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20 Complete Annotations

PROPOSED TOPIC: Campaign Finance Reform

ORIGINAL PROPOSED QUESTION: Should the government institute stricter campaign  
finance reform laws on the federal and state level?

REVISED QUESTION: Should the funding of campaigns in U.S. elections be reformed at both  
the federal and state level?

REVISED QUESTION II: How should the financing of U.S. federal and state elections be  
reformed?

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SOURCE: Book

Brown, H. (2016). *Pay-to-play politics: How money defines the American Democracy*. Santa Barbara, California: Praeger.

This book by Heath Brown is about the deep-rooted connection between money and the American political system. Brown begins the book by discussing why Americans should be worried about money in politics and in particular why it should be a concern in our contemporary political world. He introduces the issue by describing two ironies that he believes defines the relationship between money and American politics. The first relates to the politicians. Brown illustrates this by using examples from the 2016 presidential election to show that both the Democratic and Republican parties may claim that money in politics is an issue and yet the candidates for these parties still hold major fundraisers with wealthy donors to fund their campaigns. The second irony is that in the 21<sup>st</sup> century Americans have become more polarized and divided on political issues than ever, yet most Americans agree that money has too great of an influence on politics. Despite this consensus of opinion elections at both the federal and state levels have only risen in cost over the last two decades. Brown asks the questions “can a democracy sustain such contradictions?” and “should a democracy sustain such contradictions?” Brown then goes on to discuss the American public and how they think about and are connected money in politics. He then discusses the relationship between money in politics and the courts. In recent decades it has been the U.S. Supreme Court, not Congress or the President, that has issued the decisions that have had the greatest impact on shaping money in politics. As these decisions have been made the private sector has had to adjust accordingly, leading to major overhaul in the attitudes and decisions of big business. Brown then moves on to discuss money in Congress and the dozens of corruption cases that have exposed some of the biggest flaws in the American

political system. In this section of the book Brown does also discuss the often bipartisan and ambitious reforms passed by Congress. Finally, Brown moves on to discussing the relationship between money and presidential candidates as well as those who have held the office. Brown ends the book by offering potential reforms. Some of these include contribution limits, public financing programs, public voice tax credit programs, subsidized lobbying for underrepresented groups and issues, clarifying Internal Revenue Service nonprofit political regulations and mandating additional political spending disclosure for government contractors. Despite offering these reforms, Brown acknowledges at the end of the book that for the most part things will likely stay in the status quo and that without a political corruption scandal the magnitude of Watergate, reform will be hard to implement.

Heath Brown is an assistant professor of public policy at the John Jay College of Criminal Justice at City University of New York, a position he has held since 2014. Brown is also the reviews editor for the academic journal *Interest Groups & Advocacy*, a co-leader of the New York City chapter of the Scholar Strategies Network, hosts a podcast called *New Books in Political Science* and is an expert contributor to *The Hill*, *The Atlantic* and *American Prospect*. Before teaching at CUNY Brown was an assistant professor of political science and public administration at Seton Hall University in South Orange, New Jersey, beginning in 2011. Prior to Seton Hall he held his first job as an academic as an assistant professor of political science at Roanoke College in Salem, Virginia from 2006 to 2011. Before Roanoke College Brown worked as the director of research at the Council of Graduate Schools from 2004 to 2006. In 2004 Brown spent four months as a graduate fellow in the Congressional Budget Office. In 2001 he worked as a policy assistant for the American Bus Association and from 1999 to 2001 he was the director of communications at The George Washington University School of Media and Public

Affairs. In 1996 Brown earned his bachelor's degree in history from Guilford College in Greensboro, North Carolina. In 1999 he earned his master's degree in international relations and affairs and in 2006 earned his doctorate in public policy, both from The George Washington University. Besides "Pay-to-Play Politics" Brown has also written three other books: "Lobbying the New President: Interests in Transition," "Tea Party Divided: The Hidden Diversity of a Maturing Movement," and "Immigrants and Electoral Politics: Nonprofit Organizing in a time of Demographic Change." Praeger Publishing is an imprint of academic publisher ABC-CLIO/Greenwood. It is the book publishing imprint of ABC-CLIO/Greenwood's vast academic publishing umbrella.

A strength of this source is the many recent political anecdotes used as evidence for Brown's arguments. Most of the examples he uses are from the last few election cycles so the information in the book is relevant to the current landscape of money in American politics. This is important because it allows the reader to connect what they already know about recent political development to the financial information discussed in this book. It also helps to hold the readers interest when discussing current politicians that the reader may here in their day-to-day life. Had he used examples from further back in American political history the reader may not be as interested or feel as though the arguments are as pertinent to the current problems at hand in politics. However, it is not just anecdotes that Brown uses to make his arguments. He also uses data and figures gathered from recent elections and studies done on recent elections. Including this empirical evidence along with the anecdotal evidence gives Brown's arguments more legitimacy than if he had just used one or the other for individual arguments. The one notable weakness in the book is that there is not much discussion of history on campaign finance reform and money in American politics. Although the recent anecdotes make the book more relevant

and may hold the reader's interest longer, slightly more in-depth historical context about money in American politics could provide less-informed readers with the background knowledge needed to understand this complicated issue. Most of the book focuses on money in American politics in its current state; including more historical information would have strengthened this source.

Brown can be compared to Carnes (2018). Carnes' book is about the amount of money in politics, the high cost of elections, the disproportionate balance of white-collar to blue-collar individuals who run for public office and suggestions for potential reforms to encourage low-cost elections and persuade more working-class individuals to run for public office. Carnes also writes because politicians so often come from the upper class, politicians in the U.S. have been significantly better-off than the people they represent, which leads to serious consequences for public policy. Carnes offers reforms such as new candidate recruitment programs, political scholarships to increase education levels among the working class and seed-money programs to fund campaigns. The reforms suggested by Carnes could all help solve the issues discussed in Brown. Brown can also be compared to Berman (2014). Berman writes about the process of campaign finance reform in the U.S. and asserts that major reforms only happen following a large scandal that leads to public outrage. The article says that America's campaign finance system has been shaped by crises for over a century and may need another crisis for more reform to take place. Berman closes the article by equating actions of Super-PACs in recent elections to the weight of a major scandal but that due to years of declining faith in government there is minimal public outrage and thus little reason to believe that reforms will be implemented. At the end of his book Brown also concedes that short of a controversy the magnitude of Watergate we can expect most our current campaign finance system to remain intact.

I will use this book to discuss campaign finance issues from elections throughout the last decade and also when discussing potential reforms at the end of my essay.



SOURCE: Book

Carnes, N. (2018). *The cash ceiling: Why only the rich run for office - and what we can do about it*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

This book is about the amount of money in politics, the high cost of elections, the disproportionate balance of white-collar to blue-collar individuals who run for public office and suggestions for potential reforms to encourage low-cost elections and persuade more working-class individuals to run for public office. The book begins by discussing the issue of underrepresentation of working-class people in American politics. One of the ways Nicholas Carnes illustrates this is explaining that from 1789 to 2018, seats in the U.S. House of Representatives have changed hands over 14,000 times, but two former blue-collar workers have never served in the same U.S. House seat in consecutive terms. Carnes also shows early in the book that because politicians so often come from the upper class, politicians in the U.S. have been significantly better-off than the people they represent, which leads to serious consequences for public policy. The book goes on to explain the factors that have kept blue-collar Americans out of political institutions. Carnes calls these factors the “cash ceiling.” Carnes then explains the conventional wisdom of why members of the working class don’t hold political office. He says that many political observers believe the candidates of the working class do not hold office because they are unqualified or because voters do not want them to hold office; but these ideas are incorrect. Carnes says the reason working-class people do not hold office is simply because few choose to run in the first place. The reason they do not run is because many simply do not have the time or money to run for office and working-class candidates are rarely recruited to run by larger political institutions. Blue-collar Americans can rarely leave their job for the sustained stretches of time that are necessary for campaigning and do not have the steady financial base or

backing needed to run a successful election. Political recruiters rarely look for working-class candidates because it is easier for them to recruit from their own white-collar circles. The book proposes new candidate recruitment programs, political scholarships to increase education levels among the working class and seed-money programs to fund campaigns. Carnes ends the book by suggesting that the best way to curb the outsized influence of money in American politics is to help more working-class Americans become politicians.

Nicholas Carnes is an associate professor at the Duke University Sanford School of Public Policy, holding the Creed C. Black position since 2011. His areas of expertise are American democracy, revitalizing U.S. democracy, economic security, inequality and the middle class, economy and public budgets and jobs and workers. Much of his research focuses on the problems surrounding inequality in politics, why few working-class citizens go on to run for public office, and how the absence of those people in public office affects public policy decisions. Sanford earned his bachelor's degree from the University of Tulsa in 2006, his master's degree from Princeton University in 2008 and his doctorate from Princeton in 2011. Carnes published his first book, "White Collar Government: The Hidden Role of Class in Economic Policy Making," in 2014. This book used data from Congress, state legislatures and city councils to measure the effects of the perceived phenomenon of few working-class citizens running for public office. The American Political Science Association honored Carnes with the 2013 Harold D. Lasswell Award and the 2014 Gladys M. Kammerer Award. In 2014 Carnes founded the American Political Science Association Organized Section on Economic and Social Class Inequality to support scholars who study political causes and consequences of economic inequality, social class stratification, and mobility and opportunity. He also serves as the co-chair for the North Carolina chapter of the Scholars Strategy Network. Much of Carnes' research is

done in partnership with Noam Lupu, associate professor of political science at Vanderbilt University. Besides his two books, Carnes has also had many academic articles published as well as editorial work in newspapers and magazines.

It is clear that this book is well-researched and detailed. One of the strengths of this book is the heavy use of data points to back up the arguments of the author. Throughout the book Carnes uses data from public polls, economic data, candidate and politician surveys and original data models. These sources of data provide hard evidence to back up the notions stated in the book describing the vast economic inequality in American politics. However, one potential weakness from this is the use of original data models. Although some of the models are based upon prior studies and research Carnes' models could potentially be slanted to support his arguments. If all the models were the same as ones used in prior research on this issue, rather than created specifically for Carnes' research, the information determined by the models could be considered more credible. Another potential downside of heavy data use throughout the book is that it may lose the interest of the reader. But the text of the book explains the information and theories clearly and in an interesting manner. Carnes also uses anecdotes about working-class Americans who have been involved in politics in the past and how and why those individuals succeeded or failed. By coupling data with anecdotes Carnes is able to effectively explain and support his arguments while keeping the attention of the reader. The writing is also well-rounded and examines every aspect of the issues explained in the book. Another weakness of this book is that Carnes occasionally uses first person when talking about his research. The reader could interpret this as Carnes having a personal or emotional connection to the topics discussed in the book and thus could potentially be a less credible source.

This book can be compared to Brown (2016). Brown's book discusses money in American politics from many different aspects and focuses on the question: if both the public and politicians are aware that money in politics is a problem, why has there been so little change? Brown offers several ideas for reform throughout his book but ends up concluding that barring a campaign finance scandal the magnitude of Watergate there is little reason to believe that there will be any change from the current political system. Carnes argues that if more efforts were put into providing more opportunities for working-class Americans to become involved in politics, there would be less big-money in politics and greater economic equality throughout both elections and public policy. The reforms suggested by Carnes, working-class recruiting programs, political scholarships for low-income students and seed money programs to fund political campaigns, could all help solve the issues discussed in Brown. Carnes can also be compared to Democracy Reform Task Force (2019). This document is a summary of H.R. 1: The For The People Act, a bill intended to implement sweeping election reforms, which was brought to the U.S. House of Representatives by Democrats in February 2019. Certain parts of the bill are specifically intended to help raise political involvement among working-class Americans and make it easier for the non-wealthy to run for public office. For example, Division B, Title V, Subtitle D allows for personal use services to be authorized as campaign expenditures. It would expand authorized expenditures to include child care, elder service care, professional development and health insurance payments. One of the main reasons Carnes gives as to why blue-collar workers rarely run for political office is because they cannot afford to go extended periods of time without their steady paycheck. Otherwise they would not be able to afford these types of services. Democracy Reform Task Force suggests reforms similar to those suggested in Carnes to become public policy.

I will use this source to explain the widespread effects of money in politics. The issues discussed in this book correlate with how much money is spent on elections. I can use this to show how politicians taking large sums of money from donors upsets the equality among the greater political and societal spectrum.

SOURCE: General Periodical

Blumenthal, P. (2019, January 04). House Democrats introduce their sweeping new reform bill.

*HuffPost*. Retrieved from <https://tinyurl.com/y8fl8e5q>

This article reports on a new bill introduced to the U.S. House of Representatives by Democrats: H.R. 1: The For the People Act. The bill is comprised of election reforms, campaign finance reforms and campaign ethics reforms. It was initiated by House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, Calif., and Rep. John Sarbanes, Md. Both of these representatives have pushed this bill in prior congressional sessions. The key objectives of the bill are restoring voting rights for disenfranchised Americans, making voting more accessible, requiring presidential candidates to disclose their last 10 years of tax returns and creating a public financing system for House elections. The bill will pass through the administration, judiciary and oversight committees before going to the House floor for voting. The article reports that it will likely be difficult to get the bill to pass in the Senate due to Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, a Republican, opposing the bill. In election reform, the bill will automatically register voters who submit paperwork to a state government agency, provide same-day voter registration and redistrict congressional maps. It will also ban post-release felon disenfranchisement, ban voter caging and make Election Day a federal holiday for over 2 million federal employees, among other things. The main purpose of the campaign finance section of the bill is to create a public financing system for House elections that provides \$6 of public money for every \$1 of funds raised up to \$200. Candidates who participate in this system would also be prevented from accepting donations from large-money donors. This model is based on systems used in state and local elections around the country, including major metropolitan areas like New York City. The bill would also require nonprofits and other organizations not required to disclose their donations to make all political spending

public and would reorganize the Federal Election Commission from six members to five to avoid deadlocks. The bill also proposes several other changes like requiring the disclosure of political advertisements on social media platforms.

