Campaigns and Elections

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Campaigns and Elections

- The Changing Nature of Campaigns
  - Internet Web Sites
  - Polling and Media Consultants
  - Computerized Mailing Lists
  - Focus Groups
Presidential Campaign strategies:

- Run to the Middle
- Preserve your base while trying to win over the undecided
- Focus on the states with the most payoff
CAMPAIGN FINANCING:

- In 2004 the average cost to run for the House – roughly $530,000.
  - Roy Blunt spent $3.5 million
- For the Senate, close to $6.5 million.
  - Kit Bond raised $8.9 million
Presidential Campaign Spending

- Kerry: $310 million
- Bush: $345 million
- Both received about $75 million in public funds
Overview of Campaign Finance Reform

- The Federal Election Campaign Act - 1971 (Applies to Presidential candidates). Designed to:

  - Prevent undue influence by any one individual donor by limiting individual contributions:

  - Prevent large imbalances in the level of money candidates received by setting up a system of public financing of presidential campaigns.

  - Limit the amount of money that Presidential candidates could spend out of their own pocket IF THEY CHOOSE TO ACCEPT FEDERAL FUNDS -
Role of the Federal Election Commission

○ Monitor Campaign Contributions and Expenditures

○ Specific Rules:
  ● For individuals, $2,000 limit per candidate per election
  ● Individual contributions of up to $25,000 to a national party committee
The Role of Political Action Committees

- **What are PAC’s?**

- **Specific Limits**
  - $5,000 limit from an individual to any one PAC per year
  - $5,000 limit from a PAC to a candidate per election
The Growing Influence of PAC’s

- Indirect PAC contributions – no limits
- Who do PAC’s support?
- Effects of PAC Influence
Two Persistent Problems

- Soft Money
  - Funds raised by the two major parties that are not subject to limits
  - Supposed to be used for “party building activities” (e.g., get out the vote drives; voter registration activities)
  - In 2000, soft money contributions to both parties were about 500 million.
Two Persistent Problems

- Independent Expenditures
  
  *Buckley v. Valeo* (1976) upheld use of independent expenditures
Bipartisan Campaign Reform Act of 2002 (McCain-Feingold)

- Banned Soft Money
- Increased limits for individual contributions
The New Players: 527’s

- 2004 – over $500 million contributed
- No disclosure requirements, no contribution limits, no spending limits
- Is this good or bad for democracy?
Reforming the System

- All federal campaigns publicly financed?
- Lower the costs of elections
  - Shorten the campaign season
  - Require broadcasters to provide free or low-cost advertising for candidates
Reforming the System

- Eliminate PAC contributions?
- Eliminate 527’s?
- Set spending limits on campaigns?
Presidential Nominating Conventions

- How have they changed over time?
- Convention delegates - who are they? What do they do? What is their purpose?
ELECTIONS

- **Caucuses** - yesterday and today

- **Primaries** - What are they? What is their purpose?

- Who votes in primaries? Effects?
Types of Primaries

- open
- blanket
- closed
Electoral college

- What is it?
- How does it work?