



# Look Who's Not Coming To Washington

**Qualified Candidates Shut Out By Big Money • January 2005**



**U.S. PIRG** Education Fund

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Qualified Candidates Shut Out by Big Money

January 2005



# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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The authors would like to thank Derek Cressman, National Democracy Program Consultant to the state PIRGs and the U.S. PIRG Education Fund, for guidance and editorial assistance; Alison Cassady, U.S. PIRG Education Fund Research Director, for assistance with research, editing, and layout; Alicia Supernavage, U.S. PIRG Education Fund Production Coordinator, for publication assistance; and Cecily Anderson, Design Associate with Public Interest GRFX, for cover design. We would like to thank interns Matt Grill, Brock Towler, Erin Callahan, Whitney Lappley, and Ian Thompson for their valuable research assistance.

Special thanks to the Deer Creek Foundation, the Richard & Rhoda Goldman Fund, the Herb Block Foundation, and the Educational Foundation of America, whose generous support made this project possible. The opinions expressed in this report are those of the authors and the interviewees and do not necessarily reflect the views of our funders.

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



Large contributions made by a small fraction of Americans unduly influence who runs for office and who wins elections in the United States. Without personal wealth or access to networks of wealthy contributors, many qualified and credible candidates are locked out of contention for federal office—often before voters have the opportunity to register their preferences or hear competing points of view.

Money was as important to candidates in the most recent congressional elections as it has ever been. Our analysis of Federal Election Commission (FEC) campaign finance data for the 2004 election cycle reveals the following:

- Ninety-one (91) percent of 2004 congressional primary candidates who raised the most money won their races.
- Sixty-five (65) percent of all congressional primary elections were uncontested. Anecdotal evidence suggests the role of money in campaigns plays a significant part in discouraging candidates from running.
- Sixty-three (63) percent of 2004 congressional primary candidates' individual donations came in contributions of at least \$1,000—from just 0.08% of the voting-age population.

Moreover, according to the Federal Election Commission, campaign fundraising continues to increase at a rate greater than inflation. Winning congressional candidates raised nearly 50% more in the 2004 cycle than in a comparable period during the 2002 cycle.

In order to put a human face on this data, we surveyed federal candidates who dropped out of races, lost primaries, or lost general elections. The candidates profiled in this report cite

money as a primary reason why they lost or pulled out of their races entirely. Many of the unsuccessful candidates profiled are at least as credible and qualified as the eventual winners. What they lack is something altogether different—personal wealth, access to networks of wealthy donors, or policy positions that appeal to large contributors.

Several candidates made powerful statements about the state of our democracy and our campaign finance system:

*“Democracy should never be for sale to the highest bidder. But democracy IS for sale to the highest bidder—and our democracy is very ill served as a result. ... There’s never been real campaign finance reform, only campaign finance reform perpetrated by the good ol’ boys and girls, which puts those without wealth at a disadvantage and prohibits them from challenging the status quo.”*

- Charmaine Caccioppi, Democratic Candidate in Louisiana’s 3<sup>rd</sup> District Open Primary

*“The sad thing is that in America today if it’s going to take \$2 million to win, then normal people can’t run anymore. You either have to be very, very wealthy or very, very bought.”*

- Janice Bowling, Republican Nominee for Tennessee’s 4<sup>th</sup> District

*“[The system] protects incumbents because there’s so much money in the system. Money is tilted towards incumbents, so there’s huge financial disincentives [for challengers] . . . Being a maverick outsider is not realistic when you’re up against a \$1 million ad buy.”*

- Jeff Steinborn, Democratic Primary Candidate in New Mexico’s 2<sup>nd</sup> District

*“[Running for Congress] is such a daunting task that it becomes a huge barrier for ordinary people who want to run. It’s a business—you need a professional fundraiser ... We have a professional political class [in Congress] and we have a professional political class getting them elected. Outsiders need not apply.”*

- Mark Binder, Democratic Primary Candidate in Rhode Island’s 1<sup>st</sup> District

*“[Fundraising] is a big hurdle. I know a lot of people who would run—and I know people who have run once, but then can’t do it again because they owe money [as a result].”*

- Dr. Inam Rahman, Republican Primary Candidate in Hawaii’s 2<sup>nd</sup> District

*“My opponent raised 65% of his money from outside special interests at \$10,000 a whack, while I’m collecting money from Sally and Joe.”*

- Brian Hamel, Republican Nominee for Maine’s 2<sup>nd</sup> District

*“[Our campaign finance system] benefits incumbents who are in safe districts and are in a position to really help some very narrow special interests. In a broader sense, it hurts everybody because it naturally makes [officeholders] inclined to give better service to those who give [them] more money. Representation is supposed to be one vote per person, not based on how much money you have...If you took the money out of politics, it would change the whole dynamic and produce a much healthier, more responsive, democracy.”*

- Ben Konop, Democratic Nominee for Ohio’s 4<sup>th</sup> District

*“If we think we are a democracy, we’re deluding ourselves . . . We purport to be an example of democracy around the world, but in fact we have an oligarchy . . . I would hope and pray that we can take can take money out of politics . . .”*

- Leigh Pomeroy, Democratic-Farmer-Labor Party Nominee for Minnesota’s 1<sup>st</sup> District

# INTRODUCTION



**W**hen our Constitutional founders set out to create a brand new polity out of the ashes of the American Revolution, they initially created a central government that was so weak that it threatened to collapse under its own weight. Although the Articles of Confederation would not survive, its authors were sensible and cautious. They sought to preserve most state and local control of the people's affairs, fearing a self-serving and unaccountable government.

At the Constitutional Convention, the drafters took many precautions to ensure that the new, stronger national lawmaking body would be populated by citizen legislators, not merely by the sons of wealth and power. This was to be, as Abraham Lincoln later described in the Gettysburg Address, a government “of the people, by the people, and for the people.”

More than 200 years later, it appears we have strayed far from our founders' vision. At least 42 members of the 108<sup>th</sup> U.S. Senate were millionaires—a number that has risen steadily over the past decade.<sup>1</sup> Ten percent of the chamber qualifies as “super-rich,” worth at least \$10 million.<sup>2</sup> Perhaps even more surprising, more than one quarter of the House of Representatives—“the people's house”—reported assets of at least \$1 million.<sup>3</sup> In contrast, less than one percent of Americans are millionaires.<sup>4</sup>

It is reasonable to ask how a legislature so strikingly different from the populace with respect to a characteristic as fundamental as economic prosperity can accurately represent average Americans. How, one might wonder, has political power in our representative democracy become so skewed towards the wealthy?

Much of the answer may lie in how we elect our representatives. Election law is a famously dry discipline, but the role of money in modern politics has real consequences for ordinary people.

The purpose of this report is to put a human face on the often statistics-driven discussion of our campaign finance system. We aim to examine the system through the eyes of Americans who decided to seek federal office without the benefits of incumbency, vast personal wealth, or access to networks of large contributors.

We talked to scores of citizens who ran for a seat in the U.S. Congress, finding numerous examples of people who felt shut out of the system by big money. We profiled candidates from 45 states who appear to have legitimately been confronted with disproportionate fundraising power. These are qualified, credible candidates who might have made exemplary representatives and legislators; many have extensive public service experience. They come from different backgrounds and ethnicities, from red states and blue states, and from across the spectrum of political philosophy. What they have in common is they tend to be average Americans of ordinary means who did not have vast personal wealth or access to large contributions to fund their bid for federal office—and they will not be coming to Washington, DC this year to serve in Congress. Regardless of their qualifications or dedication, they all lost the race that determines which candidates are able to run competitive campaigns based principally on access to wealth.<sup>5</sup>

Some of these candidates lost their primaries to a better-funded candidate favored by party insiders and backed by special interests. They were not alone—more than nine out of ten major party congressional candidates who raised the most money won their primary races in 2004.<sup>6</sup>

Others made it to the general election, only to face an incumbent with an unmatched war chest, filled by years of beltway fundraisers catering to lobbyists and industry political action committees (PACs).

Some of the candidates we spoke with knew that their chances of unseating a powerful incumbent or defeating an opponent with enormous sums in the bank were slim. These dedicated patriots felt compelled to run because they believed true democracy demands that voters be given a choice on Election Day, or because they saw serious issues unaddressed and falling outside of the scope of political debate. Most saw the role of money compromise their ability to achieve even these modest goals. Realizing they could never keep pace with their opponents, some even decided not to try to raise much money at all, unwilling to ask their families, friends and neighbors to support what seemed a hopeless cause.

These remarkable individuals, however, are merely the tip of the iceberg when it comes to the influence of big money on our political landscape. Nearly two-thirds of 2004 congressional primary races were uncontested because a far greater number of potential candidates make the arguably rational decision not to try at all.<sup>7</sup> This is, perhaps, the most significant legacy of our current campaign finance system. Not only does access to large contributions or vast personal wealth usually determine the winner of a political contest, but it also determines who decides to enter the race in the first place. In this way, money fundamentally defines the scope of political discourse and narrows the choices available to American voters.

Analysts of money in politics who focus primarily on *quid pro quo* corruption—the buying of access, influence, or even votes—miss this larger point. The experiences of the candidates profiled in this report suggest that it is at least as or even more important to examine the influence of money on *elections* (who runs, who wins) than on *politicians* (how they vote).



# THE INFLUENCE OF BIG MONEY IN POLITICS



**Money was a key factor in determining the scope and outcomes of the 2004 Congressional elections.**

The biggest fundraisers continued to dominate federal elections in the 2004 cycle. Ninety-one (91) percent of candidates who raised the most money won their 2004 congressional primary.<sup>8</sup> Analyzing preliminary data, the Center for Responsive Politics has found that the figures were similar for the general elections.<sup>9,1</sup>

Moreover, our empirical and anecdotal research suggests that the primacy of fundraising played a significant role in determining who ran for Congress and who decided to remain on the sidelines. Nearly two-thirds of congressional primary races were uncontested.<sup>10</sup> Fifty-eight (58) percent of incumbent Senators who stood for re-election were not opposed in their primaries.<sup>11</sup> Those who did face challengers out-raised their opponents by a staggering 17-1 ratio.<sup>12</sup> Eight of these 11 incumbents faced challengers who raised no money at all.<sup>13</sup>

Nearly every candidate profiled in this report felt that our current campaign finance system discourages good candidates from running for

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<sup>1</sup> Many analysts point to incumbency as a factor other than money that locks out candidates such as those profiled in this report. While incumbency is clearly a significant factor (98% of House incumbents were re-elected this cycle), one of the primary advantages of incumbency is fundraising ability. According to the state PIRGs' analysis of Center for Responsive Politics data, incumbents out-raised challengers on average approximately 9-1 in the Senate and 6-1 in the House in the 2004 election cycle.

office. Many cited specific examples of people they knew who would love to run but had decided to stay on the sidelines because they knew they could not raise enough funds to be competitive; several candidates indicated that they would be reluctant to run again.

