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Summer 07 Speech 101  
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## PERSUASIVE SPEECH – CAMPAIGN FINANCE REFORM

**Specific Goal:** To persuade the audience the harm regulating campaign financing would have on American Democracy.

**Proposition:** Introducing regulations for campaign financing would be harmful for Democracy, whereas unregulated campaign contributions is healthy practice of the First Amendment.

**Attention:**

I. Imagine in future elections no one is making any reference to our First Amendment Right for Free Speech.

II. This could very well happen, given that in order for campaign finance reform laws to be in effect, changes to that prized amendment will need to take place, making the value of free speech seem less important.

III. As a creative person who values Free Speech tremendously, any restrictions come as a threat to the notion we live in a free society.

IV. Introducing regulations for campaign financing would be harmful for Democracy, whereas unregulated campaign contributions is healthy practice of the First Amendment.

**Transition:** Let us take a look at what happens when campaign finance reform laws come into place.

**Need:**

I. Introducing a new system of regulations on campaign finance would be harmful to our Democracy.

A. With caps on spending due to campaign finance reform laws, politicians would need more individual donors, thus making them spend more time on fund raising, not the issues themselves.

1. As said by Will Smith in an article “Deregulation of Campaigns Vital” from the *Badger Herald* in 2007, “the 2006 midterm elections cost around \$2.6 billion” (p. 2).

2. According to John Doolittle in his article “Private Campaign Contributions Should Not Be More Strictly Regulated,” from a book *Political Scandals*, in 2001, “the limits on contributions force all candidates – incumbents and challengers alike – to spend even more time raising money” (p. 12).

B. The very nature of regulating campaign financing is a violation of our First Amendment Right to Free Speech.

1. As Robert J. Samuelson says in his article “Campaign Finance Reform Violates the First Amendment” in 2006, “the First Amendment says that Congress 'shall make no law ... abridging the freedom of speech, or ... the right of the people to peaceably assemble, and to petition the Government'”(that's 'political association' according to Samuelson) (p 1).

2. According to James Bopp, Jr. in his article “Campaign Finance 'Reform': The Good, The Bad, and the Unconstitutional” published by The Heritage Foundation in 1999, “a political candidate has an absolute First Amendment right to spend an unlimited amount of his own money expressively advocating his own election.” (p. 50).

**Transition:** Now that we have seen the hazards to campaign finance reform, let us look at the positives of unregulated campaign contributions.

**Satisfaction:**

II. The current system of campaign contributions to candidates is healthy for our Democracy.

A. Public awareness of political campaigns is heightened when politicians have the necessary money to get their message to the millions of Americans out there.

1. According to a study taken in the 1996 elections, “higher spending produces more knowledge about candidates, whether measured candidates' names, or being able to place candidates on ideology or issue scales” from an article by John J. Coleman “Campaign Finance Laws Should Not be Reformed” in *Democracy* (2006), (p. 63).

2. In the same study, Coleman found in the 1996 elections if a challenging politician was “spending \$230,000 ... 49% of respondents in the relevant districts could place the challenger on 7-point ideology scale,” whereas if the challenger was “at \$500,000 of spending, percentage rose to 66%; and at \$1,000,000, percentage jumped to 85%.” (IBID)

B. High levels of spending in election campaigns do not breed distrust with the public.

1. As Coleman found in the same study “to determine whether campaign spending was linked to the level of public trust,” Coleman came to the conclusion “the results indicated that campaign spending does not contribute to public cynicism.” (IBID)

2. John Doolittle says in his 2001 article “Private Campaign Contributions Should Not Be More Strictly Regulated,” that “political scientist Herbert E. Alexander of USC has demonstrated that campaign contributions have little if any influence on the way members vote” and that “much more important factors are constituents' interests, political beliefs, and party loyalties” (p.18).

**Transition:** Now that we have seen the advantages of our current finance campaign system, let us look at the possibilities of having even fewer regulations.

**Visualization:**

III. Our Democracy can be enhanced even more by cutting away at the regulations for campaign financing currently in place.

A. Political campaigns can be reinvigorated by raising or eliminating the limits on individual donations.

1. As Will Smith says in his 2007 article “Deregulation of Campaigns Vital,” “such a system will have no donation limits from donors, will not prevent political participation based on calendar proximity to an election, and will not prevent any reasonable avenue of activism for citizens and candidates” (p. 6).

2. James Bopp Jr. says in his 1999 article “Campaign Finance 'Reform': The Good, The Bad, and the Unconstitutional,” “raising or eliminating contribution limits, which have been eroded by inflation, would allow elected officials to concentrate more on their public duties than on raising funds, make the flow of campaign money more transparent, and improve public accountability” (p.54).

B. Where the money comes from and who it is going to exactly for what reasons – full disclosure – should be a part of the deregulation process of campaign financing.

1. John Doolittle proposes in his article “Private Campaign Contributions Should Not Be More Strictly Regulated,” (2001) “the key to such a system(eliminating donor restrictions) is full disclosure of campaign contributions” thus enabling “voters to identify and understand the influences that may affect a certain candidate, and to vote accordingly” (p.19).

2. Will Smith says in his article “Deregulation of Campaigns Vital,” (2007) that “disclosure of donations must be rigidly enforced; that is, every dollar a candidate or organization receives must be accessible in real-time

on the Internet” and “ a Federal Elections Commission must be granted real teeth to prosecute offenders of disclosure laws” (p. 7).

**Transition:** After looking at all three aspects to campaign financing, here is what can you do to make things better.

**Call To Action:**

- I. Our Right to Freedom of Speech that we have thanks to the First Amendment should **not** be taken away, piece by piece.
- II. Campaign Finance Reform laws that greatly restrict the amount of money donors give to politicians would do that.
- III. Let your representatives in Congress and the Senate know that you are against this kind of unconstitutional campaign finance reform.
  - A. Write a quick e-mail or letter to your representative and tell them how bad this kind of reform is.
  - B. Meanwhile, let them know that going in the other direction – eliminating restrictions altogether and ensuring full disclosure of those funds – is the best way.
  - C. Come the next election, make sure you find out which politicians support de-regulation of campaign finance restrictions, then vote for them.
- IV. We can keep our right to Free Speech intact, as long as we take a clear look at the situation and act accordingly.

## References

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