

In many U.S. states, the transition to publicly funded campaigns has become a new trend. Proponents in favor of transitioning to publicly funded campaigns have championed the initiative on the grounds that it reduces corruption, prevents corporations and the richest citizens from having too much influence, and allows politicians to focus more on issues than fundraising. Additionally, advocates argue that reducing the role that money plays in democratic elections would level the playing field so that ordinary citizens would have just as great a chance at winning elections as individuals who are already well known to the public or have the resources to promote their name via advertising. The idea of publicly funding political campaigns has become more popular since the Supreme Court's ruling in *Citizens vs. United* which ruled that limiting the amount that corporations and worker's unions could contribute toward political campaigns was unconstitutional. The ruling also stated that corporations and unions did not have to disclose their donations to the public. If campaigns were to become funded by the public, the money would come from taxpayer dollars.

While publicly funding campaigns may reduce the influence that corporations have over elections, it would ultimately reduce political participation. Because financially contributing to political campaigns is considered an important form of political participation, mandating that the public fund campaigns is not entirely consistent with democracy. If campaigns were publicly funded, there would probably still be no limit on the amount of personal wealth that candidates can contribute as the United States has never even attempted to regulate this. This would actually increase the advantage of the wealthiest citizens.

I would also argue that because corporations who make the greatest contributions tend to be the most influenced by policies pertaining to their industry, forcing the public to fund campaigns could have a number of unintended economic consequences. At the national level, I do not believe this could ever work. Because local elections involve less actors, it may be possible to partially fund them using taxpayer dollars, however, if national campaigns were funded by the public, power would only be transferred from corporations to media outlets, who would then have the ultimate influence. Overall, I do not think that the problem is that corporations, worker's unions, PAC's, ect. can make unlimited financial contributions to political campaigns. Rather, I think that the problem is that corporations and the individuals who control them are financially able to make such large contributions. In the end, I do not think it is campaigns that need to be reformed, but rather it is the corporations that have been able to freely increase the salaries of those at the top at the expense of those at the bottom. If the income gap between the bottom and the top was not so large, the large financial contributions made by those at the top of the economic pyramid would be balanced by the smaller contributions made by those at the bottom. The problem, in my opinion, is that right now, the wages of those at the bottom are so low relative to the cost of living, that these citizens are unable to make even the smallest contributions.