Here are some particularly telling quotes:

*"Most folks serving in Congress are super-wealthy. Regular people do not have the ability to run for higher office...My sisters are schoolteachers and they could never run for Congress."*

- Kalyn Free, Democratic Primary Candidate in Oklahoma's 2<sup>nd</sup> District

*"You have good quality people who don't jump in because of the money and the incumbent advantage. Special interests groups pad [incumbents'] bank accounts, and the PAC money scares a lot of people away...We need to change the system so special interests don't play as much of a role."*

- Brian Hamel, Republican Nominee for Maine's 2<sup>nd</sup> District

*"[This system is] not what Jefferson had in mind...It's impossible for real people [to run for Congress] and it shouldn't be. People should feel that you can grow up to be president, and that's gone. The only people who can are of tremendous means. Congress should be close to the people—and multimillionaires aren't the people!"*

- Heidi Behrens-Benedict, Democratic Primary Candidate in Washington's 8<sup>th</sup> District

*“Money sits out there as a great big deterrent. It deters people from running in the first place and then deters reporters from covering [the race] and people in the party thinking you have a chance.”*

- Andrew Kaza, Democratic Primary Candidate in Oregon’s 5<sup>th</sup> District

*“[W]e could have someone who’s a genius in politics who could solve all our problems, but if they don’t have [money] or access to party leaders, then they don’t really have a chance. We need to set up a system for those who are not endorsed by the party bosses or who don’t have resources—they should be able to run.”*

- Tony Zirkle, Republican Primary Candidate in Indiana’s 2<sup>nd</sup> District

### **Candidate fundraising continues to rise significantly faster than inflation.**

For several decades, campaign fundraising has consistently outpaced increases in the consumer price index. Candidate fundraising increased 425% between 1978 and 2000, compared with 170% inflation over the same period; similarly, fundraising increased 7.5% for the 2002 cycle over the record-breaking 2000 cycle, compared with 5% inflation over these two years.<sup>14</sup>

The Federal Election Commission has reported that congressional candidate fundraising in the 2004 election cycle increased 20% over the 2002 cycle.<sup>15</sup> In total, the 2004 presidential and congressional elections will cost a record \$3.9 billion, according to projections based on a study of campaign finance figures by the Center for Responsive Politics.<sup>16</sup> Moreover, winning candidates raised 48% more in the 2004 election cycle than during a comparable period in the 2002 cycle.<sup>17</sup> The Bureau of Labor Statistics reports inflation of 6% between 2002 and 2004.<sup>18</sup>

Many politicians and campaign finance experts cited the need to keep pace with inflation as a reason for doubling individual contribution

limits from \$1,000 to \$2,000 per election as part of the Bipartisan Campaign Reform Act (BCRA). These data, however, show that the doubling of limits was unnecessary to achieve this purpose and may have caused fundraising totals to increase significantly beyond the cost of consumer goods such as milk and bread.

### **Large contributors increasingly dominate congressional elections.**

If candidates raised most of their money from ordinary citizens, record fundraising and the overwhelming success of the biggest fundraisers might not be cause for concern. In this scenario, fundraising prowess would be an approximate proxy for public support, and we would expect electoral and financial success to coincide most of the time.

In the modern era, however, most candidates have depended upon the support of relatively few individuals who can afford to contribute substantial amounts. In the 2002 election cycle, for example, 55% of candidates’ individual donations came in contributions of at least \$1,000—from only 0.09% of the American public.<sup>19</sup>

Rather than address the disproportionate influence of the wealthy on candidate fundraising, in 2002 Congress doubled the individual contribution limit from \$1,000 to \$2,000 per election. Recent studies indicate, however, that candidates now depend upon even larger checks from even wealthier donors. In the 2004 primaries, more than one-fifth of candidates’ individual contributions came at the new maximum \$2,000 level, and 63% came in donations of at least \$1,000.<sup>20</sup> Only 0.08% of the population made a \$1,000 contribution, and a mere 0.02% made a \$2,000 contribution.<sup>21</sup> Full data are not yet available for the entire election cycle.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> The percentage of candidates’ fundraising coming in large contributions is typically higher in primaries than in

Unsurprisingly, the large donors who wield disproportionate and increasing influence over the outcome of federal elections are not representative of the American public as a whole. Several studies have confirmed the intuitive fact that these donors—like the politicians they help elect—tend to be much wealthier than the average citizen.<sup>22</sup> One study has taken the next logical step, suggesting that these donors also differ in policy preferences from the general public.<sup>23</sup> Campaign contributors, for example, were more likely to support tax cuts and reductions in social services than was the voting age population as a whole.<sup>24</sup>

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general elections or entire cycles. Full data, however, are not available at this time. The state PIRGs predict that despite the rise of the Internet and the increasing number of small donors, the overall percentage of congressional candidates' individual donations coming in contributions of at least \$1,000 will be greater for the 2004 cycle than the 2002 cycle.

# PROFILES: QUALIFIED CANDIDATES SHUT OUT BY BIG MONEY



**F**undraising data for primary races were obtained from pre-primary reports filed with the Federal Election Commission unless otherwise indicated; data for general election races were obtained from post-general election reports unless otherwise indicated. Amended reports were used when available. All reports are available online at the Federal Election Commission website. Numbers may be rounded.

*Statements made by candidates have not been checked for accuracy and reflect their opinions only.*



## ALABAMA

### **Albert Turner, Jr.**

*County Commissioner*

*Democratic Primary Candidate in the 7<sup>th</sup> District*



Albert Turner, Jr. is an attorney and Perry County Commissioner. He has worked in the Lieutenant Governor's office and was an assistant director at the Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs, the agency that handles federal funding for the state. As a result, he acquired significant knowledge of legislative and federal funding processes. His time as county commissioner has given him numerous ideas for the improvement of Alabama's rural and urban transportation infrastructure. Running for Congress was important because "there are fundamental changes that need to be addressed in areas such as infrastructure, health care, and unemployment. Rural Alabama doesn't have a representative in Congress," he observed.

Mr. Turner thinks fundraising played a key role in his race and affected his ability to get his message out. "We knew fundraising would be an obstacle," he said. "Money is significant [in campaigns], a necessary evil. The days of going door-to-door and mass rallies are over. The medium is radio and television, and it's expensive."

His ability to fundraise was hampered by a late entry into the race and the fact that he was up against an incumbent, Congressman Artur Davis. "When you don't have a list of possible donors," he said, "you have to hire someone to fundraise for you. But we needed every dollar we had to do flyers, events, and radio."

Noting that Alabama's 7<sup>th</sup> Congressional District is one of the poorest areas of the country, Turner said, "Most people probably couldn't afford to give \$50. [Davis'] money wasn't coming from constituents but from special interest groups who waged a bet on who was going to win. And he'd done legislation to protect the coal industry."

Turner believes that a lot of good people are dissuaded from running for office by the flaws in the campaign finance system. "One [problem] is contribution limits," he maintained. According to Turner, the recently doubled \$2,000 individual contribution limit "allows corporate America to use a loophole. If I'm Coca-Cola and I want to support the incumbent, then I contact all my executives and say 'contribute x amount of money.' Raising the limits raises the amount corporate America can contribute."

He offers a simple solution for reform, however. "The fairest thing you can do is put a limit on

spending per race—that would level the playing field,” he suggested. “It would give campaigns back to the people . . . Candidates would have to face [the people] on the street, in open forums, on talk shows. Right now candidates don’t have to do much—just raise money and get on TV.”

Turner thinks he might run for office again, but that he would probably have more success running for state-level office, in part because one’s “ability to fundraise in the Alabama black belt is limited.”

*Winning 12% of the vote against seven-term incumbent Artur Davis, Albert Turner raised \$26,000 to Representative Davis’ \$750,000. Representative Davis defeated challenger Steve Cameron in the general election, raising a total of more than \$1 million.*



## ARIZONA

### **Bob Donahue**

*Businessman*

*Democratic Primary Candidate in the 1<sup>st</sup> District*

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Bob Donahue owns an assisted living center in Cornville, Arizona. Motivated to run for Congress by his strong conservation ethic, he felt none of the other candidates running shared his political philosophy. He became interested in politics and conservation when he sold his business in Flagstaff and then learned that the property, in an ecologically fragile area, was threatened by development. Unfortunately, he said, only environmental groups rallied to his side in his bid to defend the property. Upon losing the battle to the developers, he understood the importance of influencing federal agencies and felt that running for a seat in Congress would give him a voice in federal policies.

Mr. Donahue believes that his opponent’s spending, particularly on media, had a big impact on the race. After doing some initial exploratory work, Donahue saw there was a limited pool of

money available and so opted not to concentrate on fundraising. “The party dried up funds for all candidates except Paul Babbitt,” he said. “So I chose to spend virtually nothing and get my ideas out there. My biggest expense was on travel to meetings. [If I’d had more money], the next step would’ve been media, but it wouldn’t have made a critical difference. I couldn’t match him dollar for dollar . . . I had less than one-tenth of 1% of Babbitt’s money.”

Money influences campaigns primarily by endowing candidates with unequal access to the media, he says. “The average voter is affected quite a bit,” he asserted. “There is a core group of party faithful who are more influenced by the issues . . . You can be successful in getting your message across to them by going to meetings, but you don’t get to Joe Sixpack. That’s where advertising helps, and that takes money . . . Right now [winning elections] depends on ads—but who cares who can hire the best ad agency?”

He thinks there are serious flaws in the current campaign finance system. “Just the *appearance* that donations to campaigns get results has a negative effect on politics in America,” he said. “There would be a positive impact on voter participation if we cleaned up our elections process—and it’s imperative that we do clean it up.”

One way to do so, he suggests, is by establishing campaign spending limits. “I don’t see how it helps democracy to spend millions of dollars [on an election],” Donahue declared. Referring to the public financing system used in state level elections in Arizona, he said, “the ‘Clean Elections’ approach puts spending limits in place and creates a series of candidate forums. Candidates can get their message across and be reported on by the media—their platform is transmitted to the voter without the background noise of a paid media campaign. It’s just on a more adult level. I think giving speeches is fantastic—it gives you a chance to articulate your views for voters.”

According to Donahue, the Clean Elections system has had a positive influence on Arizona politics. “I know teachers who run for statewide office against incumbents,” he offered. As for his own electoral prospects, he says fundraising opportunities will play a large role in whether he runs for federal office again. He doesn’t want to lose another election, so if he runs again, he plans to do so with full party support.

