



STUDY GUIDE

CAMPAIGN FINANCE REFORM CORRUPTS

KEY TERMS: incumbent corruption reformer regulate campaign finance reform

NOTE-TAKING COLUMN: Complete this section <u>during</u> the video. Include definitions and key terms.	CUE COLUMN: Complete this section <u>after</u> the video.
What did Senator McCarthy do that was so historically noteworthy?	Is there anything inherently wrong with incumbents writing legislation pertaining to campaigns? If so, what? If not, why not?
What are the two propositions that reformers argue for to support their case?	How do campaign contributions relate to free speech?
What are campaign finance laws written to do?	

DISCUSSION & REVIEW QUESTIONS:

- Mr. Will describes a general sentiment amongst campaign finance reform believers when asking, “Don’t we want to “get money out of politics?” Isn’t campaign finance reform an inherent good?” How might it be possible to stop money from being such a huge influencing factor in politics? Is it possible? Should it be possible to stop or severely limit money from being such a strong force in deciding elections? Why or why not?
- Mr. Will asks, “Even if it were Congress’s business to decide that there is “too much” money in politics, what does “too much” mean?” What is your answer to his question? How should one go about answering this question? If money in political campaigns is to be limited or regulated, who should get to be the arbiter of where the lines should be drawn? Why? How would you approach figuring out where to draw the line?
- Mr. Will states, “Reformers say that regulation of campaign giving and spending will not only spare our leaders the distraction of the governed – that’s us – seeking “undue” influence on government, it also will make us think better of government.” What do you think reformers would consider ‘undue influence on government’ to be? Do you believe either of these claims in the quote to be true? Why or why not?
- In the video, we learn that after the McCarthy campaign the Democratic Party “...pushed for government regulation of political speech.” What outcomes do you think the reformers were hoping for? Do you think that any organization should promote the limiting of free speech? Why or why not?
- Instead of acknowledging corruption being realized in the fact that incumbents legislate campaign rules to give themselves a huge advantage, reformers argue that corruption comes in the form of contributor’s ‘buying’ the votes of politicians (even though Mr. Will shares with us that research shows, “...money is rarely given in order to change politicians’ votes; it is given in order to support politicians who already vote the way donors want them to.”) After watching the video, what is your understanding of how campaign finance reform is corrupt? Do you agree? Are you for or against campaign finance reform? Why?

EXTEND THE LEARNING:

CASE STUDY: Ted Cruz

INSTRUCTIONS: Read the article, “Campaign Finance Reform is an Assault on Free Speech,” then answer the questions that follow.

- If a voter gives money to a campaign, does that donation equate to ‘speech?’ Should it?
- Mr. Will informs us that, “Whatever their stated intentions, campaign finance laws are not written to protect the public from corrupt politicians, they are written to protect incumbents from anyone who might challenge them.” What kind of advantages do incumbents currently enjoy over challengers? Do you think that this system is good? Why or why not?
- Should there be a limit on how much individuals or organizations can contribute to a campaign? Why? If you could unilaterally change the system from what it is now, how would you have it work?



QUIZ

CAMPAIGN FINANCE REFORM CORRUPTS

1. What unthinkable act did McCarthy do in 1968?
 - a. He protested the presidential election in front of the White House.
 - b. He protested the presidential election on Capitol Hill.
 - c. He challenged a powerful, fellow senator for his party's presidential nomination.
 - d. He challenged a powerful, incumbent president for his party's presidential nomination.

2. How much money was McCarthy able to raise between 5 individuals in today's dollars?
 - a. 1 million
 - b. 55 million
 - c. 75 million
 - d. 1 trillion

3. What's the most 5 individuals can collectively contribute to a campaign today?
 - a. \$2,600
 - b. \$13,000
 - c. \$260,000
 - d. \$1.3 million

4. Whatever their stated intentions, campaign finance laws are written to protect incumbents from anyone who might challenge them.
 - a. True
 - b. False

5. Abundant research shows donors _____.
 - a. give money to change politician's votes.
 - b. give money to support politicians they agree with.
 - c. give money to incumbent senators.
 - d. give money to charities.