Paul Blumenthal is a political reporter at HuffPost. Before joining HuffPost he worked as a senior writer for the Sunlight Foundation. The Sunlight Foundation is one of the largest nonprofit government watchdog organizations in the U.S. Much of their work is dedicated toward increasing campaign finance regulations, particularly surrounding disclosure. This gives Blumenthal significant and unique credibility as a reporter writing about campaign finance reform. Blumenthal's work has also appeared in The New York Times, YahooNews and RealClearPolitics; and on PBS, CNN and MSNBC. He is "verified" and has over 11 thousand followers on Twitter. This includes notable politicians such as Sens. Bernie Sanders, I-Vt., and Earl Blumenauer, D-Ore. HuffPost, formerly known as The Huffington Post, is a news and opinion website founded in 2005 by Arianna Huffington along with Andrew Breitbart, Kenneth Lerer and Jonah Peretti. Huffington served as the editor-in-chief until the company was bought by Verizon in 2016. The website was originally created as a liberal commentary outlet, blog and news aggregator as an alternative to growing conservative news sites like Drudge Report. Although they today hold themselves to a neutral journalistic standard the website is still edited from a liberal perspective. Many consumers of HuffPost are aware of this bias. One thing that is interesting about HuffPost's liberal bias is that Breitbart, one of the key founders, is most known for his founding of Breitbart News several years later. Breitbart News has now grown to become one of the leading publications of the far right and known for its extremely conservative bias. HuffPost has newsrooms and daily editions in 16 countries. On its website it claims to be "the original internet newspaper."

The biggest strength of this source is that it is well-researched and detailed. It is clear that Blumenthal read all, or at least significant amounts, of H.R. 1. He breaks down the three divisions of the bill (voting, campaign finance and ethics) in a way that does not leave a lot of questions to be asked by the reader. He explains each of the sections of the bill in a manner that is easier to understand than the text in the actual bill without sacrificing important details and context. By discussing what purposes the parts of the bill serve and the big-picture effects the bill could have Blumenthal provides the reader with the context needed to understand the political fallout should H.R. 1 be made into law. Although he does not address every single piece of the bill it is an informative article that leaves the reader well-informed. Another strength of the article is how Blumenthal explains the lead-up to the proposal of H.R. 1. Blumenthal explains that House Democrats, led by Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., have been working toward this package of reforms since 2011. Blumenthal also talks about Rep. John Sarbanes, D-Md., overseeing the project since 2017 and how Democrats made these reforms a key part of their platform during the 2018 midterm elections. This past context is important because it shows the reader how important this issue is to the party and the amount of energy and political capital the Democrats are putting behind this bill. A third strength are the sources Blumenthal uses for this article. He quotes both Pelosi and Sarbanes as leaders of the bill but also quotes freshman Reps. Abigail Spanberger, D-Va., and Tom Malinowski, D-N.J., both co-sponsors of the bill. This provides a different perspective than those of career politicians like Pelosi and Sarbanes. A weakness though is that Blumenthal did not quote any oppositions to the bill as sources for this story. He does note that Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., promised that H.R. 1 will not reach a vote in the Senate, but no other opposition is quoted. The article is not necessarily weakened by this omission but providing another source that opposes the bill would



have allowed for more perspective shown in the article and would have helped limit the liberal bias of HuffPost.

Blumenthal can be compared to Mayersohn (2014). Mayersohn's article examines the effects of the U.S. Supreme Court case *Citizens United v. FEC* (2010) in the election cycles shortly following the ruling. The article reports that in the 2012 presidential election, outside spending tripled what was spent in the 2008 election, with over \$600 million spent by super-Political Action Committees and over \$1 billion spent by outside groups. Mayersohn also reports on spending by "dark money" groups and how *Citizens United* affected the 2012 federal elections. Blumenthal reports on how a major part of H.R. 1 involves amending the Constitution so that decisions like *Citizens United* and *Buckley v. Valeo* (1974), also discussed in Mayersohn, can be overturned. Mayersohn's article also shows how much of an increase in money in politics there has been since the *Citizens United* decision. The Democratic party has taken this issue and made it a focus in 2019, as described in Blumenthal. Blumenthal can also be compared to Hinckley and Graham (2018). Hinckley and Graham discusses the history, functionality and benefits of public financing of elections in the United States. The report examines how public financing programs could help reform U.S. federal elections by reducing the potential opportunities for corruption, encourage a more diverse group of candidates to seek public office and to broaden political participation for the public at large. The article uses successful public financing programs for local elections in New York and Seattle as models that could potentially work for large-scale federal and state elections. Blumenthal reports on a piece of H.R. 1 that would create a public financing system for House elections that provides 6 of public money for every \$1 of funds raised up to \$200. Blumenthal notes that this system is based on the one used in New York City that is discussed in Hinckley and Graham.

I will be able to use this article to discuss the long-term effort by the Democratic party over the last decade to implement campaign finance reforms over the last decade and the current landscape of the issue. This article is also useful because it provides information on several reform ideas that I will be able to propose in my paper.

SOURCE: General Periodical

Dake, L. (2019, January 25). Oregon legislature kicks off work to curb campaign spending.

*OPB.org*. Retrieved from <https://tinyurl.com/y56czmbn>

This article reports on Oregon lawmakers making campaign finance reform a priority for the current legislative session. Dake reports that this agenda comes right from the top with Gov. Kate Brown, a Democrat, telling the Legislature that work needs to be done to curb the amount of political money spent in Oregon. Dake notes early in the article that Oregon's most recent gubernatorial election, which Brown won over Republican state Rep. Knute Beuhler, was the most expensive in the history of the state. According to the article, Brown spent three times as much money as her three Democratic predecessors on her most recent campaign. Most of Brown's financial support came from unions. Most of Beuhler's money came from executives of large Oregon corporations. Most notable was a \$2.5 million donation from Nike CEO Phil Knight. A recently created state Senate committee on campaign finance is tasked with developing measures to rein in these laws. Brown says this is an important issue because elections have become less competitive in recent years due to the amounting political spending which creates barriers on who can run in elections and who can make impactful donations to candidates. One of the ways that Brown hopes this issue is addressed is through more transparency in campaign spending by requiring political nonprofits to disclose donations. Another way Brown hopes to increase transparency is by requiring political donations to be disclosed quickly after the transactions are made. Currently there is a 30-day window before they are required to be made public. Finally, Brown also wants caps on donations from both individuals and political action committees. Oregon is one of few states with no cap on contributions. For changes to be made in this area voters would have to approve amendments to

the Oregon constitution surrounding free speech. The article also quotes Republican Sen. Tim Knopp, a member of the new campaign finance committee, on the importance of the issue.

Dake is a reporter and producer covering politics for Oregon Public Broadcasting. She has spent most of her career covering state and local politics as well as rural issues in different areas around the Pacific Northwest. Prior to joining OPB, she worked for 3 years at The Columbian as the paper's state politics reporter, beginning in March 2014. The Columbian is the only newspaper circulated daily in Vancouver, Washington. Concurrent with her time at The Columbian Dake also worked as a freelance reporter for The Guardian in the Portland area. Before joining The Columbian she began her reporting career in the Pacific Northwest at The Bulletin in Bend. From 2007-2011 Dake was a reporter and then became the statehouse bureau chief for The Bulletin's bureau in Salem until leaving for The Columbian in 2014. She began her career in media in 2006 as a Washington, D.C., correspondent for the Waterbury Republican-American in Waterbury, Conn. She then worked as a contributing writer for MTV before becoming a news intern and freelance contributor for the Christian Science Monitor in New York City before spending four months in Bogotá, Colombia as a contributing writer for the Associated Press. She held all four of those jobs within 2006. She graduated from Northwestern University in 2005. Oregon Public Broadcasting is the main television and radio public broadcasting network for Oregon and southern Washington. The network consists of five television stations and over 20 radio stations. Original regional and local programming is a large part of OPB's programming menu but it also carries programs from the Public Broadcasting Service, American Public Television, National Public Radio, Public Radio International, American Public Media, Public Radio Exchange and BBC World Service. OPB television is a major producer of programming for PBS through distributors like APT. Although they hold

themselves to a neutral and journalistic standard some may view OPB as having a liberal bias. It is not uncommon for outsiders to perceive public broadcasting networks as having this bias.

The biggest strength of this source is that it succinctly summarizes how Brown wants the Legislature to address campaign finance reform in Oregon. The article reported on reducing barriers to run for office, increased transparency and addressing “dark money” as top priorities set by the governor. This is useful information because it educates the reader on how this problem is multi-faceted. Although the descriptions of these issues are brief, they do also let the reader know how deep-rooted money is in Oregon politics. Another strength is how the article portrays Brown. Dake reports on Patrick Starnes being present for this address by Brown. Starnes was an independent candidate in the 2018 Oregon gubernatorial race. Most of his platform was built upon campaign finance reform. Toward the end of the race he dropped out and gave his endorsement to Brown because he believed she was the candidate most willing to address campaign finance reform. The article also reports on Brown’s prior pushes for campaign finance reform. In the past she has pushed for donation limits of \$2,600 for individuals and \$5,000 for political action committees. These two pieces of information strengthen the source because it shows that the Oregon political sphere views Brown as being serious about campaign finance reform. But this could also be seen as a weakness if the reader thought OPB or Dake had a bias in favor of Brown. However, this is balanced out by further information in the article that Brown has benefitted greatly from donations by labor unions throughout her political career. A weakness of this source is that the article only cites one other source: Sen. Tim Knopp, R-Bend, a member of the Senate’s campaign finance committee. He is quoted at the end of the article as saying the state is heading towards a constitutional republic where few individuals select who is elected and that that idea would be “disturbing for every American, every Oregonian.” Although

using Knopp as a source is a strength because he is a Republican, which shows that it is not just Brown and other Oregon Democrats who view campaign finance reform as a major issue, using multiple sources involved in Oregon politics would have further strengthened the article.

Dake's article can be compared to Davis (2019). Davis's article reports on campaign spending in Oregon and the effects that it has had on state politicians' decisions, particularly on environmental issues. This article, like Dake's, presents this issue as a major problem in Oregon. It reports on Oregon's campaign finance laws being some of the loosest in the country. It discusses the problems of the high cost of running elections in Oregon, the massive spending by corporations and industry groups, the connections between that corporate spending and Oregon's loosening of environmental protection laws, and how the state's environmental protection and election watchdog agencies have been rendered almost useless by state legislators. Davis reports that in 1973 Oregon lawmakers voted to limit the amount of money lawmakers can spend in an election, then two years later the Oregon Supreme Court struck down this decision, citing that campaign spending limits violated the free speech protections in the state constitution. Davis writes that since then the state has had no controls on campaign spending. The reforms Brown talked about by Dake would be groundbreaking because they would be the first campaign finance reforms in Oregon implemented in over 40 years as is detailed by Davis. Dake can also be compared to Golden (2019). Sen. Jeff Golden, D-Ashland, is the chair of the Oregon Senate's campaign finance committee. He said in his interview that he believes campaign finance is one of, if not the, most important issue facing Oregon politics. Like Brown, he said that placing contribution limits and limiting "dark money" through more rigorous disclosure policies are important reforms that need to be implemented. In Dake, Brown is reported to have said that she would like to see some sort of campaign finance reform on the ballot for 2020. Golden said that

this process is in place and that in the 2020 election Oregon voters will be able to vote on a measure that currently exists as Senate Joint Resolution-18. This measure proposes an amendment to the Oregon constitution to permit the government to enact laws and policies that would limit political donations in Oregon. If the people of Oregon vote yes then the Legislature will be able to move forward with implementing more concrete and specific reforms.

I will use this article in the section in my essay that specifically focuses on campaign finance problems in Oregon.

SOURCE: General Periodical

Korecki, N., & Severns, M. (2019, February 25). Warren creates purity test unseen in modern presidential politics. *Politico*. Retrieved from <http://tinyurl.com/y5mxc6aa>

This article reports on the decision by Sen. Elizabeth Warren, D-Mass., to block big-money corporate donors from having access to her campaign for the 2020 Democratic Party presidential primary. Specifically, Warren's campaign will ban donor calls, private donor meetings and high-dollar private fundraising events. Korecki and Severns said in this article that this strategy is a major risk that will direct potential donations toward opposing candidates. But Warren's campaign team believes that this decision will show that she is a principled politician and candidate in a field that has over 20 declared candidates. Either way Warren's campaign is leaving millions of dollars on the table and is expected to significantly under-perform leading candidates like Sens. Bernie Sanders, I-Vt., and Kamala Harris, D-Calif., and Rep. Beto O'Rourke, D-Texas. Candidates like Harris have tapped into wealthy liberal donors while Sanders and O'Rourke have amassed huge followings of small-donors with massive online campaigns. Warren and her campaign have acknowledged this. In the subject line of an email sent to Warren's supporters she said, "This decision will ensure I'm outraised in this this race." The article also reports that in the first 24 hours after her announcement to run Warren raised just under \$300,000. Korecki and Severns compare this to the \$6 million Sanders raised in the first 24 hours after his announcement. Warren's campaign also announced that these policies will likely loosen should she make it to the general election. Opposing campaigns believe that this is simply a preemptive public relations strategy. The article reports on one anonymous staffer from another campaign calling it "blatant expectations-lowering." However, campaign finance reform



advocates have come out in favor of the strategy. A spokesman for the pro-reform group End Citizens United called the tactic “bold and innovative.”

Natasha Korecki is a national correspondent for Politico based out of Illinois covering Illinois and national politics, the federal courts and immigration. In her time at Politico she helped launch the “Illinois Playbook,” a daily tip sheet on Illinois politics. She has worked for Politico since 2015. Prior to her time at Politico Korecki spent over a decade at the Chicago Sun-Times beginning in 2004. She spent eight years as the Sun-Times’ federal courts reporter and from 2012 till her departure in 2015 was the chief political reporter for the newspaper. Before joining the Sun-Times she worked as a reporter for the Daily Herald in Arlington Heights, Ill., from 1997 to 2004. She graduated with a bachelor’s degree in journalism from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign in 1996 and a master’s degree in public affairs reporting from the University of Illinois Springfield in 1997. During her time covering the federal courts for the Sun-Times she reported on several high-profile government corruption cases, including the trials of former Illinois governors Rod Blagojevich and George Ryan. In 2013 she published the book “Only In Chicago” about the Blagojevich scandal and ensuing trial. Korecki was named the 2015 Illinois Journalist of the Year by Northern Illinois University’s department of communications. From 2010 to 2012 Korecki taught graduate level courses on government affairs reporting as an adjunct professor at Columbia College Chicago. Maggie Severns is a reporter covering money in politics for Politico. Much of her reporting has been on the increase in political spending since the U.S. Supreme Court decision *Citizens United v. FEC* (2010). In 2016 Severns covered President Donald J. Trump’s presidential campaign and transition into the White House. She first joined Politico in 2013 to cover education policy in Washington, D.C., where her coverage included lawmakers’ efforts to solve the student-debt crisis and repeal the No Child Left Behind

Act. Her work has also appeared in Business Insider, The Atlantic, Mother Jones and RealClearPolitics, among other publications. Before joining Politico Severns had no journalism experience. She was a program associate and public policy analyst at the nonpartisan think tank New America from 2009 to 2012. Before New America Severns spent a year teaching in the Marshall Islands through the Dartmouth Volunteer Teaching Program. She graduated cum laude with a bachelor's degree from Dartmouth College in 2012 as a double-major in government and English. Politico is a political journalism company that distributes its content through its website, television, printed newspapers, radio and podcasts. The website averages 26 million unique visitors every month. Politico has been accused of having a conservative bias by liberal watchdog group Media Matter for America and of having a liberal bias by conservative website The Daily Caller.