*Bob Donahue won 26% of the vote in the Democratic primary against Paul Babbitt. Raising less than \$5,000, Donahue accumulated a fraction of Babbitt’s funds, which totaled over \$811,000. Babbitt raised \$1.3 million through the general election, but lost to incumbent Rick Renzi, who amassed more than \$2.3 million.*



## ARKANSAS

### Ed Garner

Small Business Owner

Republican Primary Candidate in the 2<sup>nd</sup> District

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Ed Garner owns a bakery in Little Rock, Arkansas. He describes himself as having a diverse background in the sciences, investment banking, and small business.

He decided to run for Congress because he felt the current incumbent was not a good representative on the key issues of economic growth and job creation. Since Mr. Garner won 31% of the vote in the 2004 primary race, many in the Republican Party have urged him to remain involved in coming elections.

Running in the primary against Marvin Parks, a three-time officeholder and minority leader in the state house, Garner was up against “an awful lot of money.” In order to win, Garner says, “I’d have needed a little more money, but not as much as my opponent.” Money came into play when Parks “blanketed the radio and did flyers,

spending \$30,000 in the last three weeks. It drove the undecided vote.”

Describing the challenges of fundraising, Garner noted that the personal phone calls and making the contacts necessary for raising money were very time consuming. If he’d had more money, he would have liked to hire a campaign manager for the last stretch of the campaign, as well as run more commercials to respond to Parks’ advertising. “The biggest challenges are human and financial resources,” Garner asserted. “You need to do media, television, and mailings to get your name out in front of people.”

Although he thinks money is important in elections, saying candidates “have to have a significant amount of money,” he believes it’s possible to run a competitive campaign with few resources. “You need to have connections to pull in people and resources,” he emphasized. “It’s as important as money.” Garner pointed out that he didn’t have any paid staff, while his opponent had the advantage of early fundraising, with \$30,000 already in the bank when Garner entered the race. Parks had the additional advantage of familiarity with Republican Party donors, having worked as a fundraiser in previous campaigns. In addition, Garner said, “When you run a business, you can’t take time off work to run—and that hampered my fundraising.”

Reflecting on the electoral process, Garner regrets that advertising requires so much money and that the newspapers fail to adequately discuss electoral issues. He believes “527” organizations, so named for their tax code designation, should be made illegal. Our elections are “lopsided,” he said. “Incumbents have a huge advantage with lobbyists, and the more seniority they have, the bigger their advantage. [This relationship] fuels the big money machine.”

Lamenting the lack of citizen participation in the electoral process, Garner suggests that there should be more civic education in schools. “I see the need for people to be more engaged,” he

said. “We need a more participatory electorate and a greater accountability [of politicians] to the voter, not to the person with the big check. Only 2% of voters give money to campaigns. As expensive as campaigns are and with limited human resources, candidates must court the \$2,000 checks over the \$20 checks.”

Mr. Garner envisions a better electoral process in America. “In a perfect world, people would be involved, and everybody would give \$100.”

*Ed Garner attained 31% of the vote in the primary election against Marvin Parks. Parks out-raised Garner nearly eight-to-one, \$239,000 to \$30,000. Incumbent Congressman Vic Snyder defeated Parks in the general election, out-raising him \$890,000 to \$575,000.*



## CALIFORNIA

### **Peter Mathews**

*College Professor*

*Democratic Primary Candidate in the 37<sup>th</sup> District*

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Peter Mathews is the chair of the Political Science Department at Cypress College. In 1993, he founded the nonprofit organization Rescue Education California to advocate for greater educational funding and improvements. In an earlier run for San Mateo County’s North Fair Oaks Advisory Council (Planning Commission), he ran a grassroots campaign by going door-to-door, a strategy that won him 80% of the vote in the district.

Professor Mathews felt it was important to run for Congress in order to “bring about a more just system and more opportunities for everyone.” In order to provide those opportunities, he would like to help provide all Americans with access to health care and higher education, as

well as work to create jobs and a stronger economy.

He was unsurprised by the disparity in fundraising between him and his opponent, saying, “We’re always outspent ten-to-one.” The amount of money he raised allowed him to do a mailing to only about 19% of the electorate. “If we’d had money we could’ve targeted that community and done TV ads,” he said. He acknowledged that fundraising is the most difficult part of a campaign, “especially for those who want to make a difference. I could say to ARCO, ‘we’ll deregulate,’ and they’d write me a \$5,000 check. But I told the company [in a meeting], ‘You need to reduce emissions and pay corporate taxes,’ and I never heard from them again.”

Professor Mathews prefers to fundraise door-to-door. He estimates that his average contribution in the 2004 primary election was between \$2 and \$3. Given that his opponent raised a lot of \$5,000 PAC contributions, he guesses her average donation would be closer to several hundred dollars. “This is not an affluent district,” Mathews said, noting that there are many working class and working poor families. With that in mind, he suggests that the people in the district could afford to contribute only about \$5 to \$10 to a political candidate, perhaps \$25 for a middle-class family.

Professor Mathews believes that money has a strong influence on politics. He points out that about 95% of incumbents are reelected and that they outspend their challengers by a ratio of seven-to-one on average. In his forthcoming book, *Dollar Democracy—With Liberty and Justice for Some: How to Win Back the American Dream for All*, he reveals how key policy problems in areas such as health care and education remain unsolved because of the influence of private financing on our political process. The biggest failing of our current campaign finance system, he says, “is allowing unfettered private contributions. Bundling is another—wealthy contributors just call their friends and co-workers...The worst



part is not having limits. We need donations limited to \$100.” He calls the recent doubling of individual contribution limits from \$1,000 to \$2,000 “outrageous—the opposite of reform.”

In order to have real reform, he suggests that Americans implement a “Clean Money” system of public financing and cap individual contributions at \$100 while lowering PAC contribution limits from \$5,000 to \$500. He also believes free airtime for political candidates and tax credits or vouchers that reimburse donors who give small contributions are good ideas.

In preparation for the 2006 primary election, Mathews plans to raise small donations in \$1 and \$2 amounts from one quarter of the district’s registered voters. “I’m going door-to-door with calendar magnets for the fridge with all my information and my website on them...People love it that we come to the door. [At the end of the visit] I tell them I don’t take corporate money and ask, ‘Can you contribute \$1 to cover the cost of the magnets for your neighbors?’ And about half the people do give \$1.”

*Mathews won 16% of the vote in the three-way Democratic primary, losing to incumbent Juanita Millender-McDonald, who garnered 65% of the vote. Mathews raised almost \$16,000 for the primary election to Representative McDonald’s \$122,000. Representative McDonald went on to raise a total of \$324,000 and win the general election with 75% of the vote.<sup>25</sup>*



## COLORADO

### Dan Corsentino

Sheriff

Republican Primary Candidate in the 3<sup>rd</sup> District

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Dan Corsentino is currently the longest-serving sheriff in Pueblo County history. Since he was first elected in 1990, Sheriff Corsentino has turned around an office marred by 28 years of corruption, been re-elected four times, and, in 2002 was elected to the National Sheriffs’ Association Board of Directors. He holds a master’s degree in public administration and a bachelor’s degree in political science from the University of Colorado; graduated from the prestigious National FBI Academy; and completed the Harvard University John F. Kennedy School of Government Senior Executive Education Program.

Sheriff Corsentino decided to run for Congress to “be a voice at the national table on key issues facing the third district of Colorado and the U.S.” He felt he could win because he’d won elected office four times as a Republican in a Democratic region.

Sheriff Corsentino feels he lost the Republican primary because, among other reasons, he was under-funded. He says “money is multi-dimensional,” allowing a candidate to promote himself, defend attacks and hire professional staff. “In a rural area,” Sheriff Corsentino says, “it’s difficult to find the necessary money,”—especially in a five-way race. “The wealthy will cover their bases and give everybody \$500-\$1000.”

Sheriff Corsentino believes our campaign finance system discourages good candidates from running for office. “It would discourage me next time,” he says. “Someone may be competent and charismatic, but can’t raise the money.” He also expressed frustration with the burden



fundraising placed on his campaign. “I spent so much time raising money, it was sickening,” he lamented. “I set aside 2-3 hours a day asking complete strangers in and out of Colorado for money.”

To reduce the influence of money on campaigns, Mr. Corsentino supports limiting the campaign season and public financing. “I’d like to see the playing field even as far as a better formula,” he says. “Maybe everyone gets the same amount of money. Then it’s like a chess game—it’s who uses their money better.” A level playing field, he feels, would give him a better chance of winning next time.

*Sheriff Dan Corsentino ran in a five-way primary for the Republican nomination for House of Representatives in the third district of Colorado. He raised \$118,000 and garnered 11.5% of the vote. The winner, Greg Walcher, raised \$343,000 and spent \$223,300 on the primary. Walcher went on to raise \$1.6 million and lose a close general election to John Salazar, who raised and spent nearly the same amount.<sup>26</sup>*



## CONNECTICUT

### **Theresa Gerratana**

*Former State Legislator*

*Democratic Nominee for the 5<sup>th</sup> District*

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Theresa Gerratana served for ten years in the Connecticut General Assembly. During her tenure, she focused on health and human services issues and held a number of leadership positions. She also has been President of the League of Women Voters and is a former justice of the peace. In the 2004 election, the Democratic Party approached her and asked her run for Congress.

She characterizes fundraising as “a major challenge. You need to get your name out, you need to do mailings, and you need money for

that.” She found the daily grind of fundraising challenging. “It took up a good portion of every day—at home, in the car—it takes one-half to two-thirds of your time.”

Given that her opponent Nancy Johnson was a 22-year incumbent, she noted, it was unsurprising that Representative Johnson was able to raise millions of dollars. “She already had \$1.8 million in the bank in August,” Ms. Gerratana said. “She has built a base of support over the years from the business community and pharmaceutical companies... Incumbency carries with it power and the ability to raise money.” While Gerratana described her own average donations as “smallish,” in the \$100 range, not only was her opponent able to tap into PAC money, but she also had a stable source of income from her constituents. Moreover, the Congresswoman “hired people to do her fundraising. I did it all myself with friends and family,” Gerratana said.

The prospect of facing an opponent with all the advantages of money no doubt discourages good potential candidates, Ms. Gerratana believes. “I think it’s quite a challenge—and I’m an experienced incumbent,” she said. “Sometimes you [run for office] on a wing and a prayer—you just hope the issues will be discussed.”

She has long been a supporter of campaign finance reform initiatives to address the influence of money on politics, introducing and supporting reform bills during her time in the state legislature. “I’m in favor of public financing,” she declared. “It can and should be done. And you can still have some private contributions [in a public funding system].”

