads them to get elected. This includes fundraising, advertising, and travelling places to get more people to vote for them.

Under the recipients section, I was most interested in the presidential election because that is what I am most familiar with and hear most about in the media and daily life. This election was especially interesting because of how much deep hatred there was for each of the two main candidates, and then Bernie Sanders' support was also surprising as he is known for being very much independent and a socialist. I found it interesting to compare the amounts of campaign money for the most popular candidates. It is very interesting that Bernie Sanders was able to rack up over \$228 million dollars, whereas Ted Cruz only raised \$89.5 million. This was surprising to me because of how radical a lot of people view Bernie Sanders. I also found it surprising that Donald Trump's was worth around \$200 million less than Clinton's. For him to get elected, I would have guessed that he would have

gotten more money, but now thinking further, I guess it makes sense that Hillary's would have been more since she has been in the political game far longer and a lot of groups probably owe her favors. I also found it very interesting that Bernie Sanders actually had more small individual contributions than Hillary Clinton did.

I think money plays too big of a role in political elections, and I think it is often used in a corrupt way. Hundreds of millions of dollars were spent on Trump, Hillary, and Sanders campaigns. Instead of so much money being fundraised for that, it could've been used to help people who are starving or sick. To me, it is disgusting that companies spend so much money supporting politicians in hopes of getting more money instead of using money in ways that could actually help the people living in this country. Besides that, because of Clinton and Trump's names, people give them so much money and fund them in their political party, yet smaller politicians and third parties get far less because our system is made to only support the two big, polar parties. I also think, ideally, all money should come from individual voters instead of big groups and companies. This way, the candidates actually have to work for the voters instead of just owing favors to big businesses. Citizens would also have more of a role funding the political campaign, making them more involved in politics, and they would care more about the politician they fund.

Overall, I think opensecrets. org is a very well done and informative website that not only shows how political campaign money is used and how money is lobbied, but it educates the person viewing the site about the background of

all the information, why it is done, and shows off ways the system is corrupt. A lot of people are ignorant to information like this, so this website does a good job showing what goes on behind the scenes and allows citizens to see how money is being donated and how the donated money is being used.