This article does seem to be written with a tone of skepticism as to whether this will be a successful strategy for Warren. This is backed up with information like the comparison of Warren's first-24 hours fundraising numbers to those of Sanders. But the article also acknowledges that this gives Warren a platform to criticize her opponents who do take large amounts of corporate money. Providing these two different points of information strengthens the article by showing the authors gave well-rounded thought into the potential effects of Warren's decision. Another strength was interviewing Ami Copeland, a former deputy finance director for then-Sen. Barack Obama's 2008 presidential campaign. Obama tried a similar tactic that ended up being successful but at the time was unprecedented. Using Copeland as a source and getting her perspective on the issue provides interesting context for a strategy with an unpredictable outcome. The article closes discussing how aides from other campaigns say that this is a strategy to simply lower Warren's supporters' expectations for her fundraising numbers, which some

expect may be significantly lower than her opponents. This is a strength because it gives the perspective of people involved in the 2020 Democratic primary but not in Warren's campaign.

Korecki and Severns can be compared to Garver (2018). Garver reports on predictions that the 2020 presidential election will be the most expensive in history. The article says that \$2.4 billion was spent by candidates and interest groups, with candidates Hillary Clinton and Donald J. Trump spending \$768 million and \$398 million, respectively. These numbers were lower than the leading candidates' spending numbers in the 2012 election, but 2016 is considered an anomaly by most experts, and many agree that 2020 will have the most expensive presidential elections in history. This means that should Warren win the primary and run in the general election she will indeed have to revert to the usual campaign fundraising strategies as discussed in Korecki and Severns. Although the information in Garver is about the general election it could be assumed that the Democratic primary will also be extremely expensive. This could mean that Warren may struggle to keep up with other candidates who have greater resources as the primary race continues. Korecki and Severns can also be compared to Berman (2019). Berman reports on the trend of appealing to small-donors by the various Democratic primary candidates. This article says that Sanders' populist approach toward fundraising is what influenced Warren to forgo big-dollar donations. Berman said that this is because Sanders has polled better than Warren as the candidate of progressive activists. Berman's article echoes the same concerns as Korecki and Severns as about Warren's abilities to compete with higher fundraising candidates because of not using the usual tactics used for raising money.

This article will be useful in the section of my paper where I discuss the current landscape of money in politics and how politicians are now beginning to appeal to the growing sect of voters that view money in politics as a major issue.

SOURCE: General Periodical

Krishan, N. (2019, February 11). The one thing all the 2020 Democratic candidates agree they hate. *MotherJones*. Retrieved from <https://tinyurl.com/yycdfa3b>

This article reports on the trend of many early Democratic candidates for the 2020 presidential election who all have publicly declared that they will not accept money from corporate political action committees (PACs) to finance their campaigns in efforts to portray independence from corporate influence. Sens. Kamala Harris, Calif., Elizabeth Warren, Mass., Cory Booker, N.J., and Kirstin Gillibrand, N.Y., along with Rep. Tulsi Gabbard, Hawaii, and the former mayor of San Antonio, Texas Julian Castro, have all publicly declared that they will not accept these types of funds. Krishan notes from corporate PAC funds do not make that much of a difference in presidential elections in the age of super-PACs that can spend unlimited amounts of money of advertisements and messaging. Political scientists and commentators quoted in the article suggest that the decision to not accept this money is more of a messaging tactic to show that candidates are not under the influence of corporations and that these politicians are serious about campaign finance reform as a public policy issue. This trend was clear in the 2018 midterm elections with 50 Democrats and two Republicans publicly refusing corporate PAC money. Many winners of the 2018 midterm's were propelled to victory thanks to small donor spending. Many of the 2020 Democratic candidates have accepted corporate PAC money in their past elections. Between 2013 and 2018 corporate PACs donated over \$1.3 million to Booker, \$500,000 to Gillibrand, over \$200,000 Harris and \$22,000 to Warren. Warren in particular has been vocal about campaign finance reform and not accepting money from corporations.

Nihal Krishan is a reporter for Mother Jones covering national politics with a focus on campaign finance, lobbying and outside influence on politics and technology policy. He joined

Mother Jones in December 2018 after working on the editorial staff at the political blog The New Republic and as a reporting fellow at the Center for Responsive Politics. The Center for Responsive Politics is a non-profit and non-partisan research group that is one of the leading organizations on campaign finance research and operates the website OpenSecrets.org, which has one of the largest databases of campaign finance information. This gives Krishan unique experience and authority in reporting on campaign finance. Krishan has also worked as a political reporter for InsideSources, Global Competition Review, and Circa.com as well as a Washington, D.C., correspondent for PBS Arizona. Krishan earned his bachelor's degree from Arizona State University in 2015 as a double-major in political science and government and journalism after transferring from American University in Washington, D.C., where he studied international studies and communications. In his time at ASU Krishan worked as the social media editor for The State Press, ASU's student-run newspaper. He also interned in the communications department of the U.S. House of Representatives while he was in college. His work has also appeared in the Boston Globe, USA Today and HuffPost among other publications as well as appearing as a guest multiple times on National Public Radio. Founded in 1976, Mother Jones is a political and cultural news and commentary magazine and is published by The Foundation for National Progress. It is nonprofit and funded through reader support. It is known for having a liberal and progressive bias. In 2017 they were awarded Magazine of the Year from the American Society of Magazine Editors and has been a finalist for 31 National Magazine Awards, while winning seven awards including for General Excellence in 2001, 2008 and 2010. Mother Jones' website claims to reach more than 10 million consumers each month through its website, social-media presence, videos, podcasts, email newsletter and its print magazine.

A strength of this source is the context it provides about political action committees. Krishan briefly explains the way corporate PACs operate, how much they are allowed to donate and how they do not have as much of an impact on presidential campaigns as Super-PACs. This information is important for the reader to know. The statements made about swearing off corporate donations by the politicians referenced in the article make it seem as though not taking corporate PAC donations is the most progressive action a political candidate can take. Many progressive Americans want to see money in politics limited and thus are attracted to candidates who have taken this stance. But, as Krishan explains, taking this stance does not have as much of an effect on a candidate's total fundraising numbers and so it is somewhat of an empty gesture. This context given by Krishan provides valuable information to discern what the candidates are really saying by taking this action. Another strength is that the article is well-sourced. Krishan uses quotes from public statements made by candidates and spoke to campaign staffers as well as outside observers like Daniel Weiner, senior counsel at the Brennan Center for Justice at New York University, and Michael Beckel and Adam Bozzi of campaign finance watchdog groups Issue One and End Citizens United. These sources provide a variety of perspectives on the issue. The data and research on the article are also well-sourced. Krishan used data gathered from campaign finance databases OpenSecrets and MapLight. Both of these are reputable sources with vast databases. Krishan previously worked for OpenSecrets so he is experienced in researching the issue and clearly knows how to find the best information on money in politics. His experience is another strength of the article. A weakness of this source is that Mother Jones is known for a liberal and progressive bias, although Krishan does a strong job of not allowing much bias into this article.

Krishan can be compared to Ye He Lee (2019). Ye He Lee reports on Saikat Chakrabarti, chief-of-staff for recently elected Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, D-N.Y., coming under scrutiny for helping to establish two political action committees that later paid his political consulting corporation, Brand New Congress LLC, over \$1 million in 2016 and 2017. Brand New Congress LLC was the main consulting corporation for Ocasio-Cortez's 2017 campaign. Several conservative groups have filed complaints with the FEC that these funds were not properly disclosed. Throughout her campaign and first weeks in office, Ocasio-Cortez has become one of the leading voices for campaign finance reform and transparency in politics. Krishan illustrates the trend of many early Democratic candidates for the 2020 presidential election choosing not to accept money from corporate PACs in efforts to portray independence from corporate influence. Krishan's article suggests that the decision to not accept this money is a messaging tactic to show that candidates are not under the influence of corporations because of the growing concern about money in politics within the Democratic base. Although Ocasio-Cortez is not running for president, this news could alter the perception of the congresswoman in the public eye and her standing in the Democratic party because of these trends. Krishan can also be compared to Levinthal (2019). Levinthal's article reports on many Democratic primary candidates raising large sums of money through "bundles." This money is collected through a "bundler," a wealthy and well-connected political fundraiser, who collects checks from their friends and associates and then gives the total sum to a candidate. These bundles can be as much as seven figures. Candidates have no obligation to release the names or actions of the bundlers. Although the actions described in Krishan show many candidates as wanting to appear that they are not accepting large donations it is shown in Levinthal that many still are accepting these donations and not disclosing where the money came from.

Krishan's article will be useful in the section of my paper about the current landscape of campaign finance reform and how politicians are choosing to address the issue publicly.



SOURCE: Specialized Periodical-Trade

Berman, M. (2014, July 18). One Good Book: No Major Scandal? No Campaign Finance

Reform. National Journal. Retrieved from <https://tinyurl.com/y5k83vyd>

This article by Matt Berman is about the process of campaign finance reform in the U.S. and asserts that major reforms only happen following a large scandal that leads to public outrage. The article says that America's campaign finance system has been shaped by crises for over a century and may need another crisis for more reform to take place. Berman's article says that a scandal that leads to change needs three components. First, the practice at the root of the scandal must be something that the public finds improper even if it is not illegal. Second, those engaged in the practice must try to hide it. Finally, those people engaged in the wrongful practice must be caught which causes and outraged public that demands Congress to "do something." The article lists two scandal cycles that shaped campaign finance in the U.S. The first began in 1905 when the head of insurance company New York Life confessed to Congress that his corporation had given \$48,702.50 to the Republican National Committee in 1904. Two years later further scandal occurred when it was discovered that railroad executive E.H. Herriman had raised \$250,000 for President Theodore Roosevelt's 1904 campaign upon Roosevelt's request. Berman writes that the scandalized public demanded change and in 1907 the Tillman Act was passed barring corporate campaign contributions. It was followed in 1910 by the Federal Corrupt Practices Act which required disclosure of all campaign funds. The second scandal cycle began in the 1970s with the Watergate scandal and President Richard Nixon's subsequent resignation. Watergate resulted in the passage of the Federal Elections Campaign Act in 1974. This law expanded disclosure requirements, strengthened contribution and expenditure limits and led to the institution of the Federal Election Commission. However, this law was struck down following

the U.S. Supreme Court case *Buckley v. Valeo* (1976), the ruling that equates political donations to free speech under the First Amendment. This cycle continues into the early 2000s with the passage of the Bipartisan Campaign Reform Act in 2002 following the Enron scandal. But these reforms were rendered ineffective following the *Citizens United v. FEC* (2010). Berman closes the article by equating actions of Super-PACs in recent elections to the weight of a major scandal but that due to years of declining faith in government there is minimal public outrage and thus little reason to believe that reforms will be implemented.

Matt Berman is the deputy politics editor at BuzzFeed News. He has held the position since July 2017. Prior to joining BuzzFeed Berman was a senior editor for Politico New York from 2015 to 2017. Before working at Politico he was assistant managing editor at National Journal (where he published this article). Berman first joined National Journal in 2012 as an online editor before transitioning into becoming a staff writer in 2013. He was made assistant managing editor in 2014. Prior to National Journal he worked for one year as a social media and communications assistant at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace in 2012. He began his career in media in 2011 as an assistant editor and reporter for the now-defunct *The Faster Times*. His work has also appeared in *The Atlantic*. Berman earned his bachelor's degree in political science from The George Washington University in 2011. Berman has over 5,600 followers on Twitter. Founded in 1969 as the Government Research Corporation, National Journal is a research and consulting and advisory services based in Washington, D.C. It offers services in government affairs, advocacy communications and policy brands research for both government and the private sector. National Journal was first popularized by their weekly magazine but ended publication after 46 years in December 2015 but they still post journalism

on their website daily. National Journal switched to a paid membership program in 2011 when they began providing strategic research, analysis and consulting. It has over 1,000 members.

A strength of this article is the historical background information it provides about campaign finance reform in the U.S. Berman takes the reader through over a century of American corruption scandals that have resulted in campaign finance reforms. Berman relies on facts from the scandals and reform processes to illustrate how public outrage leads to policy changes rather than rely on suggested correlation between public outrage and actual government action. A second strength is variety of different examples Berman offered in this article. He uses four different scandals and the legislation that followed to show how reform has occurred in the past. This makes the article more multi-dimensional. A weakness of the article is that Berman only relied on one source for his information. He gathered this history from Robert E. Mutch's 2014 book "Buying the Vote: A History of Campaign Finance Reform." Using multiple sources would have possible allowed for Berman to go more in-depth on the anecdotes he selects. A second weakness is how at the end he reasons that there may not be any reform soon because of American's declining lack of faith in their government means that they are not as easily outraged. Berman does not use any evidence to support his claim that the public's faith in government has declined or that people no longer get outraged about campaign finance reform.

Berman can be compared to Jorgensen, Song and Jones (2017). Their article discusses the findings of a study on how the American people feel about campaign finance reform and money in politics in general. The researchers wanted to find out how different Americans felt about these issues and find out how policy narratives, cultural theory and the individuals' political knowledge shaped the individuals' opinions on these topics. The main objective was to find out how all of these factors affected collective policy preference, using campaign finance reform as

the base issue. They found that policy narratives are the most influential in shaping a voter's opinion but cultural theory holds explanatory value for those with high political knowledge. The results of the study led them to believe that as this issue moves more into the public eye support for campaign finance reform will increase. Berman explains how in the past Americans have become concerned about campaign finance when money in politics becomes obviously outsized which correlates with Jorgensen, Song and Jones statement that the more people are aware of money in politics the more likely they are in favor of reform. Berman can also be contrasted to Blumenthal (2019). Blumenthal reports on a bill introduced to the U.S. House of Representatives by Democrats: H.R. 1: The For the People Act. The bill is comprised of election reforms, campaign finance reforms and campaign ethics reforms. The main purpose of the campaign finance section of the bill is to create a public financing system for House elections that provides \$6 of public money for every \$1 of funds raised up to \$200. Candidates who participate in this system would also be prevented from accepting donations from large-money donors. The bill would also require nonprofits and other organizations not required to disclose their donations to make all political spending public and would reorganize the Federal Election Commission from six members to five to avoid deadlocks. The problem with this bill is that it was killed nearly immediately upon reaching the Republican-controlled Senate. Democrats can only pass this bill if they either gain control of the White House or the Senate in 2020. They believe they can win these partly by being the party of election reform. Blumenthal would argue that Americans do not care enough about election reform for the Democrats to make it a key platform issue and that campaign finance reform will not get the American people calling for change.