As for her own future, she says she would consider running for office again, but concedes that her fundraising prospects would weigh heavily in her decision whether to make another bid for Congress.

*Theresa Gerratana raised \$110,000 and won 38% of the vote in the general election against 11-term incumbent Nancy Johnson, while being out-raised by more than 20-*

to-1. Representative Johnson raised more than \$2.3 million for the election.



## DELAWARE

### **Paul Donnelly**

*Head Start Family Service Worker*

*Democratic Nominee for the At-Large Seat*

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Paul Donnelly has been a family service worker with Head Start for the past five years. Prior to that, he worked for 20 years with the New York Department of Health and Human Services. He also has served as a union representative for the Communications Workers of America.

“Two issues near and dear to my heart” prompted him to run against Representative Michael Castle. “One was the war in Iraq. My son—and father of two of my grandchildren—is a veteran and served there. I’ve been against the war from the beginning.” The other was Head Start, because he opposes a bill that Representative Castle introduced that “would have taken away federal funding for Head Start programs.” Democratic Party leaders asked Donnelly to enter the race, and a number of Donnelly’s coworkers particularly encouraged him in his bid for office. Finally, Donnelly added, his job and the fact that he is a resident of Delaware allowed him “to see the needs of families and Delawareans.”

Mr. Donnelly feels that money greatly affected the outcome of the race. “With the limited amount of money I had,” he said, “I had no chance of beating [Castle] . . . I knew I was going to lose. I just didn’t want him to run unopposed.”

Fundraising posed major difficulties for Mr. Donnelly. “I had to take a leave of absence to run,” he attested. “And I was trying to survive with the campaign contributions I had . . . I’m still reeling from the debt.”

As for his opponent’s superior fundraising, he observed, the “mere fact that he can raise so much more money is because he’s an incumbent. Those that contribute to him know they’ll continue to have influence—it’s a tremendous advantage for incumbents.” While Donnelly estimates that his average contribution was around \$100, he noted that Representative Castle was able to raise thousands of dollars from many different sources.

Mr. Donnelly believes many potential candidates are “absolutely” discouraged from running because of the role of money in politics, saying he knows good people who would otherwise be interested. Finding the fundraising aspect of campaigning overwhelming, he will not consider running for office again. “I’m so bitter now,” he declared, “I certainly wouldn’t run again.”

*Paul Donnelly raised under \$5,000 in his run against six-term incumbent Michael Castle and earned 30% of the vote. Representative Castle raised \$987,000 and spent \$874,000 on the campaign.*



## FLORIDA

### **Jan Schneider**

*Attorney*

*Democratic Nominee for the 13<sup>th</sup> District*

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Jan Schneider has earned a B.A. from Brown, a master’s degree from Columbia, and a JD and Ph.D. from Yale University. She has 25 years of legal and legislative experience in Washington, DC and has served on numerous legal and public interest association boards.

Ms. Schneider first decided to run for Congress in 2002 because she “was offended by Katherine Harris and the Bush administration,” noting that she “wanted to make it an election, not a

coronation.” During that campaign, Ms. Schneider says she had an active roster of about 600 volunteers and came within five percentage points of winning the race.

In 2004, Ms. Schneider ran again in a similar style and focused on issues affecting seniors in her district. “We were as close as you can get to an old-fashioned grassroots campaign,” she says. “Our contributions were much smaller [than our opponents’ contributions] in the primary and general and we had many more contributors.” Ms. Schneider estimates that her average contribution was below \$50. In addition, she depended upon volunteers. “We are a retirement district and we had a lot of experienced volunteers,” she said. “We would have been really dead if we had to pay for the kind of advice we got for free. We really were a grassroots effort and that’s not so popular anymore.”

However, Ms. Schneider wasn’t able to match Republican Congresswoman Katherine Harris’ \$3.6 million in fundraising—especially after the Democratic Party backed her opposition in the primary. “Party leaders supported my primary opponent and discouraged people from giving to me because they smelled money, and thought my opponent could raise more,” Schneider said. Her primary opponent was “a banker who’d been a Republican and put in over \$300,000 of her own money.”

Ms. Schneider reports that money played a “significant role” in her race. Although she won the primary, she had difficulties fundraising because “Katherine Harris had \$3.5 million and we had our own party working against us and discouraging people from contributing... The party had reserved a lot of ad time in the district for the general and they withdrew it [once Schneider won the primary]. That was published in the paper and it really hurt our fundraising efforts.”

Ms. Schneider claims that her opponent “ducked out of at least nine debates, so the voters didn’t get to hear the issues.” Ultimately, says

Schneider, Representative Harris “had the money to run the 30-second attack ads and she succeeded in killing the free media time [that I could have used] to respond. The media then didn’t give us any of the time.” She claims Representative Harris was on the air six times per hour right after the primary. “On half a million,” she says, “we could have had a shot at this race, but [after the contentious primary] we were left with maybe \$200,000 or so.”

Schneider believes that our current campaign finance system discourages good candidates from running, and found it especially “discouraging to be told by your own party that they’re looking for people who can self-fund.” She suggests providing free airtime to candidates and finding ways to make better use of email and other modern communication tools as options for improving the situation.

Ms. Schneider plans to stay involved in politics. She plans to form a senior advocacy center to work on the types of senior issues she hoped to address in Congress; she also is willing to help less experienced candidates run for office. She would consider running for federal office again, but notes that fundraising concerns would play a role in her decision.

*Jan Schneider defeated Christine Jennings in Florida’s 13<sup>th</sup> District Democratic primary 45% to 38%, even though Ms. Schneider raised just over \$315,000 and Ms. Jennings raised approximately \$560,000. Schneider went on to raise \$605,000, but was defeated 55% to 45% in the general election by Representative Katherine Harris, who raised \$3.56 million.<sup>27</sup>*



## GEORGIA

### **Doug Haines**

*Attorney, Former State Senator*

*Democratic Primary Candidate in the 12<sup>th</sup> District*

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In 1992, attorney Doug Haines founded Georgia Legal Watch, a nonprofit public interest law firm devoted to environmental and good government work. In 2000, he won a seat in the Georgia State Senate, even though he was outspent five-to-one by a longtime incumbent.

Mr. Haines decided to run for Congress because his experience taught him that legislating is a “great opportunity to do good work.” He says that he “wasn’t pleased with the orientation of most of the people involved in elected office with respect to public resources. In Georgia, we’re in the dark ages with respect to the environment.”

Despite his state government experience, Haines was not welcomed by the Democratic Party. “The party functionaries discouraged me because another guy had a lot of money raised by the time I got in, which was after my daughter was born,” he says. “This guy had already raised as much as I did in total by the time I got in.” Haines decided to run anyway because he commissioned a poll in Clark County before he announced and polled almost two-to-one over the eventual winner.

When asked why he lost his race, Haines answers with two words: “Money, TV.” He found fundraising especially difficult given his opponent’s head start. “I’ve given the Sierra Club about \$1 million worth of free legal help since 1993,” he says, “but they and the League of Conservation Voters (LCV) endorsed the winner because he had money, which deprived me of the legitimacy of being the environmental candidate—despite the fact that LCV had given

me their highest score ever. I received the equality award in the Senate, but the Human Rights Campaign didn’t endorse in the primary. The Democrat they eventually endorsed after the primary refused their endorsement and opposed gay marriage.”

Ultimately, Mr. Haines found running for office frustrating. “We ran a very grassroots campaign,” he says. “I wouldn’t waste my time on a grassroots campaign anymore. I wouldn’t run and I wouldn’t suggest it to anyone I care about. It was a profoundly disheartening and shallow experience. There was absolutely no media coverage of anything but the horse race. We had interesting policy proposals and none of them got a drop of ink. It all revolved around TV, and we did very little of it.”

Haines concludes “if you want to win an election, you should be doing nothing but fundraising. Meeting with people, giving speeches, looking at issues is beyond a waste of time as far as your being elected.” He suggests providing free airtime and requiring ads to be more substantive as ways of improving the system.

*Doug Haines raised \$375,000, including \$105,000 of his own money, to finish second in a four-way race for the Democratic nomination for Georgia’s 12<sup>th</sup> District House seat with 28.9% of the vote. John Barrow won the race with 51.5% of the vote, having raised \$853,000. Barrow went on to raise \$1.8 million and win a narrow victory over incumbent Republican Max Burns in the general election, who raised \$2.8 million.*



## HAWAII

### **Inam Rahman**

*Physician*

*Republican Primary Candidate in the 2<sup>nd</sup> District*

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Dr. Inam Rahman is in private practice in Honolulu and is the President of the Hawaii Medical Association. He is a founding member of the nonprofit organization Hawaii

Prescription Care, which helps those who cannot afford prescription medications gain access to needed medicines. He also hosts a medical program on local radio and television.

Dr. Rahman ran for office on a platform of improving the health care system, noting that there are a lot of problems with the system in Hawaii and in the United States generally. “If elected,” he said, “I would be able to make a difference as a physician.” He also is concerned about the state of agriculture in Hawaii, worried that “we are losing our agricultural potential.” In his bid for office, he received a lot of encouragement from patients who “thought I could make a difference.” Many local Republican Party leaders, on the other hand, did not encourage him on the grounds that he would not be able to raise enough money.

In the end, Dr. Rahman felt that money and the media had a big influence on his race. “It’s a vicious cycle,” he said. “Having money gets you more media attention. [My opponent Michael Gabbard] came in with a lot of money—\$100,000—so the media took to him.”

Fundraising was difficult, Dr. Rahman said, because he did not have the support of the party. His opponent, however, was able to attract big donations. “My opponent raised big money in \$4,000 amounts and the media promoted him. People give money to whomever they think will win—the one with name recognition. When he

began he had the same name recognition as me, but the money made a difference.”

His own campaign raised money in \$50 and \$100 amounts, “from average people.” Dr. Rahman believes his constituents could generally afford to give at the lower end of the scale, between \$50 and \$200.

After his experience running for Congress, Dr. Rahman thinks that the obstacles to winning a seat in Congress are too difficult for ordinary people to overcome. “It’s a big hurdle,” he attested. “I know a lot of people who would run—and I know people who have run once, but then can’t do it again because they owe money [as a result].”

According to Dr. Rahman, one of the more imposing obstacles is the high contribution limit. “The \$2,000 limit is too much,” he declared. “If rich people belong to one group, they decide collectively to support one candidate.” Such a system, he believes, gives an unfair and unmerited advantage to certain candidates. “Those who have the best ideas should win.”

Privileging big money donors has negative repercussions throughout the electoral system, says Dr. Rahman. “It encourages government to cater to big donors—and [officeholders] have to give something back in order to win again. It’s a vicious cycle,” he observed.