QUIZ - ANSWER KEY

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NATIONAL REVIEW

Campaign Finance Reform Is an Assault on Free Speech
Ted Cruz stands up for citizens' right to spend money on politics.
By Dustin Siggins — May 2, 2014

What is the right amount of speech to give to citizens in politics? Both major parties are debating this question as the 2014 midterm elections approach.

According to former Supreme Court Justice John Paul Stevens, who [told a Senate panel](#) Wednesday that campaign money is not the same as speech, the answer seems to be “a limited amount.” Stevens, who has been critical of his former colleagues on the Court for overturning a number of campaign finance reform measures, was joined by Democrats who went after the Koch brothers for their involvement in the political system.

Enter Senator Ted Cruz (R., Texas), who in about five-and-a-half minutes [shattered](#) the entire argument for what Washington considers “campaign finance reform.” His comments turned campaign-finance pieties on their head and made clear why free speech needs to be paramount in the United States.

Cruz pointed out how campaign finance reform protects incumbents. Instead of allowing as much speech as possible for the American people, elected officials have engaged in self-preservation at the cost of the First Amendment. To quote the Cato Institute’s Ilya Shapiro from [a 2012 appearance](#) in front of a Senate subcommittee, “Let the voters weigh what a donation from this or that plutocrat means to them, rather than — and I say this with all due respect — allowing incumbent politicians to write the rules to benefit themselves.”

Similarly, Cruz noted that incumbents have “lobbyists and entrenched interests” doing fundraising for them. This is in stark contrast to challengers, who Cruz says “[have] to raise the money.”

The senator hammered people who say restricting speech fits with the First Amendment. Pointedly, Cruz said that “there are 300 million Americans who have the right to criticize you all day long and twice on Sundays.” He also asked whether the same people who want citizens and those who run corporations silenced would apply the same standard to *The New York Times* or CBS, both of which are corporations that engage in political speech.

“...I would ask you, why does a corporation like *The New York Times* or CBS, or any other media corporation, in Congress’ view, enjoy greater First Amendment rights than individual citizens,” said Cruz.

The split Cruz described was especially clear in [spending for and against the Affordable Care Act \(ACA\)](#). Media corporations aren’t forced to count dollars spent in favor of (or opposition to) laws as political speech. Otherwise, tens of millions of dollars spent by CBS, ABC, NBC, and other mainstream media outlets would have to be counted as spending in favor of the ACA.

Cruz [rightly called](#) for unlimited money in politics and *complete and immediate disclosure* of all monies. While he didn’t get into details, [a worthwhile system to consider](#) would be one where all candidates have to post donations on their websites within 24 hours of receiving the contribution. Incumbents would have to post the donations on their official websites, as well, and all contributions would include the name of the donor.

One thing that Cruz did not address was the final step to make sure money in politics doesn't corrupt: Keeping Washington to its constitutional limits. If Corporation A and Union B each give a billion dollars to presidential candidates, but those candidates don't have the authority to influence the preferred policy position, then that money is wasted. And since political and business leaders aren't stupid, they'll spend the money elsewhere — probably on expanding the economy or doing something else more useful than bribing politicians.

Cruz noted that campaign finance regulation is a bipartisan affair, designed to keep incumbents in office until they choose to leave.

He's right, and more people should be taking up his argument. Free speech is a basic right of Americans, not a favor for politicians to give out at their own discretion. If money really is power, we should create a system that limits the power of Congress and the bureaucracy — through more speech and more disclosure, based on the barriers put in place by the Constitution.

Dustin Siggins is the D.C. Correspondent for LifeSiteNews, a former blogger with Tea Party Patriots, and co-author of the forthcoming book BANKRUPT LEGACY: THE FUTURE OF THE DEBT-PAYING GENERATION.

<http://www.nationalreview.com/node/377154/print>