This article will mostly be useful for the section of essay where I explain the history of campaign finance reform in the United States.

SOURCE: Specialized Periodical-Scholarly Journal

Jorgensen, P. D., Song, G., & Jones, M. D. (2017). Public support for campaign finance reform:

The role of policy narratives, cultural predispositions, and political knowledge in collective policy preference formation. *Social Science Quarterly*, 99(1), 216-230.

Retrieved from <https://tinyurl.com/y6qgnyru>

This journal article discusses the findings of a study on how the American people feel about campaign finance reform and money in politics in general. The researchers wanted to find out how different Americans felt about these issues and find out how policy narratives, cultural theory and the individuals' political knowledge shaped the individuals' opinions on these topics. The main objective was to find out how all of these factors affected collective policy preference, using campaign finance reform as the base issue. In the introduction, the researchers discuss how political spending has long been in the disapproving eye of the American voter and how President Donald J. Trump's 2016 campaign brought new attention to the subject. Using a survey of 2,450 average Americans, the researchers wanted to answer several questions. They were, "What is the range, and dimensions, of public support for various campaign finance proposals?"; "Does more political knowledge lead to more support for campaign finance reform?"; and "Which campaign finance policy narratives are the most persuasive?" The researchers determined the debate around campaign finance reform breaks into three separate subgroups: strengthening campaign finance limitations, deregulating campaign finance reform or ending dependence on private money all-together. They found that policy narratives are the most influential in shaping a voter's opinion but cultural theory holds explanatory value for those with high political knowledge. The results of the study led them to believe that with this issue moving

more into the public eye, support for campaign finance reform will increase through support for public campaign funding, free media time and public funds matching programs.

Paul D. Jorgensen is an associate professor of political science at the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley in Edinburg, Texas. His research interests and areas of expertise focus on the political economy, political parties, campaign finance, lobbying and public policy. Before holding the position of associate professor he was an assistant professor of political science at UT-Rio Grande Valley. Before that he was an assistant professor of political science at the University of Texas Pan American, also in Edinburg. His first professional experience as an academic came as a research fellow at the Edmond J. Safra Center for Ethics at Harvard University. Jorgensen earned his bachelor's degree in economics from the University of Arizona in 1999, his master's degree in political science from Colorado State University in 2003 and his doctorate in political science from the University of Oklahoma in 2011. Geoboo Song is an associate professor of political science and public policy at the University of Arkansas. His research interests and areas of academic expertise are systemic explanation of the variations in individuals' perceptions of policy problems, their policy preferences and their behaviors under certain policy arrangements within highly contentious and controversial domains. Song has been at the U of A since 2012. He earned his bachelor's degree in public administration in 1994 from Hanyang University in Seoul, South Korea, his master's degree in public administration in 1999 from Korea University in Seoul, his Master of International Public affairs degree in 2003 from the University of Wisconsin-Madison and his doctorate in political science from OU in 2012. Michael D. Jones is an associate professor of political science at Oregon State University. His research interest and areas of academic expertise are narrative policy framework, theories of policy process, policy theory, environmental policy and energy policy. He has been at OSU since

2014. Prior to OSU Jones was an assistant professor at the Virginia Institute of Technology. Before VT Jones did two fellowships at the Safra Center for Ethics at Harvard. He earned his bachelor's degree and master's degree, both in political science, from Idaho State University in 2000 and 2004. Like Jorgensen and Song, he earned his doctorate in political science from OU, but his in 2010. *Social Science Quarterly* is published by Wiley-Blackwell on behalf of the Southwestern Social Science Association. It has been in publication since 1919. Wiley-Blackwell was formed in 2007 following the merger of John Wiley & Sons and Blackwell Publishing. It is based in Hoboken, N.J.

A strength of this article is that it provides unique information. This study provides data on the views of Americans about campaign finance reform. This information provides unique data points that are not available in many other places. Another strength is where the survey data comes from. The researchers used a U.S.-Census-balanced survey of 2,450 average citizens from across the country. This means that the survey theoretically is able to collect even data from across many demographics. This is important because it provides a better scope of Americans perspectives rather than if the survey had been focused on specific demographics. Another strength is that the survey questions focused exclusively on campaign finance reform. By using a single-topic survey the participants were able to completely focus on their opinions of campaign finance reform and not have those opinions altered or distracted by other political topics that could have potentially been on the survey. A third is that the survey did measure the respondents' political engagement and knowledge. This is useful because it allowed the researchers to be able to track the campaign finance reform opinions of people who may or may not already have an understanding of the topic compared to those who do not pay as much attention to politics. The final strength was the inclusion of background information at the

beginning of the article. The article discusses developments on campaign finance reform in recent history and other research on Americans' opinions on campaign finance reform and money in politics in general.

This article can be compared to Noble (2019). Jorgensen, Song and Jones reported through their research that the more informed individuals are on the issue of campaign finance reform the more likely they will be in favor of campaign finance reform policies. This can be compared to Noble because he said in his interview that for real change to be implemented citizens have to be willing to "look past the headlines" and actually inform themselves on issues. He applied this to himself; Noble had no idea about the amount of money in Oregon politics until he became involved. Once he saw how much money is in Oregon politics he realized that reform is necessary. Both of these sources explain that the more the public is informed on campaign finance issues, the more support there will be for campaign finance reforms. Jorgensen, Song and Jones can also be compared to Yablon (2017). Yablon proposes implementing campaign finance reform through the private sector instead of through public measures like judicial or legislative decisions. He writes that reformers have long believed that without effective campaign finance reforms, wealthy individuals and organization will always have an outsized influence on the outcome of elections. The article says that although there have been decades of advocacy on this idea there has been little to show for the efforts. One of the reasons he said that campaign finance reform through the private sector is possible is because consumers are willing to vote with their money. Yablon writes that consumers choose to support or not support a business because of that business's political donations and in turn also choose to support or not support a political candidate because of the companies that a candidate has chosen to accept donations from. These



views expressed in Yablon are parallel to the idea that the more a citizen knows about campaign finance, the more important of a political issue they deem it to be.

This article will be useful for the portion of my essay when I discuss how the American people could potentially respond to possible campaign finance reforms.

SOURCE: Specialized Periodical-Trade

Kelly, B. (2019). PAC spending spiked in recent cycles. InvestmentNews. Retrieved from

<https://tinyurl.com/yy2qyj9n>

This article by Bruce Kelly reports on significant increases in spending by several political action committees funded by some of the largest broker-dealer and finance firms in the country. The increase occurred between the 2014 election cycle and the 2018 election cycle. This is notable because these increases in spending occurred while a U.S. Department of Labor fiduciary rule was being challenged by the securities industry. From 2014 to 2018 a PAC run by LPL Financial nearly tripled its spending from \$258,000 to \$742,668, a PAC run by Charles Schwab Corp. more than doubled its spending from \$251,000 to \$520,000, and a PAC run by Ameriprise Financial almost doubled its spending from \$164,000 to \$302,000. Kelly notes that not all large financial firms increased their spending to such an extent. A PAC run by Morgan Stanley increased its spending by 31 percent to roughly \$1.1 million while a PAC run by Edward Jones actually decreased their spending from \$187,000 in 2014 to \$164,000. The Department of Labor fiduciary rule that was in question at the time was first introduced under former President Barack Obama and demanded that retirement investors act in the best interest of their clients rather than their own. The securities industry was widely seen as against the rule. The common complaint was that the rule led to potential for added compliance costs and lawsuits from clients. Many PACs from the industry directed their political donations to Rep. Ann Wagner, R-Mo., who wrote legislation intended to kill the rule. The LPL Financial PAC's contributions went from being split 54 percent toward Republicans and 46 percent to Democrats in 2014 to being split 74 percent toward Republicans and 26 percent toward Democrats in the 2018 election cycle.

Eventually the rule was not killed in Congress but vacated in the 5<sup>th</sup> U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals following a lawsuit brought forward by several industry groups.

Bruce Kelly is a reporter and senior columnist for InvestmentNews covering independent broker-dealers and wirehouses. He joined InvestmentNews in 2000 as a brokerage reporter. From 1998 to 2000 Kelly wrote for InvestmentNews' sister publication Pensions & Investments. Prior to financial journalism Kelly worked as a middle and high school English teacher. He writes an award-winning bi-weekly column called On Advice. In 1997 he earned his master's degree in journalism from Columbia University. His work has appeared in Bloomberg Businessweek, Forbes and Investopedia, among other publications and websites. Kelly has over 3,000 followers on Twitter. Founded in 1998 InvestmentNews is one of the leading sources for news, analysis and information in the financial industry. It publishes a weekly print newspaper as well as producing daily content for their website including video and webcasts. Its total print circulation is 61,000 with over 153,000 weekly print readers. It has the largest market share for print advertisers in the financial news industry. Its daily email newsletter reaches over 177,000 readers. InvestmentNews' website has over 540,000 total registrants and averages 1.8 million page views a month with 527,000 unique users a month. In 2017 InvestmentNews was awarded the Jesse H. Neal Award for Best Website. The Jesse H. Neal Awards are some of the most prestigious editorial awards in specialized journalism. In recent years InvestmentNews also began doing highly customized research projects for financial companies and hosting industry events on topics such as tech finance, women in finance, diversity and inclusion in finance and industry innovation. Its offices are headquartered in New York City and they also have offices in Chicago and Washington, D.C. InvestmentNews is owned by the publicly traded, London-based media and information company Bonhil Group plc.

A strength of this article is the detail of information used to show how the different financial PACs increased their political spending. By detailing the actual amounts and percentages over time it emphasizes to the reader how big the spending increase was. Another strength of the article was that Kelly also included information about PACs that did not increase their spending as aggressively or even decreased their spending. This gives the article a more measured tone than if it simply pointed out that financial PACs were spending heavily while their industry was under government scrutiny. If Kelly had not done this the reader might generalize that all or most financial corporations with PACs were pouring money into politics to try and kill the Department of Labor's fiduciary rule. A third strength was the inclusion of information about what percentage of political contributions was going to the two political parties. The information about the LPL Financial PAC's donation taking a 20-point swing from 2014 to 2018 is some of the most striking evidence in the article. This showed that instead of just contributing money to politicians they think will wholly strengthen their industry LPL Financial was specifically trying to achieve an objective with their donations. The article is also well-sourced. Kelly interviewed two independent observers from the finance industry who are well-informed on the subject as well as spokespersons for the corporations.

Kelly can be compared to Federal Election Commission (2017). This document is a data summary of campaign spending during the 2016 United States federal election cycle, from Jan. 1, 2015, to Dec. 31, 2016. It provides financial information on presidential candidates, congressional candidates, political party committees, political action committees, independent expenditures, electioneering communications and communications costs. The document shows that in the 2016 election cycle, presidential election candidates raised and spent \$1.5 billion, congressional candidates raised and spent \$1.6 billion, political parties received and spent \$1.6

billion and political action committees raised and spent \$4 billion. Spending in congressional elections has fluctuated over recent election cycles because of the variation in the number of candidates campaigning election-by-election. Kelly can also be compared to Greenhut (2019). In his article Greenhut advocates for small government. He writes that if the size and power of the government is reduced there will be less need for corporations to become involved in politics. Greenhut would likely say that diminishing the role of the government in monitoring the financial industry would help to clean the money out of politics and do away with the issues discussed in Kelly.

This article will be useful as an example of how corporations spend money on political contributions to benefit their industries, sometimes to accomplish very specific goals.

SOURCE: Specialized Periodical-Scholarly Journal

La Raja, R., & Schaffner, B. (2014). The effects of campaign finance spending bans on electoral outcomes: Evidence from the states about the potential impact of Citizens United v. FEC. *Electoral Studies*, 33, 102-114. Retrieved from <http://tinyurl.com/yx9whscv>

This article presents findings from a study conducted to find out the effects of campaign finance laws on state elections. This study was spurred by the then-recent Citizens United v. FEC (2010) U.S. Supreme Court ruling that eliminated bans on corporate and union political donations. La Raja and Schaffner were trying to determine what sort of potential effects the Citizens United decision could have on federal elections. Their study focuses on whether corporate and union spending bans generate electoral outcomes that are noticeably different from the outcomes in states that lack these types of spending bans. La Raja and Schaffner measured this by comparing two key electoral dynamics that these types of bans could influence. These are the partisan balance of power and the success of incumbent candidates. For their research La Raja and Schaffner used election data from 49 states from 1968 to 2009. They hypothesized that, based on theoretical expectations about the partisan preferences of corporations, the presence or absence of spending bans does shape partisan control of state legislatures and incumbent electoral advantage. But the results of their study actually ended up showing that these bans have little or no impact on state election outcomes. This confirmed some previous findings on spending bans and election outcomes. In the conclusion La Raja and Schaffner acknowledge that there are limitations to their research. One is that the study just focused on the two outcomes while there are potential effects that they are not able to examine like spending bans potentially increasing constituent trust in their elected officials and leading to more responsiveness and accountability in elected officials. The other limitation is that election dynamics at the state level

may not be generalizable to federal elections due to a greater incentive for corporations and unions to take advantage of unlimited spending in national elections.

Raymond La Raja is a professor of political science at the University of Massachusetts Amherst. His research focuses are political parties, interest groups, elections, campaign finance, political participation, American state politics, public policy and political reform. La Raja began at UMass Amherst as an assistant professor in 2002. He was promoted to associate professor in 2008 and made a full professor in 2016. He published his first book, “Small Change: Money, Political Parties and Campaign Finance Reform,” in 2008. La Raja is the co-founder of the political science journal *The Forum*, is the associate director of the state and national polling group UMass Poll and is a member of the academic advisory board of the Campaign Finance Institute. La Raja earned his bachelor’s degree in history and literature from Harvard University in 1987 and his master’s degree in public policy in 1992, also from Harvard. In 2001 he earned his doctorate in political science from the University of California, Berkeley. Brian Schaffner is the Newhouse professor of civic studies at Tufts University in Medford, Massachusetts. He has held the position since 2018. He also is a faculty associate at Harvard’s Institute for Quantitative Social Science and a co-principal investigator for the Cooperative Congressional Election Study which is a national survey of about 50,000 voters. Prior to joining Tufts Schaffner taught at UMass Amherst as an associate professor from 2008 to 2013 and as full professor from 2013 to 2018. From 2008 to 2009 Schaffner was the program officer for political science at the National Science Foundation. He taught as an assistant professor at American University from 2004 to 2008 and at Western Michigan University from 2002 to 2004. In 1997 he graduated from the University of Georgia with a bachelor’s degree in political science and earned his doctorate in 2002 from Indiana University, also in political science. In 2015 La Raja and Schaffner co-wrote

“Campaign Finance and Political Polarization: When Purists Prevail.” The American Political Science Association awarded this book with the 2016 Virginia Gray Best Book Award for best political science book on the subject of U.S. state politics or policy in the preceding three years. *Electoral Studies* is an international bi-monthly academic journal on elections and voting. It is widely recognized as a major journal of political science and has an impact factor of 1.203. *Electoral Studies* is housed at Royal Holloway, University of London and published through the Dutch information and analytics company Elsevier.