“I believe campaign finance reform is needed,” he continued. “Such as a cap on how much a person can raise and spend. The donation cap also should be lowered.” He also thinks it would be a good idea for the federal government to provide a voucher or a tax credit to people who give small donations of under \$100. Not only would it help his prospects as a candidate, but it “would encourage those who feel in their hearts that they should give.”

As things stand now, Dr. Rahman is not sure he will run for office again because of the large amount of money it is necessary to raise. Under



a different system of spending limits and low contribution limits, however, he believes he would “definitely” have a better chance of winning.

*Raising just over \$22,000, Dr. Inam Rahman received 7% of the vote and was the runner-up in a four-way primary won by Mike Gabbard, who out-raised Rahman nearly sixteen-to-one. Despite raising more money than his opponent in the general election, Gabbard lost to incumbent Congressman Ed Case.<sup>28</sup>*



## IDAHO

### **Jim Pratt**

*Businessman & Farmer*

*Republican Primary Candidate in the 1<sup>st</sup> District*

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Jim Pratt is a small businessman and entrepreneur who owns a farm in Melba, Idaho. As a student at Oregon State University, he majored in political science and worked on local campaigns. He also served as a congressional staffer to former Oregon Representative Jim Bunn.

When he entered the Republican primary against incumbent C.L. Otter, Mr. Pratt says, “We knew we weren’t going to win.” However, he decided to “stand up for democracy” and “give voters a second choice.”

He was resigned to his loss at the outset because he feels “money and well-ingrained politicians” have too strong an influence on election outcomes. “I decided not to fundraise,” Mr. Pratt said, “but just to put up a fight for the electoral choice.”

“If I’d had some money,” he regrets, “at least it would’ve been competitive . . . I just spent \$1,000 to \$1,200 of my own money.” He acknowledges, however, that it still would have been a losing

battle. “If we’d spent \$100,000, we would’ve gained more in the vote, but he would’ve spent more and we probably still wouldn’t have won.”

The reason for his opponent’s overwhelming advantage was simple, according to Mr. Pratt—“because he’s a Congressman. When you have access to power, you have access to big donations. If you want to have access, then you have to donate.” For an outsider, he contends, it’s hard to raise money and impossible to match the incumbent’s fundraising prowess.

He thinks this negative cycle lends too much power to a few special interests. “Corporations and lobbyists have too much influence,” he said, “and too much control over Congress by the amount of money they can generate.”

Unfortunately, Pratt admits, it’s hard to know the solution to this problem. “I don’t know what to do to change it,” he says, “other than make sure the constituents know how much [a Congressman] received in contributions each time there’s a vote in Congress. So if a Congressman is voting on an agriculture bill and he’s received money from a fertilizer company, then the newspapers should publish it.”

If this were done, he thinks it would give him a better chance when running against an incumbent. According to Mr. Pratt, we should do “whatever you can do to give parity to people running.” He might try a run for Congress again, but is concerned about fundraising, and would like to run a fully funded campaign the next time around.

*Jim Pratt obtained 22% of the vote and raised under \$5,000 in his primary race against incumbent C.L. Otter. Representative Otter raised \$333,000 in the primary and went on to raise \$717,000 through the general election, defeating challenger Naomi Preston and out-raising her 83 to 1.*



## ILLINOIS

### David Phelps

Attorney

Republican Primary Candidate in the 8<sup>th</sup> District

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David Phelps, a longtime resident of Illinois's eighth district, is an attorney who has served as a local public official for 12 years. He was motivated to challenge 35-year incumbent

Phil Crane for the Republican Party nomination because he felt Crane was doing an ineffectual job. Mr. Phelps identifies himself as a "moderate conservative Republican." His opponent, he says, "is a big advocate of outsourcing American jobs." On environmental issues, he was "appalled" by the incumbent's opposition to the Clean Air Act, the Clean Water Act, and the Safe Drinking Water Act, all of which Mr. Phelps would have supported.

Although the war chest of his opponent exceeded his own by a 15-to-1 margin, Mr. Phelps nonetheless netted 31% of the vote. He believes he lost because he was at a formidable disadvantage in facing a longtime incumbent who was able to raise a lot of money from big corporations, particularly drug and oil companies.

Lacking the funds to launch a major ad campaign, Mr. Phelps campaigned the old-fashioned way, through direct contact with voters. "My wife and I spent 13 months going door to door, holding open-house meetings at local libraries and participating in community parades and events," he said.

The main problem with our current campaign finance system, according to Mr. Phelps, is that special interest groups can effectively buy influence. "Average individuals cannot match what is accumulated by corporations or special interest groups. The average person can't afford

to give \$1,000, let alone \$2,000." Under a system of mandatory spending limits, he believes the regular person would stand a chance in a campaign. "But for the financial aspects of a campaign, you'd have a lot more qualified people running," he maintained.

As for his own prospects, he thinks they would improve if there were mandatory spending limits to put all the candidates on a level playing field. Asked if he would consider running for federal office again, he admits that fundraising concerns are the one factor that would weigh heavily in his decision. "The battle of the campaign war chest bleeds out a lot of good people," he said.

*David Phelps lost to incumbent Representative Phil Crane in the 8<sup>th</sup> District Republican primary, receiving 31% of the vote. Representative Crane raised \$312,000 for his primary bid, more than 15 times the \$20,500 raised by Phelps. In an upset victory, challenger Melissa Bean defeated Representative Crane in the general election, matching his fundraising of nearly \$1.6 million.*



## INDIANA

### Tony Zirkle

Attorney

Republican Primary Candidate in the 2<sup>nd</sup> District

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Tony Zirkle has a diverse background, having attended the U.S. Naval Academy, a theological seminary, and Indiana University law school.

He served as a deputy prosecutor in Elkhart, Indiana and now has his own law firm in Crown Point. He was drawn to running for Congress because he felt strongly that a number of major social issues needed to be addressed, and he objected to the Bush administration's "tax cut for billionaires."

Sensing he wouldn't be able to raise a lot of money running against the party favorite,

incumbent Congressman Chris Chocola, Mr. Zirkle decided not to put time into fundraising, but rather to spend time on the issues. “I tried to run a campaign on ideas,” he said, “but [Representative Chocola] refused to debate me...When you’re a challenger running against a party favorite, you don’t get a chance to speak.”

Instead of raising money, he said, “I used my own money and delivered flyers throughout the district...I did all I could with the resources I had. I did get some ideas out there.”

In light of the fundraising power he was up against, however, Zirkle admits he wasn’t able to do enough. “The National Republican Party put [Representative Chocola] on their top ten list,” he said. “Both Bush and Cheney raised money for him. When Cheney came, he raised \$500,000 in one day.”

“You probably need to get on TV to win,” he concedes. “You can buy TV ads and get name recognition, and then the newspapers report on how much money you raise. If that’s democracy, I would challenge the definition of it.” Part of the problem, he says, is that the media determines a candidate’s viability by reporting on the amount of their fundraising.

Another issue, he maintains, is the party’s control over electoral choices. “I think Nader’s right when he says we have a two-party duopoly and single party districts. If you agree with parts of both party platforms, it’s hard to get a hearing.”

To illustrate the problem, he points out that “we could have someone who’s a genius in politics who could solve all our problems, but if they don’t have [money] or access to party leaders, then they don’t really have a chance. We need to set up a system for those who are not endorsed by the party bosses or who don’t have resources—they should be able to run.”

In order to improve our electoral process, Mr. Zirkle says it “should be easier to have public access to the media . . . The real challenge in a

low-budget campaign is to get your message out. A couple of free 30-second commercials would help...There also should be some form of public financing once you’ve reached a minimum threshold.” Furthermore, he believes, candidates should face a fine or penalty for refusing to participate in debates. “In three campaigns, no one has agreed to debate me,” Zirkle stated.

He’d like to run for office again, he says wryly, “if I can pay off my debt!” Rather than run a campaign funded by big money, however, “I’d like to pay for it all myself. I’d prefer to run a low-budget campaign so I can say nobody’s buying my vote.”

*Tony Zirkle won 16% of the primary vote against incumbent Chris Chocola while raising less than \$5,000 to Representative Chocola’s \$921,000. In the general election, Representative Chocola defeated challenger Joe Donnelly, raising nearly \$1.6 million to Donnelly’s \$701,000.*



## **Denny Heath**

*Retired Business Owner*

*Democratic Primary Candidate in the 1<sup>st</sup> District*

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Denny Heath says he understands the needs of Iowans because he’s had the experience of working hard and getting by in difficult circumstances. “I’ve owned my own business, I was a teacher, I worked on the railroad, and I worked my way through college—I started with no money and I know what it’s like,” he said. He was drawn to running for office because he feels there are a lot of problems in Iowa that are unaddressed, such as the need for health care. He says politicians currently do not respond well to the concerns of the people of Iowa because “they have gotten addicted to special interest money. They have to



pay favors back—that’s why they don’t take care of us.”

Refusing to accept any contributions at all because “the only way you change our special interest-run system is by not taking money from the very start,” Mr. Heath used less than \$5,000 of his own money in the primary, but nonetheless garnered 40% of the vote.

He admits that it is difficult to run a campaign without accepting contributions. “Being self-financed is limiting because it’s difficult to get your message out,” he said. “Network TV is expensive.” Others tried to dissuade him from his approach—“People told me I needed \$1 million to run a campaign,” Heath said, but he was determined to buck a campaign finance system dominated by money. He says he knows a lot of people who would make great representatives, but who are discouraged from running by the need to raise so much money.

According to Mr. Heath, a system of public financing, as well as allocating free airtime for political candidates, would enable more good candidates to run. “It would level the playing field not only for the candidates, but for the country,” he asserted. “It would help the country to get candidates that truly represent the people.”

*Denny Heath won 40% of the vote in Iowa’s 1<sup>st</sup> District Democratic primary despite not accepting any contributions. He lost to Bill Gluba, who raised \$218,000. Gluba was defeated by incumbent Representative Jim Nussle in the general election, 54%-44%.*



## KANSAS

### **Kris Kobach**

*Law Professor*

*Republican Nominee for the 3<sup>rd</sup> District*

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Professor Kris Kobach teaches law at the University of Missouri-Kansas City. He has served as a judicial clerk on the United States Court of Appeals for the 10th Circuit, in addition to two and a half years of service on the local city council. In 2001, Professor Kobach was invited to work in the office of Attorney General John Ashcroft, first as a White House fellow and later as counsel on a presidential appointment. During his tenure in the Attorney General’s office, he was involved in designing and implementing national counterterrorism measures.

