

HANOVER CHAT

Martha Cunningham's Living Room, Hanover, NH, Sept. 6, 2006 – 6:00pm

CAMPAIGN FINANCE REFORM

Presenters: John Rauh (Americans for Campaign Finance Reform) and Brian Walsh (Board member, Americans for Campaign Finance Reform)

Attending: Martha Cunningham (host), Randy Mudge, Monte Clinton, Don Kreis and Jennifer Keller, Bryan Clements, Linda Patchett, John Round, Mike Hoefer, Margaret Drye, and Melanie Waldvogel (LNH Staff)

How campaigns work, and what needs to change

John Rauh passionately explained to the group that wealth was drowning out American voices due to the current system of privately funding campaigns as opposed to publicly funding them. John stated the following reasons for publicly funding campaigns:

1. **Cost** – this plan could fund all federal elections (both parties) for only \$6 per citizen
2. **This plan would work!** – Candidates that have well out-spent other candidates did not in all cases result in election to office.
3. **Supports the 1st Amendment and Freedom of Speech**

The following politicians are behind the plan and have signed on as honorary Chairs to American for Campaign Finance Reform: **Senator Bill Bradley, Senator Bob Kerrey, Senator Warren Rudman, Senator Alan Simpson.**

Tests have been conducted in Arizona, Maine and Connecticut. Vermont publicly funds its races for Governor and Lieutenant Governor. Public funding has also been getting lots of media attention, between articles in the New York Times and celebrity attention (Warren Beatty). ***All supporters of public funding must be bi-partisan for independent evaluation.** The Supreme Court recently had a case regarding private funding and how donations can be limited but not the total amount of funds spent, with the following issue before it: 1) Would it support speech?, 2) Would there be minimal corruption, and 3) Would candidates have enough funds to run? Public funding solves all three of these issues!

Candidates are entitled to public funding if they can obtain a certain amount of donations in small checks (under \$100) and a signed petition for their candidacy. Candidates are still free to use private funding, as well. Public funding would result in more women and minority candidates, and a clearer American voice.

This topic is the most important issue we face, and responsibility must be connected back to the citizens, and their beliefs in democracy and leadership.

OTHER COMMENTS included:

- 21,000 new supports of Americans for Campaign Finance Reform have been signed up. Raising funds is the toughest challenge, and gaining a non-partisan response. The focus is on federal elections. Grassroots efforts are mobilizing the efforts, especially through the internet.

WHAT YOU NEED TO DO TO SUPPORT CAMPAIGN FINANCE REFORM:

1. Sign up at: www.just6dollars.org to receive updates
2. Make a donation
3. Organize meetings and/or spread the word!

For further Information, please visit: <http://www.just6dollars.org/>