One strength of the article is that it begins by providing important background information about campaign finance restrictions on corporations and unions in the U.S. This shows the reader the historical context for this study, which is important because the researchers looked back at 51 years of data. Another strength is that the article clearly explains the model used to find these results. Without this in-depth explanation, the reader would have a hard time deciphering how the researchers came to their conclusion that the effects of spending bans on elections are minimal. A weakness of this article is that the two areas that it measures, incumbent success and party balance, are not the only aspects of politics affected by campaign finance reform. Although how these areas are affected by campaign finance reform is important to consider when talking about the issue at large, aspects like policy changes and politician productivity go unmeasured. Another weakness is that these findings might not be translatable to elections on the federal level because of the amount of money spent on those elections and other outside factors seen in federal elections that are not as apparent in state elections.

This article can be compared to Yablon (2017). Yablon proposes implementing campaign finance reform through the private sector instead of through public measures like judicial or legislative decisions. He writes that reformers have long believed that without effective



campaign finance reforms, wealthy individuals and organization will always have an outsized influence on the outcome of elections. The article says that although there have been decades of advocacy on this idea there has been little to show for the efforts. Many of these potential reforms are limited to begin with, hit political roadblocks or become watered down by loopholes. Because of this constant failure by the government to monitor itself, Yablon proposes moving the discourse on campaign finance reform toward possible private sector correctives. La Raja and Schaffner's findings that spending bans have minimal impact on state elections supports Yablon's argument that campaign finance reforms attempted through public measures have fallen flat and had little impact on actually changing how elections are won in the U.S. La Raja and Schaffner can also be contrasted with Mayersohn (2014). He examines the effects of the U.S. Supreme Court case Citizens United v. FEC (2010) in the election cycles shortly following the ruling. The article reports that in the 2012 presidential election, outside spending tripled what was spent in the 2008 election, with over \$600 million spent by super-Political Action Committees and over \$1 billion spent by outside groups. Mayersohn writes that Citizens United unleashed unprecedented amounts of outside spending in the 2010 and 2012 election cycles. Although the Citizens United ruling clearly had a large effect on federal elections, as Mayersohn details in his article, La Raja and Schaffer's research suggests that Citizens United did not heavily affect state elections.

I will be able to use this article in my essay when discussing the Citizens United ruling and as evidence in the section of my essay where I lay out the arguments against campaign finance reform.

SOURCE: Specialized Journal

Yablon, R. (2017). Campaign finance reform without law. *Iowa Law Review*, 103(1), 185-243.

Retrieved from <http://tinyurl.com/y2gqnlk>

This article proposes implementing campaign finance reform through the private sector instead of through public measures like judicial or legislative decisions. Robert Yablon writes that reformers have long believed that without effective campaign finance reforms, wealthy individuals and organization will always have an outsized influence on the outcome of elections. The article says that although there have been decades of advocacy on this idea there has been little to show for the efforts. Many of these potential reforms are limited to begin with, hit political roadblocks or become watered down by loopholes. Because of this constant failure by the government to monitor itself, Yablon proposes moving the discourse on campaign finance reform toward possible private sector correctives, which he says has been long overlooked in favor of public regulation. Yablon says there are many extra-legal reforms that could be made through the private sector that could at least begin to restrain big-money's grip on American elections. He writes that there are many actors in the electoral system outside of the government who have incentives to limit money in elections. Yablon offers potential reforms through limiting big money, diluting big money's influence and minimizing big-money abuses. These could be implemented by corporations setting donation limits on themselves or not donating altogether, which Yablon says many corporations have begun doing because of concerns of negative reactions from consumers, shareholders and voters. He also writes that the influence can be diluted by candidates refusing corporate money, spreading anti-big-money messages and using the internet to focus on small-donor fundraising. Finally, he suggests that big-money abuses could be limited by corporations taking it upon themselves to disclose their campaign

donations. Yablon mentions that this is also something many corporations have been doing in recent years. Yablon concedes that implementing these reforms through the private sector would not come without challenges.

Yablon is an assistant professor at the University of Wisconsin-Madison Law School where he teaches civil procedure, federal jurisdiction and the law of democracy. His academic research interests are political and election law, constitutional law and statutory interpretation. The UW-Madison Law School website lists him as an expert on the Supreme Court, the federal judicial system and political and election law, specifically on voting rights and campaign finance. Yablon earned his bachelor's degree as a double-major in economics and political science at UW-Madison. He then went on to be a Rhodes Scholar at the University of Oxford where he earned his master's degree in social policy. Following Oxford he earned his law degree at Yale University. At Yale he worked as an articles editor for the Yale Law Journal. He then worked in several different functions of the legal system in both public service and private practice. He began as a clerk for Judge William Fletcher of the U.S. Court of Appeals of the Ninth Circuit. He then clerked in the Supreme Court for both Justice Ruth Bader Ginsberg and Justice Sonia Sotomayor. In private practice he worked on appellate litigation for the firm Orrick, Herrington & Sutcliffe LLP in both Washington, D.C., and San Francisco. In this role he was the principal author of many appellate and trial-level briefs and argued in a number of state and federal courts, including the U.S. Supreme Court. He has published articles in several academic journals. In 2018 UW-Madison Law School students selected him to receive the Classroom Teacher of the Year Award. Established in 1915, the Iowa Law Review is published by the University of Iowa Law School, where it is edited by students. New issues are published five times a year. It is ranked ninth among law journals in the United States.

A strength of the article is that Yablon clearly explains the problems of campaign finance reform and why public regulation has not worked to slow the amount of big money in politics. The article informs the reader about the different ways that reform has been attempted through laws and regulations and how those attempts have failed. It explains that many reformers in the public sector have simply attempted to implement the same campaign finance reform proposals over and over again with little traction. Most importantly, the article explains how it would be almost impossible to implement major campaign finance reforms without amending the Constitution, which is a long process that rarely occurs. By doing so, Yablon exposes the broken campaign finance system and the fact that public institutions have failed to protect elections from corruption. This makes the main arguments of the article, the possibilities of how private regulation could curb big money in elections, more appealing to the reader. One weakness is that some of the ideas proposed in the section about public regulation are based on theoretical ideas about how social norms and the political climate could potentially change. However, he does acknowledge this problem in the paper and states that public regulation could only work if specific factors are in place. Another strength is that the article is clearly well-researched, with over 300 sources cited.

Yablon can be compared to La Raja and Schaffner (2014). Their research was conducted to find out the effects of campaign finance laws on state elections. It focuses on whether corporate and union spending bans generate electoral outcomes that are noticeably different from the outcomes in states that lack these types of spending bans. They measure this by comparing party success in state elections and the success of incumbents in elections in 49 states from 1968 to 2009. The results found that spending bans have had limited effects on these state election outcomes when compared to states without spending bans. This supports Yablon's argument that

campaign finance reforms attempted through public measures have fallen flat and had little impact on actually changing how elections are won in the U.S. Yablon can also be contrasted with Davis (2019). Davis reports on the extreme lack of campaign finance laws in Oregon. The article presents this issue as a major problem in Oregon. It discusses the problems of the high cost of running elections in Oregon, the massive spending by corporations and industry groups, the connections between that corporate spending and Oregon's loosening of environmental protection laws, and how the state's environmental protection and election watchdog agencies have been rendered almost useless by state legislators. This runs counter to Yablon's idea that corporations can self-regulate their campaign donations. Oregon has some of the loosest campaign finance laws in the country. Corporations and candidates have not used this freedom to act responsibly and morally with their campaign finance decisions. Rather they influence elections and policy decisions in mutually beneficial manners for the politicians and the corporations that do not put the greater good of the state as the top priority.

I will use the reform ideas discussed in this article as potential answers to the campaign finance problems that I will present in my essay.

SOURCE: Institutional Source

Hensel, D. (2016). New poll shows money in politics is a top voting concern. *Issue One*.

Retrieved from <https://tinyurl.com/yy1939kz>

This article reports on the results of a poll of how Americans feel about voter issues. The poll was on issues from across the political spectrum but the article focused on the results from questions about money in politics and campaign finance reform. The poll was conducted less than six months before the 2016 presidential election between Hillary Clinton and Donald J. Trump. The article reports that Americans viewed money in politics as a top-five political issue heading into the election. But of the issues in the top five, which also included the economy, health care, education and terrorism, money in politics was the only one that elected leaders had not addressed with major legislation in over a decade. The overwhelming majority of respondents to the poll, 78 percent, said the country needs sweeping new laws to reduce the influence of money in politics. For respondents 55 years or older, which means they would have been old enough to see the passage of both the Federal Election Campaign Act of 1971 and the Bipartisan Campaign Reform Act of 2002, 85 percent believed new laws were needed. Although Americans are often divided on many political issues, and they particularly were during the 2016 election, 72 percent of respondents wanted the parties to work together to reduce the influence of money in politics, with 81 percent of Democrats and 79 percent of Republicans calling for bipartisan reform. Despite this there was little faith in either party to implement reforms, as 37 percent of respondents said the Democrats are more likely to implement reforms and 23 percent said Republicans are more likely to while 40 percent responded with neither party. Over 80 percent of respondents said that money in politics is a bigger problem than ever before. Of respondents 55 or older, who would have been at least 12 years-old during the Watergate

scandal, 90 percent said money in politics is a bigger problem now than in any point in their lives. On whether or not respondents felt as though their views were being left out of the political process, 93 percent said their views are being ignored in favor of wealthy voters. 70 percent of respondents said that if action is not taken then our democracy is at risk.

Daniel Hensel is a news assistant for National Public Radio's Morning Edition. He has held the position since August 2018. He began his time at Morning Edition as an intern during the summer of 2018. Prior to working on Morning Edition Hensel was a production assistant for Michigan Public Radio's Stateside, MPR's flagship daily program. While Hensel was in college he worked for Issue One as a digital communications intern, a policy and programs intern and as a freelance contributor. Hensel graduated from the University of Michigan in 2018 with a bachelor's degree in political science. He wrote for U of M's student-run newspaper, The Michigan Daily, for two years. Issue One is a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization that works on reducing the role of money in American politics. Its aim is to increase public awareness of what it views as problems within the present campaign finance system and to reduce the influence of money in politics through enactment of campaign finance reform. Issue One was formed in 2014 through the merger of campaign finance reform organizations Americans for Campaign Reform and Fund for the Republic. The executive director of Issue One is Nick Penniman. Penniman is also one of the cofounders of the organization. Its advisory board is chaired by former Sens. Alan Simpson, R-Wyo., Bill Bradley, D-N.J., and Bob Kerrey, D-Neb. The advisory board has over 40 members including former U.S. Solicitor General Charles Fried, retired Army Gen. Wesley Clark, historian and commentator Doris Kearns Goodwin, former Chairman of the Federal Reserve Paul Volcker and former Federal Election Commission chairman Trevor Potter. Potter also was the general counsel for the presidential campaigns of both George H.W. Bush and John

McCain. He is one of the most critical voices of unlimited spending and “dark money” contributions within the Republican Party.

A strength of this source is the organization that conducted the survey. Issue One partnered with global market research firm Ipsos. Ipsos has vast resources and is known for conducting reliable and accurate studies and polls. It has the fourth-highest revenue share in the world among leading market research companies. By partnering with Ipsos for this poll Issue One was able to procure reliable and accurate data that supports the goals of the organization without sacrificing credibility. Another strength is how the Issue One presented the data from the poll. The article does not just give the raw information from each poll question but briefly analyzes the data for each question. The article offers information about how Republicans, Democrats and Independents feel about the issues. It also shows how different age demographics feel about these topics. This is particularly interesting when examining older demographics because of their experience with past campaign finance scandals and reforms. A weakness of the article is that a small part of the data, focused on which candidate respondents trusted more to fix money in politics, is no longer useful due to the poll being three years old.

Helsen can be compared to Krishan (2019). Krishan reports on the trend of many early Democratic candidates for the 2020 presidential election who all have publicly declared that they will not accept money from corporate political action committees to finance their campaigns in efforts to portray independence from corporate influence. Sens. Kamala Harris, Calif., Elizabeth Warren, Mass., Cory Booker, N.J., and Kirstin Gillibrand, N.Y., along with Rep. Tulsi Gabbard, Hawaii, and the former mayor of San Antonio, Texas Julian Castro, have all publicly declared that they will not accept these types of funds. Political scientists and commentators quoted in the article suggest that the decision to not accept this money is more of a messaging tactic to show



that candidates are not under the influence of corporations and that these politicians are serious about campaign finance reform as a public policy issue. This trend was clear in the 2018 midterm elections with 50 Democrats and two Republicans publicly refusing corporate PAC money. Many winners of the 2018 midterm's were propelled to victory thanks to small donor spending. Many of the 2020 Democratic candidates have accepted corporate PAC money in their past elections. These politicians discussed in Krishan are attempting to capitalize on the sentiments of voters expressed in Helsen. Helsen can also be contrasted with Berman. Berman writes about the process of campaign finance reform in the U.S. and asserts that major reforms only happen following a large scandal that leads to public outrage. The article says that America's campaign finance system has been shaped by crises for over a century and may need another crisis for more reform to take place. Berman closes the article by equating actions of Super-PACs in recent elections to the weight of a major scandal but that due to years of declining faith in government there is minimal public outrage and thus little reason to believe that reforms will be implemented. Although Helsen reports on mass frustration among the American people when it comes to money in politics Berman's article suggests that the people are more apathetic, disappointed and frustrated than outraged.

I will use this source in my essay to show how Americans have felt about campaign finance reform and money in politics through the past decade.