His experience combating terrorism, Professor Kobach suggests, would be useful expertise in the halls of Congress. He adds that he received encouragement from all sides when contemplating a run for Congress against incumbent Congressman Dennis Moore, including from Republican leaders in the district and leaders of the pro-life movement.

In Professor Kobach’s view, the single greatest factor in his loss was his inability to respond to his opponent’s attack ads in the last weeks of the campaign. “My opponent was able to launch a nasty smear campaign with \$600,000 and about eight weeks to go and I had no money left to answer it,” he said. “I could’ve easily answered it if I’d had the money to answer it. But we elected the cheaper option—to answer his TV smear campaign with campaign mailings.”

He declared himself pleased, however, with the \$1.2 million he was able to raise. As his race was one on a shortlist of contests that the Republican Party had targeted nationally, Professor Kobach benefited from high-profile assistance. “The

Vice President flew in for a breakfast,” he recalled. “We raised \$125,000 that morning.”

Nonetheless, he said, “As much as we were able to raise, we weren’t able to keep pace.” For a challenger, he points out, the difficulty in fundraising lies in convincing individual donors that you have a chance of winning. “But the biggest barrier is economic organizations. They will always line up behind the incumbent because they are risk averse—they don’t want to bet against the incumbent . . . Businesses are pointed to as a distortion in the system.”

Speaking from his experience and his knowledge of the electoral system, Professor Kobach maintains that the powerful influence of money on the electoral process is undeniable. “There’s no question that money [influences election outcomes] in the vast majority of cases,” he said. “The evidence is overwhelming, and I can speak from experience. The advantage of incumbents is that they can snap their fingers and the money arrives. . . . Incumbents have ways of raising money that challengers can’t match.”

He is not optimistic about the chances for real reform, however. “The system is designed by and favors incumbents. Current members won’t vote for legislation that threatens incumbents—and that makes it difficult for challengers.”

With the electoral process skewed in favor of incumbents and the well-funded, Professor Kobach says there is “no question” that good candidates decline to run for office. “I had to spend the vast majority of my campaign efforts for [over a year] raising money. My largest single activity was fundraising . . . I had no idea what an overwhelming task it would be,” he attested.

While he would consider running for office again, he would “certainly weigh the decision very carefully if I run as a challenger. There must be some factor that outweighs the huge incumbent advantage.” In fact, he continued, “I’m much less likely to run as a challenger, which creates a self-fulfilling prophecy—

qualified challengers drop out, making it even easier for incumbents.”

*Kris Kobach garnered 43% of the vote against three-term incumbent Congressman Dennis Moore, raising nearly \$1.2 million to the Congressman’s \$2.3 million.*



## KENTUCKY

### **Tom Buford**

*State Senator*

*Republican Nominee for the 6<sup>th</sup> District*

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Tom Buford has been a Kentucky State Senator since 1991 and has served as both the Minority Whip and Minority Caucus Chair. Having always wanted to move to the federal level, he felt that with Republicans in control of Congress and the White House, this was a good time for the 6<sup>th</sup> District to be represented by a Republican who could serve it well in the appropriations process.

Senator Buford says he lost because he faced an opponent with a famous Kentucky political name, incumbent Representative Ben Chandler, and was heavily outspent. He feels that money influences outcomes in “almost every election. It’s safe to say incumbents enjoy a strong advantage because of the ability to raise huge money. I had to make myself known to about eight counties and you can’t do that by driving around. . . . Money, money, money is hard to overcome. I have run and won and spent a lot less—but in smaller territory where footwork can help.”

Senator Buford believes that his average contribution was between \$200 and \$300 and reports that his opponent “had a lot of \$1,000 and \$2,000 contributions from lobbyists.” Without financial assistance from the Republican Party, he wasn’t able to overcome the shortfall.

With it, he feels he would have had a much better shot. “One candidate was expected to lose,” said Buford, “but with about \$1.5 million he beat [actor] George Clooney’s father.”

He will consider running again, but not without sufficient financial backing. “I would not do it without first having locked down support from the national party,” he says.

*Despite being out-raised more than six-to-one, State Senator Tom Buford received 40% of the vote against Representative Ben Chandler, an incumbent Democrat. Senator Buford raised \$138,000 to Representative Chandler’s \$860,000.*



## LOUISIANA

### **Charmaine Caccioppi**

*Businesswoman*

*Democratic Candidate in Louisiana’s 3<sup>rd</sup> District  
Open Primary*

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Charmaine Caccioppi is familiar with the workings of politics, having served for 20 years as an executive assistant and state director for U.S. Senator J. Bennett Johnson. Her portfolio included interstate transportation, and she has extensive expertise in the area of job creation. For the past five years, she has served as the Senior Vice President of Public Policy and Economic Development for the New Orleans Regional Chamber of Commerce.

When considering a bid for office, she received encouragement from former Senator Johnson, many businesses, and the local Chamber of Commerce, in addition to the support of many local women. She felt it was important to run in order to engage in the fight against coastal erosion and push for public education incentives, quality health care, and incentives for job-creating small businesses.

Frustrated by the outside interference she observed in the Louisiana race, she noted, “Until you run for office, you just don’t understand how the system works. . . . The Washington special interests pick their favorites, and the parties choose their favorites up front, which becomes a huge obstacle.”

The winner of the primary, Ms. Caccioppi pointed out, was Billy Tauzin, III, the son of retiring Congressman Billy Tauzin. “His father was a ranking member of the House of Representatives, and the Republican favorite. The Republican Congressional Campaign Committee and the special interests unleashed an enormous amount of money for this candidate.” On the Democratic side, she said, the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee weighed in on behalf of one candidate in an unprecedented way, running \$350,000 worth of TV ads for primary runner-up Charlie Melancon.

“It’s all about the money,” Caccioppi declared, “the election is controlled by Washington special interests.”

She believes the combination of special interest and party favoritism with the challenge of fundraising presents a formidable obstacle to candidates. “While fundraising is difficult for all candidates,” Caccioppi said, “it is particularly difficult for candidates like myself who had never run before and don’t come from personal wealth. I announced in April, and by June I’d come within striking distance of the other Democrats. For a first-time candidate, I did exceptionally well. But soon, it was all over-- the DCCC decided who to put their money on. And the Washington special interests’ decision to drop \$350,000 on Melancon gave him the ability to raise even more money.”

Of the task of fundraising itself, she says, “It’s all about dialing for dollars.” Her challenge, she attested, was achieving name recognition throughout a large district. “I needed media exposure, which is very expensive. I felt

doomed—it was the chicken-and-egg [problem]...Without the exposure, I could not raise sufficient funds, and without the funds, I could not get the exposure.” The money she did raise, she said, she earned by “staying locked up in an office, day after day, making phone call after phone call.”

This state of affairs in the campaign finance system can be discouraging to potential candidates, Caccioppi maintains. “It’s a disaster and a joke. There’s never been real campaign finance reform, only campaign finance reform perpetrated by the good ol’ boys and girls, which puts those without wealth at a disadvantage and prohibits them from challenging the status quo.”

“Individuals with no personal wealth who hold a real job can’t afford to run for public office,” she added. “I had to give up my job in the private sector and live off my 401k...Why can’t we fix this system so hardworking, honest citizens can seek public office without putting their financial security at risk? We have strong, capable people who want to contribute their talent and energy as public servants, yet the system does nothing but discourage them from doing so.”

She believes the recent doubling of the individual contribution limits has only made matters worse. “It encourages more control by the wealthy fat cats who are able to dump thousands of dollars on candidates who will see to it that their particular interests are protected. The fat cats give \$2,000 from their own account and then they get \$2,000 from everybody that works for them to dump in [their candidate’s] war chest. If anything, we need to reduce the big money donors and increase the role of average citizens...Ordinary people who want to contribute to a candidate are often discouraged from doing so because they don’t believe their \$50 or their \$100 will have any impact...They don’t stand a chance because thousands of them don’t equal ten big donors . . . After all, the PACs and special interest fat cats are able to dump big bucks to ensure . . . their candidate has adequate media exposure.”

She also criticized the role of the media, saying they have a “responsibility to the people of this country and they should focus on the issues impacting our communities. Instead, they are lazy and report on the credibility of any candidate based solely on his or her ability to raise campaign funds. This contributes to the status quo and plays right into the hands of the special interests.”

Lamenting the current state of our electoral process, she declared, “Democracy should never be for sale to the highest bidder. But democracy IS for sale to the highest bidder—and our democracy is very ill served as a result. That’s why we’ll never have the environmental controls we need.”

In order to restore true democracy, Caccioppi advocates setting limits on spending or limiting the amount of airtime candidates can purchase. She also thinks giving incentives to small donors would increase the participation of average citizens in elections.

Despite her disillusionment with the system, she would “absolutely” consider running again, saying, “Democracy in America is too great for me to ever give up on it.”

Nevertheless, she adds wistfully, “I want to go back to the days of grassroots campaigning. This type of campaigning brings voters face-to-face with the candidates and strengthens the democratic process...As a candidate, I really wanted those \$25, \$50, \$100 contributions because those people were voting for me.”

*Running as a Democrat in Louisiana’s six-way open primary, Charmaine Caccioppi raised \$257,000 and received 7% of the vote. W.J. “Billy” Tauzin III and Charlie Melancon made it to a runoff, earning 32% and 24% of the vote respectively. Tauzin raised \$603,000, and the runner-up Charlie Melancon raised \$786,000. Melancon defeated Tauzin in the runoff election, with both candidates raising a total of approximately \$1.7 million.<sup>29</sup>*



# MAINE

## **Brian Hamel**

*Business Executive*

*Republican Nominee for the 2<sup>nd</sup> District*

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As the former President and CEO of the Loring Development Authority, Brian Hamel led an effort that attracted new businesses to the area and created new jobs to replace those lost with the closing of Loring Air Force Base. Furthermore, Hamel has served as Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Maine Community College System and has worked as a CPA in the past.

Mr. Hamel decided to run for office because he was “frustrated by the business climate in Maine, with the loss of manufacturing jobs and plant closings. I wanted to bring a job creation mindset to Congress.”

On the reasons for his loss to incumbent Michael Michaud, Hamel is direct: “It was the power of incumbency. He had the ability to out-raise me two to one, he had name recognition, and he was a state legislator for 22 years, so he had the ability to fundraise.”

“It’s absolutely all about the money,” he continued. “People were pounding that into my head. If you don’t have enough money to get your message out, it’s very difficult to unseat an incumbent.” Raising enough money to overcome his opponent’s name recognition was an uphill task. “I’d never run for office before...and the fact that there was no primary race didn’t help me with name recognition...Because of the power of the incumbency, PACs are reluctant to fund non-incumbents—they know that 90% of incumbents win, so it’s hard to get them interested.”

Traditionally, he says, challengers in Maine’s second district don’t succeed in raising much

money. “I surprised a lot of people by raising a lot,” he declared. “80% of my money came from individuals, mostly from within the state of Maine... I had a lot of grassroots contributions.” Pointing out that Maine is one of the poorest states, Hamel estimates that most constituents cannot afford to give more than \$200. His opponent, on the other hand, “raised 65% of his money from outside special interests at \$10,000 a whack, while I’m collecting money from Sally and Joe.”

Hamel felt he was not able to raise enough money to communicate his message widely enough. “The only way to be effective,” he said, “is to be on the airwaves—it’s a big district.”

A lot of potential candidates are likely to be discouraged by all these hurdles, he believes. “You have good quality people who don’t jump in because of the money and the incumbent advantage. Special interests groups pad [incumbents’] bank accounts, and the PAC money scares a lot of people away . . . We need to change the system,” he maintains, “so special interests don’t play as much of a role.”

Hamel has taken his experience as a cautionary lesson. If he decides to run again, he says, “I would need assurances from the National Republican Congressional Committee that they would play a role . . . If I’d had about a half million more I could’ve won.”

*Brian Hamel raised \$652,000 and won 39% of the vote in his run for office against incumbent Congressman Michael Michaud, who out-raised him two-to-one with nearly \$1.4 million.*





## MARYLAND

### **Scott Rolle**

*District Attorney*

*Republican Primary Candidate in the 6<sup>th</sup> District*

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Since 1994, Scott Rolle has been elected to three terms as the Frederick County District Attorney. He also serves as a captain in the Maryland Army Reserves and teaches law at Mount St. Mary's College.

He felt it was the right time to run for Congress against incumbent Roscoe Bartlett because "people were ready for a change." He received a lot of encouragement for his bid, and "even those that didn't support me said 'we will support you when your turn is up.'"

In addition to low turnout in the primary elections, Mr. Rolle thinks money influenced the election results significantly because "people perceive the biggest fundraiser will be the winner. And [Representative Bartlett] had a better ability to get his message out."

Although he feels he raised a good amount of money, he adds that he would have liked to do more direct mailings. "Fundraising," he said, "is very difficult. You're asking friends for money for something that may not work out." Furthermore, he pointed out, "People in Frederick County expect \$25 to \$30 barbecues. They're not used to \$100 fundraisers."

His opponent, a longtime incumbent, had the advantage of being able to call on Republican Party luminaries for his fundraising effort. "Because he's the incumbent, when the President needs something, he's there. So the President said 'what do you need?' and he wanted the Vice President," Rolle said, noting that Cheney attended one of Bartlett's fundraising events.

While Rolle estimates his average contribution at around \$100, he thinks Representative Bartlett's was nearer to the \$2,000 limit. "Most people gave the maximum," he said, "because then you got your picture with the Vice President. [Representative Bartlett] also took PAC money, and we didn't take any money from PACs."

Although he admits he is not fond of the current campaign finance system, Rolle doesn't see much of an alternative. One change that would help, he concedes, would be to provide vouchers or tax credits for small political contributions. "It would give the little guy more voice—it would be a good thing."

He will definitely consider running for office again, but there's "no question" that he will weigh his fundraising opportunities carefully. "The biggest discouraging aspect," he said, "is raising all that money."

*Scott Rolle won 30% of the vote in the Republican primary election and raised just over \$100,000. Six-term incumbent Roscoe Bartlett raised \$249,000 in the primary and more than \$550,000 through the general election. In the general election, Representative Bartlett defeated his Democratic opponent Kenneth Bosley, who did not raise money.*



## MASSACHUSETTS

### **Ronald Crews**

*Nonprofit Organization President*

*Republican Nominee for the 3<sup>rd</sup> District*

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Ronald Crews is the President of the Massachusetts Family Institute, a nonprofit advocacy organization. He has held a number of diverse positions in the past, ranging from serving three terms in the Georgia state legislature to serving as a pastor and a chaplain in the U.S. Army. He is currently a

chaplain colonel in the Massachusetts Army National Guard.

Prior to the election, both Republicans and Democrats approached Mr. Crews to ask him to run for Congress. Mr. Crews felt it was important to do so in order to continue his fight to preserve traditional marriage and because he was concerned about the negative portrayal of the war in Iraq.

In addition to the wave of Democratic support generated by Senator John Kerry's presidential candidacy, Mr. Crews cites a shortfall in funding as a principal factor contributing to his electoral loss to incumbent James McGovern. "I didn't have enough money to fund enough television ads and mailings," he said. Money generally has a significant impact on elections, he says, "because it takes money to get your message out."

He believes there were not a lot of funds available for his candidacy because the state's Republican governor had recruited 100 candidates to run on the Republican ticket for the state legislature. "All 100-plus candidates were going after the same donor base," Crews pointed out. "And Republicans in Massachusetts didn't generate much out-of-state [donor] interest."

As a result, fundraising was a difficult task. "I spent hours and hours on many days calling through lists of known donors. It was a tedious but necessary process without a whole lot of fruit." His opponent, however, did not encounter such problems because he raised a lot of money from PACs, Mr. Crews asserted.

Mr. Crews can well imagine that potential candidates might be dissuaded from running by the prospect of fundraising. "The amount of money it takes to run a campaign is discouraging," he attested. "The benefits of incumbency make it extremely difficult for challengers—only seven incumbent

Congressmen lost—and it's hard to fundraise as a challenger."

While acknowledging the failures of the electoral process, Mr. Crews is resigned to its shortcomings. He does offer, however, that federal incentives for small political contributions, such as vouchers or tax credits, could give challengers a boost. As for his future political prospects, he is unsure whether he will run again, but he is certain that fundraising concerns will "absolutely" play a role in his decision.

*Ron Crews won 29% of the vote against incumbent Representative James McGovern. Crews raised \$140,000 and was out-fundraised by more than six-to-one by Representative McGovern, who raised \$939,000 and spent more than \$1.1 million on the election.*



## MICHIGAN

### **Don Hooper**

*Retired Businessman*

*Republican Nominee for the 1<sup>st</sup> District*

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Don Hooper is the chairman of the Iron County Republican Party. Prior to retirement, he ran a trucking company for 27 years and started several small businesses. He has served in the military and worked his way through college. On his qualifications for federal office, he says, "I'm a businessman and I've been paying taxes for 40-plus years."

Mr. Hooper was moved to run for Congress because "I don't like what's happening in the federal government." He also feels strongly that the conservative values he espouses are "the only hope for America."

He attributes his loss in part to the fact that his opponent, incumbent Congressman Bart Stupak,

“has been in there 14 years.” Money played a big role in the race, he says, “because I didn’t have any. I ran with \$12,000 of my own money. My opponent’s money was from PACs. In September he could have outspent me 32-to-1.”

In order to raise sufficient funds, he said, “You gotta have people working for you.” Hooper ran a low-budget campaign, however, traveling to northern Michigan with his wife to talk to people and put up campaign signs. It was difficult, he attests, “for me to go out there and spend one-half of my income and spend two to three months putting up signs.” He regrets that he received no help from the state Republican Party in his campaign. The contributions that he did receive he describes as coming from individuals, mostly in the \$10 to \$30 range.

According to Mr. Hooper, his opponent didn’t have to make nearly as much of a campaign effort. “People were just giving [money] to him,” he said. “Big companies give to people they think can win because they want favors. They want to get on the good side of politicians—[Congressman Stupak] doesn’t even need to write letters.” Hooper commented that there was a significant discrepancy between the candidates’ ability to disseminate their message. “If you want to put ads on TV,” he noted, “then you need to spend money. Nine-second ads cost \$2,000—that means everything to me, and nothing to him. When he travels around campaigning, he doesn’t need to pay for anything.”

Even if the campaign finance system doesn’t necessarily discourage good people from running, he says, it certainly “enhances their chances of losing. The incumbent has an enormous chance to stay where he’s at.” Mr. Hooper is extremely critical of recent efforts at campaign finance reform, however, saying they have “completely missed keeping money out of campaigns . . . With 527s, there’s *more* money in the system.”

He believes in a much simpler and more direct approach to reform. “Money,” he declared, “that’s what it’s all about. Limit the amount of money you can get—do that, and you’ll get an even playing field . . . Don’t allow three-quarters of a million dollars to be spent on one side—we need to equalize the thing with \$20,000 spending limits. If we put an overall limit on it, then [Congressman Stupak] would have to go out and campaign.”

Mr. Hooper also thinks decreasing or eliminating PAC money would help. “We need to prevent money from being given in such massive amounts,” he said, “so [challengers] don’t have to compete with an incumbent’s war chest.” It also would be helpful if candidates had equal access to the airwaves, he suggested.

If such changes were made, Mr. Hooper believes his race would be much more competitive. In the meantime, although he would like to run for Congress again, he is hesitant about presenting his candidacy if Representative Stupak is running again. “There’s just no way I can win,” he declared.

*Don Hooper lost to six-term incumbent Congressman Bart Stupak, winning 33% of the vote in the general election. Representative Stupak raised \$782,000 to Hooper’s \$9,000, a margin of more than 86-to-1.<sup>30</sup>*





## MINNESOTA

### Leigh Pomeroy

*Small Business Owner & Writer*

*Democratic-Farmer-Labor Party Nominee for the 1st District*

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Leigh Pomeroy is a writer who owns a small editing company in Mankato, Minnesota. He also teaches English composition part-time at Mankato State University.

An avid cyclist, he founded the Minnesota Valley Bicycle Advisory Board, an advocacy group for bicycling and trails in the area. His activist work on improving local trails led him to become deeply involved in numerous community activities, including City of Mankato Planning Commission and a local urban design project.

When the DFL Party's initial candidate dropped out of the Congressional race, Pomeroy took his place at the party's request. He was motivated to accept by his sense that "my opponent was wrong on every issue" and that "the country was going in precisely the wrong direction."

According to Mr. Pomeroy, his loss to incumbent Congressman Gil Gutknecht can be attributed to two major factors—the power of the incumbency and the influence of money. "We have a totally unfair system," he said. "Only seven incumbents were turned out of office—and four of them were from Texas. That's a poor track record for what purports to be a democracy." Pointing to the fact that he was vastly out-raised, he remarked, "You can win with less money, but it's certainly a largely determining factor."

As a first-time candidate, Pomeroy was unaccustomed to the trials of fundraising. "I had to train myself to take phone calls," he said. "You have to get on the phone and ask people for money—it's a very strange thing." Despite

the fact that the party had encouraged him to run, he received minimal support from the party and no financial help. "I got in late," he attested, "and I wasn't 'blessed' by the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee—I got absolutely no help on the national level."