SOURCE: Institutional Source

Mayersohn, A. (2014). Four years after Citizens United: The fallout. *OpenSecrets.org*. Retrieved from <https://tinyurl.com/y5mcqxsks>

This article examines the effects of the U.S. Supreme Court case *Citizens United v. FEC* (2010) in the election cycles shortly following the ruling. The article reports that in the 2012 presidential election, outside spending tripled what was spent in the 2008 election, with over \$600 million spent by super-Political Action Committees and over \$1 billion spent by outside groups. The article also reports on spending by “dark money” groups and how *Citizens United* affected the 2012 federal elections. Andrew Mayersohn writes that *Citizens United* unleashed unprecedented amounts of outside spending in the 2010 and 2012 election cycles. Outside spenders were active before 2010 but were legally limited in the ways they could spend money to influence elections. The article says the *Citizens United* decision paved the way for direct corporate spending and the creation of super-PACs. But, because of potential public backlash, publicly traded corporations have been wary to donate to super-PACs. However, privately held companies have not been as restrained and were among the 2012 elections biggest outside spenders, Mayersohn says. Corporations are still possibly active in political spending when giving to the dark money groups that were created because of *Citizens United*. These dark money groups are nonprofits that do not have to disclose their political donations but have the same spending rights as for-profit corporations. The article reports that dark money donations accounted for a quarter of total non-party spending in 2012. It is suspected that much of this money was given to the super-PACs by corporations, but the total sum is unknown. Mayersohn notes that *Citizens United* has not handed elections to the party that simply spends more. In the

2012 presidential race Barack Obama won re-election and Democrats gained seats in both congressional houses despite being vastly outspent by Republican groups.

Mayersohn is a researcher for the Center for Responsive Politics, the institution that runs OpenSecrets.org. He joined the Center for Responsive Politics in 2013. Prior to joining the Center for Responsive Politics, he was a fellow with the Progressive Change Campaign Committee. The PCCC is a political action committee focused on building progressive power through advocacy campaigns for liberal and progressive ideas and campaigning for progressive candidates. Mayersohn graduated from Yale University in 2011 with a bachelor's degree in political science. At Yale he served as the treasurer of Students for a New American Politics, which is the country's largest student-run PAC. The Center for Responsive Politics, formed in 1983, is a nonprofit, nonpartisan research group that tracks effects of money and lobbying on American elections and public policy. The institution was founded by former Sens. Frank Church, D-Idaho, and Hugh Scott, R-Pa. OpenSecrets.org was launched by the Center for Responsive Politics in 1996. Its website is one of, if not the, most extensive database of campaign and political spending information on the internet. The executive director of the Center for Responsive Politics is Sheila Krumholz. Krumholz became the head of the institution in 2006. OpenSecrets.org has won many awards for the quality of its website and the content it provides. Most recently, OpenSecrets.org was honored with the 2013 Sigma Delta Chi Award from the Society of Professional Journalists for Public Service in Online Journalism. The Center for Responsive Politics has many notable donors, including the Sunlight Foundation, the Pew Charitable Trusts, the Carnegie Corporation of New York, the Open Society Institute, the Joyce Foundation and the Ford Foundation.

A strength of this article is how Mayersohn explains in detail the different effects of the Citizens United ruling. Mayersohn does not just describe the changes that Citizens United made to the American electoral system but also goes in depth to describe how different actors, like politicians and corporations, reacted to those changes in the following elections. This leaves the reader with a well-rounded perspective on the effects of Citizens United. Another strength is the credibility of the data and information in the article. Because the article is published by the Center for Responsive Politics', one of the most reputable sources on campaign finance, the reader knows that the data is up to date and comes from the most credible sources. Because the Center for Responsive Politics wealth of data is so deep, Mayersohn is able to use interesting data points and trends, such as the rise of PACs created to support just one candidate. A third strength is that it is not just data that Mayersohn uses to illustrate his points but also using information from human sources, in this case Trevor Potter, the general counsel for John McCain's 2008 presidential campaign, and Rick Hansen, a law professor at the University of California-Irvine. Using these human sources in addition to the data points allows the reader to understand the different perspectives of this issue from experts' points of view. A weakness of the article is that Mayersohn did not provide much information about the landscape of campaign finance prior to the Citizens United ruling. Providing some information about money in politics before Citizens United would give the reader more context on the issue as a whole.

This article can be contrasted to La Raja and Schaffner (2014), which presented the findings of a study on the effects of Citizens United on state elections. It focuses on whether corporate and union spending bans generate electoral outcomes that are noticeably different from the outcomes in states that lack these types of spending bans. The results found that spending bans have had limited effects on these state election outcomes. Although the Citizens United

ruling clearly had a large effect on federal elections, as Mayersohn details in his article, La Raja and Schaffer's research suggests that Citizens United did not heavily affect state elections.

Mayersohn can also be compared to Blumenthal (2019). His article reports on a bill introduced to the U.S. House of Representatives by Democrats called the "For the People Act." The bill is comprised of election reforms, campaign finance reforms and campaign ethics reforms. It was initiated by House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., and Rep. John Sarbanes, D-Md. Blumenthal discusses how part of the bill aims to overturn Citizens United, which would be difficult because it would involve amending the Constitution. According to the article, without making changes to the First Amendment it would likely be nearly impossible to overturn Citizens United.

Mayersohn's article shows how much of an increase in money in politics there has been since the Citizens United. The Democratic party has taken this issue and made it a focus in 2019, as described in Blumenthal.

I will use this article to provide information about the immediate effects of the Citizens United decision when providing background context on the issue for my readers.

SOURCE: Government Document

Federal Election Commission. (2017, April 7). *Statistical summary of 24-month campaign activity of the 2015-16 election cycle*. Retrieved from <http://tinyurl.com/yycumy7o>

This document is a data summary of campaign spending during the 2016 United States federal election cycle, from Jan. 1, 2015, to Dec. 31, 2016. It provides financial information on presidential candidates, congressional candidates, political party committees, political action committees, independent expenditures, electioneering communications and communications costs. The document shows that in the 2016 election cycle, presidential election candidates raised and spent \$1.5 billion, congressional candidates raised and spent \$1.6 billion, political parties received and spent \$1.6 billion and political action committees raised and spent \$4 billion. Independent expenditures totaled \$1.6 billion during the 24-month period. Electioneering communications totaled \$56.1 million and communication costs totaled \$28.7 million. The source also provides the spending information for presidential candidate and congressional candidate spending in the prior three election cycles. Total spending among presidential candidates increased in 2016 from 2012 following a slight decrease compared to the 2008 election cycle. Presidential candidates spent nearly double in the 2008 election compared to total spending in the 2004 election. Spending in congressional elections has fluctuated over recent election cycles because of the variation in the number of candidates campaigning election-by-election. The source also breaks down the spending for the major individual party committees for the 2016 election. Democratic committees spent \$870 million while Republican committees spent \$752 million. Committees from other political parties spent a total of \$6.8 million. Finally, it breaks down the spending by different types of political action committees. This includes

corporate PACs, labor PACs, trade PACs, membership PACs, cooperative PACs and corporations without stock PACs, as well as several types of nonconnected PACs.

The Federal Election Committee is an independent regulatory agency with the purpose to enforce campaign finance laws in United States federal elections. The FEC was formed in 1975 following amendments made to the Federal Election Campaign Act. Its duties are to disclose campaign finance information, to enforce the provisions of the law such as the limits and prohibitions on contributions and to oversee the public funding of presidential elections. The committee meets in closed sessions to discuss matters that legally must stay confidential and in public sessions to formulate policy and vote on legal and administrative matters. There are six members of the FEC. They are appointed by the president and confirmed by the Senate. The members serve six-year terms with two seats subject to appointment every two years. In an effort to curb partisan decisions no more than three commissioners can be members of the same political party with all decisions requiring at least a 4-2 majority vote. The chairmanship of the commission rotates among the members every year. Members are not permitted to serve as the chair of the committee more than once a term. The current chairwoman of the committee is Ellen Weintraub. Weintraub also served as the chair in her two prior terms in 2003 and in 2013. The current vice-chair is Matthew Petersen. The other two members of the committee are Caroline Hunter and Steven Walther. Two seats on the committee are currently vacant. All four active members of the commission were also members during the publication of this source. During the publication of this data the chair of the committee was Ann Ravel. Lee Goodman was also a member of the commission during the 2016 election cycle. Some critics of the FEC argue that at this point the committee serves the interests of the politicians it was intended to regulate; its

bipartisan structure renders it toothless due to deadlocks and penalties levied by the FEC often come long after the actual election that the offenses occurred in.

The biggest strength of this document is the quantity of information within the source. This provides information on every type of spending connected to federal elections, with links to detailed data summary tables with reports for specific candidates and political groups. One strength is that the document provides the 24-month financial information for candidates in the previous three presidential races and candidates in the previous five years of congressional races. This allows the reader to easily compare the 2016 election cycle with recent past elections and recognize the changes year by year. This gives the reader more context for the information in the document. A slight weakness is that it did not provide recent historical spending by political party committees or political action committees or information on how much was spent in recent election cycles on independent expenditures, electioneering communications or communication costs. These extra details would have provided more context for the reader on those specific types of spending. But another strength is the amount of detail included for information on the spending by specific major political party committees and the different types of political action committees. The document lists six types of political party committees (not including political party committees at the state and local levels), plus the total spending by each party overall, and 11 political action committees.

This source can be compared to Fredreka Schouten (2018) who reports on the record-setting amount of money spent in the 2018 midterm congressional elections. Schouten reports that over \$5 billion was spent during the midterm election campaigns, a 35 percent increase from the 2016 midterms. Democratic candidates for the U.S. House of Representatives had raised more than \$950 million at the time of publication, a week before Election Day 2018, while



Republican candidates for the House spent \$367 million. According to the Federal Election Commission data, candidates from both parties combined to spend just over \$1 billion in 2016. The Federal Election Commission information can also be compared to Ryan Garver (2018). Garver reports on predictions that the 2020 presidential election will be the most expensive in history, similar to the information in Schouten on congressional elections. The article says that \$2.4 billion was spent by candidates and interest groups, with candidates Hillary Clinton and Donald J. Trump spending \$768 million and \$398 million, respectively. These numbers were lower than the leading candidates' spending numbers in the 2012 election, but 2016 is considered an anomaly by most experts, and many agree that 2020 will have the most expensive presidential elections in history. The Federal Election Commission data shows the cycle-by-cycle increase in spending since 2004, when just \$850 million was spent on elections. By 2016 there was a 55 percent increase in spending. According to Garver's article, this trend should continue to surge in 2020.

This document will be useful to my essay. I will use the data points from this source to explain background information on the amount of money spent in federal elections in the U.S.

SOURCE: Government Document

Democracy Reform Task Force (2019). *H.R. 1: The For The People Act Section-By-Section*.

Retrieved from <http://tinyurl.com/yatkdfpz>

This source is a breakdown of a H.R. 1: The For The People Act, a bill recently proposed by Democrats in the U.S. House of Representatives to implement sweeping election reforms. The bill focuses on making it easier for U.S. citizens to vote, reforming campaign finance laws and imposing stronger ethics laws. This document delivers an abbreviated version of the actual bill. It was created by the Democracy Reform Task Force, a 15-member committee of Democratic representatives chaired by Rep. John Sarbanes, D-Md. Specifically, the bill looks to improve access to voting, promote integrity in elections, ensure security, guarantee disclosure, empower citizens and strengthen oversight, fortify ethics law and impose greater ethics enforcement. It is broken into three sections: voting, campaign finance and ethics. Of these each is full of provisions that are aimed at cleaning up federal elections in the U.S. One of the most notable parts of the bill falls under the campaign finance section. Division B, Title V, Subtitle A, proposes to amend the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution so that *Citizens United v. FEC* (2010), can be overturned and campaign finance reforms can be implemented. This has been something that Democrats have wanted since the *Citizens United* decision was ruled on but will be difficult to follow through on. Another important part of the campaign finance section of the bill is the proposal to ban all foreign money in elections. That section also contains proposals to require super-PACs to disclose donors who give over \$10,000 and to establish a publicly financed 6-1 matching system on small-dollar donations up to \$200 for both congressional and presidential elections.

The Democracy Reform Task Force is an effort in the U.S. House of Representatives, led by Sarbanes, to clean up federal politics and put the public's interest ahead of special interests. The task force specifically looks to fight back against actions taken by the Republican Party and the President Donald J. Trump administration that it believes makes Washington, D.C., more corrupt. It does this by conducting oversight of ethical violations, challenging special-interest policy and advancing positive democracy reforms. Including Sarbanes, the committee has 15 members. They are all Democrats. This list includes John Cicilline, R.I., Katherine Clark, Conn., Elijah Cummings, Md., Ted Deutch, Fla., Debbie Dingell, Mich., Reuben Gallego, Ariz., Pramila Jayapal, Wash., Annie Kuster, N.H., Barbara Lee, Calif., Zoe Lofgren, Calif., Mark Pocan, Wis., David Price, N.C., Jamie Raskin, Md., and Jan Schakowsky, Ill. In 2018 the Democrats gained control of the House and were able to pass this bill in the early stages of the 2019 congressional session.

The biggest strength of this document is the quantity of information within the source. This provides information on every type of spending connected to federal elections, with links to detailed data summary tables with reports for specific candidates and political groups. One strength is that the document provides the 24-month financial information for candidates in the previous three presidential races and candidates in the previous five years of congressional races. This allows the reader to easily compare the 2016 election cycle with recent past elections and recognize the changes year by year. This gives the reader more context for the information in the document. A slight weakness is that it did not provide recent historical spending by political party committees or political action committees or information on how much was spent in recent election cycles on independent expenditures, electioneering communications or communication costs. These extra details would have provided more context for the reader on those specific

types of spending. But another strength is the amount of detail included for information on the spending by specific major political party committees and the different types of political action committees. The document lists six types of political party committees (not including political party committees at the state and local levels), plus the total spending by each party overall, and 11 political action committees.

The bill can be compared to Hinckley and Graham (2018), which discusses the benefits of public election financing and proposes a public finance system of donation matching for federal elections. If H.R. 1 were to pass this practice would be put into action. Division B, Title V, Subtitle's B and C of the Bill propose a 6-1 matching system on small-dollar donations up to \$200 for both congressional elections and presidential elections. This article can be contrasted with Yablon (2017), who argues that campaign finance reform should be handled in the private sector instead of by the government. Yablon discusses the different ways that reform has been attempted through laws and regulations and how those attempts have failed. It explains that many reformers in the public sector have simply attempted to implement the same campaign finance reform proposals over and over again with little traction. Some of these tactics are being attempted again by Democrats in the bill, including a constitutional amendment to create a pathway to overturn *Citizens United v. FEC* (2010). Yablon explains that the process amending the constitution is difficult and has been attempted by other politicians since the *Citizens United* ruling. H.R. 1 proposes this process in Division B, Title V, Subtitle A to amend the constitution to clarify the states' and Congress' role and authority in regulating elections.

This will be one of the most used sources for my essay. I will be able to use it when discussing potential reforms, the landscape of campaign finance reform and the amount of partisanship on this issue.

SOURCE: Subject Interview

Noble, R. (2019, March 21). Interview by Joe Stuart. From notes and audio recording.

McMinnville, OR: Black Rock Coffee Bar, [Rep.RonNoble@oregonlegislature.gov](mailto:Rep.RonNoble@oregonlegislature.gov).

Rep. Ron Noble, R-McMinnville, is the state representative for the 24<sup>th</sup> district in the Oregon House of Representatives. Noble said that before he entered politics he had no idea how much money was involved in politics and elections in Oregon. He said he assumed it was a significant amount but did not pay close enough attention to that issue before becoming a politician. Noble said that many citizens think like this and that part of keeping elections clean is that the citizens have to be willing to look “past the headlines” and be willing to become informed. Noble said that in his first race for office in 2016 his campaign, his opponents’ campaign and third-party donors spent over \$1.5 million on the race despite the district only having around 67,000 constituents. A part of the reason that Noble’s first campaign was so expensive was because there was no incumbent running for re-election. This made the race for the seat representing the 24<sup>th</sup> district one of the most tightly contested races in the state during that cycle. Noble’s race for re-election in 2018 was significantly less expensive, costing a combined total of \$50,000. Noble said one of the easiest reforms to implement would be banning donations and spending from outside of Oregon. Noble said that it does not make sense for corporations, unions and individuals located outside of a state to be able to influence the outcomes of races of politicians who do not represent them. He said this could be easily fixed because unlike most campaign finance reforms, limiting out of state donors does not violate the first amendment of the state constitution. A reform measure that Noble said he is against is the use of public money to fund elections. He said that public money to fund elections would limit

the voice of the voter because then a taxpayer's money might go toward a politician whom they do not support.

Noble is in his second term as the representative for the 24<sup>th</sup> district in the Oregon House of Representatives. His district mostly covers the city of McMinnville and other parts of Yamhill County. He was elected in 2016. In his first election he received 55 percent of the vote over Democratic candidate Ken Moore. Noble sits on three Legislative committees: the Committee for Human Services and Housing, for which he is the vice-chair, the Committee on Health Care and the Joint Committee on Transportation, for which he is the vice-chair. Noble worked as a police officer for 28 years. He began his career with the Corvallis Police Department in 1988. He worked there until he was hired as chief of police for the McMinnville Police Department in 2006. Noble held the position for eight years until being hired as the director of college public safety at Linfield College in McMinnville in 2014. Noble worked at Linfield through 2017. Noble earned his bachelor's degree from Seattle Pacific University after transferring from Oregon State University. He earned his master's degree from Portland State University from the Hatfield School of Government Public Safety Command College. He also completed training from the FBI National Academy in 2011. When Noble was serving as chief of police in McMinnville he also served as the president of the Oregon Association of Chiefs of Police. In this capacity he testified before state Legislative committees on public safety issues.

A strength of this interview is Noble's experience in running in a high-cost state election. Since Noble's first election was so expensive, he gained a first-hand perspective on the high cost of elections in Oregon during his earliest involvement in politics. That makes this a more important issue to Noble than it would be to a politician who has not been involved in a high-cost race. It also makes Noble more informed on campaign finance in Oregon and what level of

fundraising it takes to win a tight race in Oregon. Another strength is Noble's slight removal from this issue. Although clearly affected by campaign finance laws in Oregon, Noble does not sit on any campaign finance reform committees and has not campaigned on election reforms as a key issue. But it is clear from the interview that this is an issue that he cares about and thinks needs to be resolved. Noble certainly has a perspective on campaign finance reform in Oregon but because he is not directly involved in the policymaking around the issue he is potentially less biased. A third strength of this interview is that Noble was upfront with his responses. He did not respond to questions like some politicians do and try and avoid or shift questions. Noble seemed comfortable and confident on his true opinion about campaign finance reform. Noble's interview provided transparency into what Oregon politicians actually think about their unregulated campaign finance landscape. A weakness of the interview is that Noble has only been in the Oregon legislature for three years. This means his opinions on campaign finance reform may only be formed from experiences from a comparatively shorter time. A more experienced state representative might have a more nuanced or in-depth perspective on campaign finance reform.

This interview can be compared to Davis (2019). Davis reports on campaign spending in Oregon and the effects that it has had on state politicians' decisions, particularly on environmental issues. The article presents this issue as a major problem in Oregon. It discusses the problems of the high cost of running elections in Oregon, the massive spending by corporations and industry groups, the connections between that corporate spending and Oregon's loosening of environmental protection laws, and how the state's environmental protection and election watchdog agencies have been rendered almost useless by state legislators. Oregon has become one of the least-regulated states in the country and has the highest spending on elections per capita of any state. Noble said in his interview when he first ran for office he was "blown

away” by the amount of money it took to win an election in Oregon. He said that he is in favor of some sort of reform that limits money in Oregon politics, which Davis shows is a major problem in the state. Noble can also be contrasted to Jorgensen, Song and Jones (2017). They reported through their research that the more informed individuals are on the issue of campaign finance reform, the more likely they will be in favor of campaign finance reform policies. This can be compared to Noble because he said in his interview that for real change to be implemented, citizens have to be willing to “look past the headlines” and actually inform themselves on issues. He applied this to himself: Noble had no idea about the amount of money in Oregon politics until he became involved. Once he saw how much money is in Oregon politics he realized that reform is necessary.

I will use this interview when discussing the issue of campaign finance reform specifically in Oregon. The information about the high cost of Noble’s first election will be useful in establishing the stakes of this issue.



SOURCE: Policymaker Interview

Davis, R. (2019, April 8). Interview by Joe Stuart. From notes. McMinnville, OR: Linfield College, 503-294-7657, rdavis@oregonian.com.

Rob Davis is an investigative reporter for The Oregonian who In March of 2019 wrote a four-part series titled “Polluted By Money” on the relaxed campaign finance laws in Oregon and the effects that these laws have had on environmental standards. Davis’ main beat is on the environment. Two environmental stories led him to discover the lack of campaign finance regulations in Oregon and how they connect to poor environmental regulations. The first was about aerial spray regulations. Davis said that in Oregon corporate farm companies have minimal regulations about where and how often planes can spray pesticides and other chemicals on crops. Planes can even spray close to other properties like schools and private homes. Davis said the legislatures in Washington and California passed laws to regulate aerial spraying, but similar bills keep dying in the Oregon Legislature. The other environmental issue that led him to this investigation was the rise in the amount of oil transported via train. In 2016 a derailed train caused a massive oil spill and fire along the Columbia River during peak salmon migration. Both Washington and California implemented laws to limit the amount of oil shipped via railroad. Similar bills in the Oregon Legislature died. Davis said there was initially no clear reason as to why these bills kept dying. He wanted to figure out why Oregon was such an outlier compared to its neighboring states and why it had this “myth of environmentalism.” He started looking at the lack of limits on campaign donations after Nike CEO Phil Knight made large donations to Knute Buehler, the Republican nominee in the 2018 Oregon gubernatorial race. From here he began connecting political donations from corporations to different lawmakers, failed bills and the loose environmental standards. Although there is a push for campaign finance reform in the

Oregon capital, Davis says that the message around this issue is being misrepresented. He was specifically referring to Gov. Kate Brown's statement that Oregon elections are being decided by "a few wealthy individuals." Davis said that this issue goes beyond a few corporate individuals because corporate entities from all over America are donating to Oregon politicians and are taking advantage of Oregon because of the weak environmental laws here. Davis said that he is interested to see how the current reforms being pushed in the Oregon Legislature turn out because he is not sure if these reforms are legitimate. He said he is concerned that the reform attempts are just for political appearances because the politicians won their seats from the political system. Davis said that he has heard from many readers who could not believe that this was how their state operates but that lawmakers have been quiet in responses to the investigative report.

Davis has been at The Oregonian since 2013. Prior to The Oregonian, Davis wrote for the Voice of San Diego, an online-only nonprofit news site. From 2006-2012 he was a senior reporter and assistant editor on investigative journalism stories, many of them focused on the environment. His stories specifically covered development, water supplies, endangered species, broken government problems and persistent pollution problems. One of his biggest news stories was a 2008 report on wrongdoing at San Diego's downtown redevelopment agency that forced the cancellation of a \$406 million hotel deal. At The Oregonian two of his biggest stories were investigations into the safety risks posed by oil trains and the state's poorly handled investigations into complaints by residents about herbicide exposures. In 2017 Davis was given the Bruce Baer Award by the Oregon Society of Professional Journalists. This award is considered the highest recognition for investigative reporting in Oregon. He was given the award for his series "Toxic Armories," which revealed lead hazards in National Guard armories

nationwide, many of which also hold public events. During his time in San Diego, Davis served on the board of directors for the Society of Environmental Journalists, the only North American membership association for journalists focused on coverage of environmental-related issues. Prior to working for the Voice of San Diego, Davis was a staff reporter for The Free-Lance Star in Fredericksburg, Virginia, from 2003 to 2005 and for the Hanover Herald-Progress in Ashland, Virginia, from 2000-2003. In 2000, He earned his bachelor's degree from the University of Richmond. Founded in 1850, The Oregonian is the oldest continuously published newspaper on the West Coast. It is the most widely circulated newspaper in Oregon. The Oregonian is owned by mass media corporation Advance Media and is published by the Oregonian Media Group.

The biggest strength of this interview is that Davis has done more in-depth reporting on recent developments on campaign finance reform than any other journalist in Oregon. Davis spent several months doing investigative work on his four-part series for The Oregonian. No other Oregon media outlets have produced this expansive of a report on the issues surrounding campaign finance in Oregon. Because of how closely he has covered this issue he has more expertise on state campaign finance reforms than any other media member in Oregon. Another strength is how his article raised awareness about these issues. His series on the correlation between the lack of campaign finance regulations in Oregon and plummeting environmental standards brought these issues to the forefront of many Oregonians' concerns. Davis's reporting was groundbreaking because many Oregonians do not realize how much money was involved in Oregon politics or how non-environmentally friendly their state has become. His series helped make campaign finance reform one of the most important issues in the current Oregon political sphere. This is another reason why he is one of the most reputable media sources on this issue at the state level. A weakness of this interview could be that Davis' main role at The Oregonian

does not directly involve politics. He is an environmental reporter. This has been his focus throughout his career. His investigative reporting for his four-part series began with trying to figure out why environmental standards in Oregon were far behind those in other states and he eventually discovered the lack of regulations on political donations made to Oregon lawmakers. From there he began investigating campaign finance. This source could be considered weak because Davis was new to this field when he began reporting on it. Another weakness is the length of the interview. Davis was only available for about 20 minutes so not as much information was procured from the interview as could have been possible in a longer interview.

The interview can be compared to Lauren Dake (2019). Dake reports on Oregon lawmakers making campaign finance reform a priority for the current legislative session. Dake reports that this agenda comes right from the top with Gov. Brown, a Democrat, telling the Oregon Legislature that work needs to be done to curb the amount of political money spent in the state. The article states that Oregon's most recent gubernatorial election, which Brown won over Republican state Rep. Beuhler, was the most expensive in state history. According to the article, Brown spent three times as much money as her three Democratic predecessors on her most recent campaign. In his interview Davis said the reforms Brown talked about in Dake would be groundbreaking because they would be the first campaign finance reforms in Oregon implemented in over 40 years. But Davis also said that he is skeptical of campaign finance reforms that Dake reported on taking hold in the near future because the Oregon lawmakers, including Brown, won their elected positions in the system. Davis' interview can also be compared to Noble (2019). In Noble's interview he said that one of the biggest flaws he sees in the current campaign finance system is that out-of-state donations are allowed. He said that people who do not live in Oregon or corporations headquartered outside of Oregon should not be

able to influence Oregon elections. He said one of the easiest campaign finance reforms to implement would be banning these types of donations. Davis said in his interview that Brown says that this is a problem of “a few wealthy individuals” controlling who is elected in Oregon. But Davis said this is not the case and that the ideal is simply political messaging. There are many corporations and extremely wealthy donors who are influencing Oregon elections and a large number of them operate from outside of the state.

This interview will be useful for the section of my essay where I focus in specifically on the issues surrounding campaign finance regulations in Oregon.

SOURCE: Policymaker Interview

Kelly, D. (2019, March 13). Interview by Joe Stuart. From notes and audio recording.

McMinnville, OR: Linfield College, [dikelly@linfield.edu](mailto:dikelly@linfield.edu)

Dimitri Kelly discussed the different parts of campaign finance reform. Most of what was discussed was based on developments in the last 20 years in U.S. politics. Kelly said that the biggest impacts on campaign finance in the last 20 years were the 2008 presidential election and the Citizens United v. FEC (2010) U.S. Supreme Court decision. The 2008 presidential campaign, between then-Sens. Barack Obama, D-Ill., and John McCain, R-Ariz., had a large increase in fundraising compared to past presidential elections. One of the biggest reasons for this was the Obama campaign's strategy to create a grassroots movement of small donor funding mostly promoted on and collected through the internet. Kelly said that this model was then seen again in Sen. Bernie Sanders', I-Vt., campaign in the 2016 Democratic presidential primary and then again in several congressional races in the 2018 mid-term election cycle. It has also already been used by candidates in the early stages of the 2020 Democratic presidential primary race and is a trend that is likely to continue for future elections. Kelly said that coupling that trend with the Citizens United ruling, which allowed for more corporate spending than ever in U.S. elections, created a huge influx of money into U.S. politics. Kelly talked about the bill H.R. 1: The For The People Act, which was recently passed in the U.S. House of Representatives, and how the campaign finance pieces of that bill would work should it turn into law. Kelly was skeptical of the bill's proposal to overturn the Citizens United decision through Congress, which he said is unrealistic. Kelly said the only way that the ruling will be overturned is if the Supreme Court was restructured to be opposed to Citizens United, a process that will take years until the court becomes skewed to that side.

Kelly is an assistant professor of political science at Linfield College in McMinnville, Oregon. He has been on the Linfield faculty since 2013. His academic focuses are political behavior, media and politics, political psychology and elections. Much of his research has focused on the citizens' connection to politics with an emphasis on the role of media as an intermediary, public distribution of political information, the decision to participate in politics, the degrees of ideological restraint, polarization in political society and the media's role in polarization in political society. Kelly's ongoing research project, funded by the National Science Foundation in Alexandria, Virginia, explores cognitive responses to biased political news-media and the effects of partisan news on political polarization. Kelly earned his bachelor's degree from the University of California, Davis and his doctorate in political science from the University of Wisconsin, Madison. At Linfield, he teaches courses on political communication, the American presidency, politics and inequality and a study abroad course in Brazil. Linfield was founded in 1858 and is one of the oldest institutions of higher learning in the Pacific Northwest. A small, private liberal-arts college, Linfield educates around 2,000 students and offers three types of degrees in over 50 different majors. The political science department aims to teach students to think critically, systematically and creatively about important political questions through conceptual, theoretical and methodological tools; communicate well to a range of audiences, both written and verbally; apply coursework to current political issues and student experience through study abroad, internships and community service; and to engage effectively and responsibly in civic and civil debate and discourse.

A strength of this interview is that Kelly provided other resources to use to research campaign finance reform. Throughout the interview he referenced watchdog institutions like Open Secrets and the Sunlight Foundation as well as a colleague of his at the University of

Wisconsin, Madison, also a political science professor, who has spent a lot of time researching campaign finance reform during his career. Referencing these sources allowed for more information to be found after the interview concluded. Another strength of this source is that Kelly's academic expertise lays in American elections. He has spent much of his career researching the different aspects of elections, including the funding of political campaigns. Because of this Kelly was able to connect how campaign finance relates to other parts of political campaigns like advertising, messaging and polling. This provided a more well-rounded view of political campaigns and how excessive spending can and has altered elections. One part of this interview that could be considered a weakness is that Kelly seemed highly skeptical about the possibility of Citizens United being overturned by way of a constitutional amendment. This is somewhat contrary to the current view on campaign finance reform. Many campaign finance reform advocates and politicians who are pushing for campaign finance reforms often highlight this task as something that must, and can, be accomplished. Although, Kelly's skepticism could also be considered a strength. Many of the leaders on this issue who are pro-reform believe that the Citizens United decision will be overturned with changes to the First Amendment. Kelly is not anti-campaign finance reform but is a neutral observer. His perspective on campaign finance reform is rooted in reality but also may not be in line with current thinking on the issue because of the push for a constitutional amendment to overturn the Citizens United ruling.

This interview can be compared to Brown (2016). Brown's book discusses money in American politics from many different aspects and focuses on the question of: if both the public and politicians are aware that money in politics is a problem, why has there been so little change? Brown offers several ideas for reform throughout his book, but ends up concluding that barring a campaign finance scandal the magnitude of Watergate, there is little reason to believe



that there will be any change from the current political system. Kelly was also skeptical of major change. Both Brown and Kelly said that overturning the Citizens United decision, either through legislation or through the U.S. Supreme Court, would be highly difficult and that reform through other measures would be more effective because they could be more easily implemented. Kelly can also be compared to Goldmacher and Kaplan (2019). Goldmacher and Kaplan report on early fundraising numbers from the Democratic primary race for the 2020 presidential nomination. It particularly focuses on South Bend, Ind. Mayor Pete Buttigieg. Buttigieg reportedly raised \$7 million through the first quarter of fundraising. The \$7 million came from 158,550 individual donors for an average donation of \$36.35. Buttigieg's campaign also reported that 64% of the donations were less than \$200. In his interview Kelly discussed the growth of grassroots campaigns and small-dollar donations after Obama's successful presidential campaign in 2008. He discussed how they became common in both congressional races and in the 2016 presidential race, particularly within the campaigns of Sanders and Donald J. Trump. Kelly said that this trend is likely to continue through future elections. Goldmacher and Kaplan document the continuation of this trend in their article.

This interview will be useful in my essay when discussing the history of campaign finance reform, the affects that loose campaign finance regulations have on other parts of elections and the likeliness of a constitutional amendment being used to overturn Citizens United.

SOURCE: Policymaker interview

Titus, K. (2019, April 9). Interview by Joe Stuart. From notes. McMinnville, OR: Linfield College, 503-283-1922, [ktitus@commoncause.org](mailto:ktitus@commoncause.org)

Kate Titus discussed possible campaign finance reforms in Oregon and the work that watchdog organizations like Common Cause do to help create and uphold free and fair elections at every level of government. Kate Titus said that implementing campaign finance reforms in Oregon is imperative. But she also said the process will likely take time and that it will take a combination of different reforms. Titus said that the current system in place “drowns out” the voices of any Oregonians who can’t afford to donate large sums of money to candidates. This leads to most voters not donating any money at all, so it seems that the big-money donors have an exaggerated impact on Oregon elections. She added that when the voters believe that their donations have little impact and that their lawmakers are bought by big corporations, fewer constituents vote and become engaged in the democratic system because they see their efforts as futile. Titus said this current system ultimately creates barriers to running for office and for constituent participation. This means that groups that have faced institutional and structural barriers, like women and minorities, are less likely to become involved in the political process. This creates a lack of diversity among the people in power. Titus said that in Oregon the most important reform that needs to be implemented is campaign contribution limits. She said in her interview that nearly every other state in the country has some sort of contribution limit. She said that another key reform would be implementing small-donor contribution programs. Titus and Common Cause have done a significant amount of work advocating for small-donor elections. Beginning in 2020, local elections in Portland will have small-donor elections, much in part because of work by Common Cause and Titus. Titus said small-donor reform works because it

allows candidates to focus on meeting with constituents during campaigns instead of fundraising and elected officials are then not indebted to corporations after their campaigns. She also added that small-donor elections allow for a more diverse set of candidates who can run for public office. This leads to more diverse ideas in the governing body and creates greater constituent trust in candidates which then leads to greater political involvement.

Titus is the executive director of Common Cause Oregon. She joined the organization in 2013 after two decades working as a community organizer and public policy advocate. Prior to Common Cause, Titus worked for the national Change to Win labor federation, an organization of labor unions with over 5 million members. Before Change to Win, Titus was at Public Citizen, where she was the deputy director of the global trade watch division. Public Citizen is a consumer advocacy group that lobbies in the public interest. Before those two organizations, Titus was the executive director of Oregon Action, a grassroots organization that works for economic justice in Oregon for minorities and disadvantaged groups. She has also sat on several executive boards, including for the Northwest Federation of Community Organizations, which builds affiliations between community-run organizations throughout the Pacific Northwest. Another executive board she sat on was that of USAaction, now known as Priorities USA, which is the largest super-Political Action Committee of the Democratic Party. It is most known for supporting then-President Barack Obama's 2012 re-election campaign and for being the primary super-PAC for Hillary Clinton's presidential campaign in 2016. Titus earned a bachelor's degree from Connecticut College and a master's degree in public administration from the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University. She is a registered lobbyist in Oregon. Common Cause is a government watchdog group headquartered in Washington, D.C., with chapters in 35 states. The organization's main issues are constitutional conventions, government ethics, voting

and elections and money in politics. The Oregon chapter of Common Cause is most known for its recent work to help pass a law to create automatic voter registration using Department of Motor Vehicles information and creating a small-donor election system for local elections in Portland through Portland's city council.

A strength of this interview is the amount of experience Titus has in political reform. By working as a lobbyist, policy advocate and community organizer, Titus has seen how change should be implemented and what kinds of reforms work to create free and fair elections. Because she is someone who has already led successful election reforms in Oregon through the DMV voter registration law and Portland's small-donor elections, it is clear that she is experienced with and knowledgeable about the Oregon political system. Another strength of this source is when the interview took place. Campaign finance reform is a top issue in Oregon right now and it is the top priority for Titus and Common Cause Oregon. She was well-versed in recent developments because of her work in the last few months to promote election reform in Oregon. A weakness of the interview is that Titus holds a liberal bias. She has worked for many organizations that fight for liberal causes such as minority equity and strengthening labor unions. The clearest example of a liberal bias is her time spent on the board of USAaction. Albeit campaign finance reform is one of the top issues of the Democratic party at both the federal level and in Oregon. Most campaign finance advocates are likely to hold a liberal bias. Another weakness was that Titus was not available for an extensive interview. The interview was only about 30 minutes so not as much information could be gained from the interview as might be possible with a longer interview.

Titus can be compared to Democracy Reform Task Force (2019). Democracy Reform Task Force's document, a summary of H.R. 1: The For The People Act, a bill intended to

implement sweeping election reforms, which was brought to the U.S. House of Representatives by Democrats in February 2019. Division B, Title V, Subtitles B and C, respectively, propose a small-donor matching program for both congressional and presidential elections. Both propose a publicly-financed 6-1 matching system on donations up to \$200. This means that for every dollar donated by a small-money contributor, the government would match the donation times six. The bill cites the success of a similar program in New York City elections. Titus said that these types of programs are one of the keys to campaign finance reform and also cited the success of the New York Program. Titus, Common Cause Oregon and other reform advocacy groups are promoting small-donor programs as a reform for Oregon statewide elections. This interview can be contrasted with Noble (2019). Rep. Noble, R-McMinnville, said that he does not believe in small-donor programs for publicly financing elections. Noble said that it is wrong because taxpayer money is being spent on candidates that those taxpayers do not necessarily support. Essentially, if Democrats pays their taxes but then that public money is given to a Republican candidate, Noble views this as unfair because taxpayers are being forced to throw money at candidates they are not voting for and would not donate to in the first place.

This interview will be important for my essay when discussing potential reforms, steps taken in Oregon to implement election reforms and the reform process overall.

SOURCE: Site Observation

Oregon Senate Committee on campaign finance meeting. (2019, March 20). Observation by Joe Stuart. Oregon State Capital building, Salem, OR. From notes.

This observation of the Oregon Senate Committee on Campaign Finance was the most recent of regularly scheduled meetings for this committee. The committee is comprised of five members. In attendance for the meeting was former Oregon gubernatorial candidate Patrick Starnes, one of the most vocal proponents of campaign finance reform in Oregon, and Kate Titus, the executive director of Common Cause Oregon. The meeting focused on Senate Joint Resolution-18-4. SJR-18 proposes an amendment to the Oregon Constitution relating to limiting or prohibiting political contributions. This meeting discussed the fourth version of the bill. Committee chairman Sen. Jeff Golden, D-Ashland, opened the meeting by discussing the several campaign finance reform bills moving around both chambers of the state legislature. He also said that the committee had an obligation to Oregonians to have this issue on the ballot by the next election cycle. Three people testified at the meeting. Norman Turrill, the president of the League of Women Voters of Oregon, testified in favor of SJR-18. Daniel Meek, a pro bono attorney for Honest Elections Oregon and the Oregon Progressive Party. Meek also testified in favor of the bill but highlighted what he saw as five key problems with SJR-18. Starnes was the final person to testify. He did not provide a pre-written statement or information. Starnes used his time to simply voice encouragement to the committee on passing SJR-18. The committee had the option to advance to a work session following this meeting but instead elected for a fifth draft of SJR-18. Golden reiterated the importance of passing this initiative and said that he hoped to advance to a work session following the proposal of the fifth draft the following week.

The Senate Committee on Campaign Finance is a five-member committee that holds a three-to-two Democratic advantage. It was formed in January 2019 after vocal support for campaign finance reform in recent months from voters, legislators and Gov. Kate Brown. Because campaign finance reform has recently become a hot-button issue at both the federal level and in Oregon, it has been one of the more high-profile committees in the early stages of the current legislative session. Golden serves as the chair of the committee and the co-chair is Sen. Tim Knopp, R-Bend. The other three members are Senate Majority Leader Ginny Burdick, D-Portland, and Sens. Fred Girod, R-Stayton, and Floyd Prozanski, D-Southern Lane and Northern Douglas counties. Girod was absent due to a forest fire near his home. Prozanski arrived about 10 minutes late to the committee meeting. Golden is a former journalist, radio personality, political activist and television producer. He attended Harvard University but did not graduate. He instead left to live a sustainable life in southern Oregon after volunteering on a cooperative farm in Georgia. Knopp is a former small-businessman who previously served in the Oregon Senate from 1999 to 2005. During that time, he spent one term as the Senate majority leader. Burdick is the longest tenured senator on the committee. A former environmental activist; she was first elected in 1996. She is one of the leading Oregon lawmakers on gun control measures. Girod is a practicing dentist who previously served two terms in the Oregon House of Representatives in 1992 and 2006. He was elected to the Senate in 2008. Prozanski, a former attorney, also previously served in the House, from 1995-2000. He was elected to the House again in 2003 but left halfway through the term to assume the Senate seat left vacant in his district. He won re-election for that seat in 2004 and has held the office ever since.

A strength of this observation was that it showed that Oregon politicians believe that it is important for campaign finance issues to be addressed. The four present members of the committee all seemed to be in favor of passing some sort of campaign finance reform legislation. Although recent reports have showed that Oregon politicians have done little to address the issue of money in Oregon politics these senators seemed committed to at least providing the people of Oregon with an option to address campaign finance in the next election cycle. This observation provided clarity on the view of campaign finance reform in the Oregon legislature. Another strength was that this observation provided information about what outside groups are pushing for campaign finance reform. With representatives from Common Cause Oregon, the League of Women Voters of Oregon, Honest Elections Oregon and the Oregon Progressive Party all present, it is clear that liberal and progressive institutions in Oregon are in favor of campaign finance reform. A weakness of this observation is that the meeting was not that extensive, only lasting about 45 minutes, and not that many proposed changes to the bill were discussed. The changes that were discussed were also not incredibly impactful provisions of the legislation. Had more core parts of the bill been discussed in-depth useful information about this issue could have come up in the meeting. Another weakness was that the fifth member of the committee, Girod, was absent. As one of the more conservative members of the Oregon Senate his input could have changed the direction and topics discussed in the meeting.

This observation can be compared to Democracy Reform Task Force (2019). Democracy Reform Task Force's document, a summary of H.R. 1: The For The People Act, a bill intended to implement sweeping election reforms, which was brought to the U.S. House of Representatives by Democrats in February 2019. One provision of the bill, Division B, Title V, Subtitle A, proposes to amend the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution so that Citizens



United v. FEC (2010), can be overturned and campaign finance reforms can be implemented. As the bill is written this process would be conducted completely through Congress. Similarly, the Oregon Senate Committee on Campaign Finance Reform has to amend the first amendment of the state constitution for campaign finance reforms to be implemented. But the Oregon Senate wants this decision to be on the ballot and be decided on by the voters, not carried out through the state legislature. This observation can also be compared to Davis (2019), who reports on campaign spending in Oregon and the effects that it has had on state politicians' decisions, particularly on environmental issues. The article presents this issue as a major problem in Oregon. It reports on Oregon's campaign finance laws, which are some of the loosest in the country. It discusses the problems of the high cost of running elections in Oregon, the massive spending by corporations and industry groups, the connections between that corporate spending and Oregon's loosening of environmental protection laws, and how the state's environmental protection and election watchdog agencies have been rendered almost useless by state legislators. One of the Oregon politicians that the article focuses in on is Girod. The article highlights Girod's connections to the timber industry and reports that in his last two elections 89 percent of his campaign funds came from corporate donations. Although Girod was not present for this observation his membership on the committee puts him in an interesting position as he balances working with his fellow senators to pass campaign finance legislation while holding corporate ties.

I will be able to use this source in the section of my essay when I focus in on campaign finance regulation issues in Oregon. I will be able to use this source to highlight the progress being made on the issue.

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