Small donations composed the bulk of his contributions, Pomeroy said. "The average was less than \$200, maybe under \$100." Pomeroy's experience stands in contrast to the ease with which his opponent was able to raise money. "He had bigger contributions, and more PAC money—his PAC money alone was more than my total amount." The reason for the discrepancy, Pomeroy noted, was that "he's a ten-year incumbent. He had a lot of money on hand and was able to raise money. Once you get in, everybody gives you money—the incumbent has a tremendous advantage." Campaign fundraising, he concluded, is like an arms race. "No matter how much you raise, your opponent out-raises you."

As a result of his experience, Mr. Pomeroy takes a dim view of our campaign finance system. "If we think we are a democracy," he argues, "we're deluding ourselves...We purport to be an example of democracy around the world, but in fact we have an oligarchy...I would hope and pray that we can take can take money out of politics, [but] *Buckley v. Valeo* was a terrible mistake."<sup>3</sup>

According to Mr. Pomeroy, the system as it is now drives potentially good candidates away from the race. "The best people don't want to get involved in all the b.s.," he says bluntly. "If we could just run on issues and not on money," then perhaps more people would get involved.

While he thinks the recent McCain-Feingold legislation was "a step in the right direction,"

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<sup>3</sup> The 1976 Supreme Court decision *Buckley v. Valeo* struck down mandatory spending limits and equated money with speech. For further information, see the Buck Buckley Campaign website at [www.buckbuckley.com](http://www.buckbuckley.com).

Pomeroy contends that the power players easily circumvent the law. Calling campaign contributions from individuals “a form of legalized bribery,” he points to his opponent’s fundraising as an example. “If you look at his individual contributions,” he said, “it’s mainly the major players in companies that supported him.”

In order to break the power of moneyed interests over our elections, Mr. Pomeroy believes, “we need to have publicly funded campaigns and a cap on spending. We need to be able to discuss the issues rather than have it be a sideshow. [Now campaigns] are welfare for big media.” Referring to Minnesota’s state-level system of providing refunds to those who give small contributions to political candidates, he asserts such a system on the federal level “would go a long way towards making things better. The Minnesota system works better than the national—but it’s not the end-all.”

If Congress instituted the reforms he suggests, Pomeroy thinks there would be increased electoral competition; and for precisely that reason, he adds, such change is unlikely to happen. “[Reform] scares . . . people who are in office—they don’t want democracy, they want power.”

Will Mr. Pomeroy contemplate another run for Congress? The decision to run, he replies, will certainly be heavily weighted by fundraising concerns.

*Leigh Pomeroy raised \$56,000 in his bid for five-term incumbent Representative Gil Gutknecht’s seat and received 36% of the vote in a three-way general election. Representative Gutknecht won, accumulating \$832,000 for his reelection campaign and exceeding Pomeroy’s fundraising by nearly fifteen-to-one.*



## MISSISSIPPI

### Mike Lott

State Legislator

Republican Nominee for the 4<sup>th</sup> District

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Michael Lott is a Republican member of the Mississippi House of Representatives and is the current President of the Mississippi Legislative Conservative Coalition. He

decided to run for Congress because he doesn’t believe incumbent Representative Gene Taylor accurately represents the district. He says the Mississippi 4<sup>th</sup> is “by far one of the most conservative districts in the country and it’s ironic that we’re represented by a Democrat who votes one way in DC and talks differently down here.”

When asked why he lost, Representative Lott says, “it had to do with finances...When you have the right message, but you’re limited in funds, it doesn’t do you much good. If I had \$400,000 it would have been a close race.”

Lott attributes much of his fundraising difficulties to the fact that he was facing a long-term incumbent. “We had the right message, but when you’re running against a 15-year incumbent it’s difficult to raise money. You have folks who view it as wasting their money—those who have the big money. People don’t know if they can go against an incumbent.”

Lott estimates that his average contribution was under \$100 and says that “most people on the street are not going to give over \$50.” He feels that our current campaign finance system, coupled with the power of incumbency, discourages good candidates from running for office. “You have organizations in DC and back in the district who give to the incumbent first because he is the incumbent and his chances of winning are greater,” Lott says. As examples, he

points to the NRA and Right to Life, who contributed to his opponent even though Lott's record on their issues was at least as strong.

Lott supports limiting fundraising to inside the district "because if a Congressman is doing his job at home I don't think he'd have anything to worry about. It would make a more level playing field." He will consider running for federal office again, but says fundraising concerns will play a role in that decision.

*Republican State Representative Michael Lott raised \$90,000 in his effort to unseat seven-term Democratic incumbent Gene Taylor. Representative Taylor raised \$407,000 and defeated Lott 64% to 35%.*



## MISSOURI

### **Joan McGivney**

*Former City Council Member*

*Republican Primary Candidate in the 3<sup>rd</sup> District*

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Joan McGivney holds a degree in journalism, a master's degree in urban planning, and a master's certificate in gerontology. She was an administrator for 17 years with Southwestern Bell, created and marketed an award-winning educational game through her own company, and served on the Webster Groves City Council for four years and on the regional school board for six years. When she was elected to the city council, it was at a time when local government arrogance and the suspicion of corruption had generated citizens' distrust. While she was on the city council, "I worked hard to gain the citizens' trust," said Ms. McGivney. "When I was elected, we weren't budgeting our resources wisely. But we worked things out—by the third year we had regained people's trust."

Ms. McGivney decided to run for Congress because she was concerned about the polarization of the nation, planning for our aging population, and the federal budget. "I felt I could represent the district better," she said. "I'm a moderate Republican and I'm local—I understand what people want from government and what they need." Many senior citizens and "regular people, not big money donors" encouraged her to run for office.

She believes that the abortion issue played a key role in her race, but that money also affected the outcome. "The more money you have, the more name recognition you get . . . But media is so expensive," she noted. "I couldn't get coverage in the local media, other than limited coverage in the weekly papers. The daily paper endorsed me but wouldn't cover me because there were ten Democrats running in the race."

Fundraising was difficult because "it's a Democratic district and Republicans had given up on the district." Her opponent, however, started raising money early. "98% of his money was from out-of-state," McGivney said. "And he had \$40,000 left over from his last campaign. Also, this was his third attempt so he had name recognition."

Her own donors were of more modest means. "I only know middle class people, not rich people," she attested. She described the district as composed of many blue-collar workers and retirees. "Most people gave under \$200, and around 100 people gave between \$25 and \$100."

According to McGivney, one of the major problems with the campaign finance system is that the media doesn't spend enough time on the candidates. To help candidates without large amounts of funding to get their message out, she suggests that free media would help. "We should have public interest spots on each candidate for five minutes a night. Free airtime would give everybody a chance," she said. She also believes incentives for small contributions like tax credits or vouchers would help.

Under the current campaign finance system, she says, candidates feel like they're indebted to their donors and that they owe political favors. "But I never felt like that," she said, "because no one gave me money in large amounts... We just don't have a lot of rich friends." As a result of the importance of money in politics, she points out that a lot of rich people run for office. Ordinary people like her, she says, would have a better chance of winning under a different system. "Right now," she observes, "[running for office] is just overwhelming for regular people."

*Joan McGivney garnered 25% of the vote in the primary against Bill Federer, raising \$12,000 to his \$909,000. In the general election, Federer matched his opponent Russ Carnahan's fundraising at around \$1.3 million, but lost the election.*



## MONTANA

### Tracy Velazquez

Consultant

*Democratic Nominee for the At-Large Seat*

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As the owner of a consulting firm that offers services to nonprofit organizations, Tracy Velazquez has a wide variety of experience on public policy issues. She has a master's degree in public administration from the University of Montana and has expertise in the area of public health, having worked on both alcohol policy and on tobacco policy. Along with the Cancer Society, she helped to pass smoke-free air legislation in Montana. She has worked to improve access to health care in rural areas and to provide for rural citizens who are suffering from asbestos exposure. She believes her skills as a "problem-solver" would make her a valuable asset in Congress.

Ms. Velazquez was encouraged to run for federal office by the Democratic Party and the Governor of Montana, who also had run for office against an incumbent. She decided to enter the race because "somebody had to run against [incumbent Dennis Rehberg], and nobody was willing to run." She also felt there were important issues not being addressed by the media.

"The biggest reason" for her loss, she said, "was that [Rehberg's] a sitting Congressman. He has name recognition—his father was a political power in Montana for a generation, and he was lieutenant governor before he was a Congressman. You cannot overestimate the value of being an incumbent for getting press and raising money. An incumbent has the PACs on his side."

For her campaign, "the biggest challenge was not being able to raise enough money. I got a late start," she noted, "and it was tough. I didn't have name recognition." Money, she believes, very strongly influences the outcome of elections. "It's a chicken-and-egg problem," she said. "People were afraid to give money because they didn't think I could raise money. Money played a huge role in my race along with incumbency—the two go hand-in-hand, and it becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy." Although the party had encouraged her to run, "they came through with no money."

She found it difficult to match her opponent's fundraising because she raised money mostly in small amounts. "People who gave \$1,000 to [Senator Max] Baucus gave \$100 to me because they wanted to support me.... People said 'we only have so much to give politically,'" she recounted. "I had people who sent me money orders—they probably couldn't afford the \$50."

She estimates that her average donation was around \$55, while Congressman Rehberg's was closer to \$1,000. "I had more people give me money for my \$130,000 than he did for his \$600,000. He raised a lot of money from special



interests. It takes a lot of \$50 donations to equal \$5,000,” she observed.

During her campaign, she was forced to recognize numerous flaws in the campaign finance system. “Partway through the campaign I thought, ‘What a stupid system we have—whoever can buy the most ads wins.’ It doesn’t have anything to do with your qualifications,” Velazquez pointed out. Not only that, she continued, but “the system also favors incumbents. Now Rehberg’s on the Appropriations Committee, so everyone who wants federal contracts will be throwing money at him. The ability of special interests to influence elections is still too great. PACs can give \$5,000—that’s a lot of money—and they’re expecting to get something back. . . . I have a problem with lobbying firm PACs writing \$5,000 checks and then contributing individual checks for \$2,000.”

There are a lot of disincentives for potential candidates to run against incumbents, she says. In addition to the power to amass large donations in their war chests, Velazquez emphasized that incumbents have the benefits of campaigning while in office. “I have to work for a living,” she attests, “but incumbents can basically fundraise on taxpayers’ dime—they have a huge home-court advantage. And their time off is paid for. I can’t travel and take time off from my job—it plays a big role. They just have more opportunity to fundraise.”

To remedy these inequities in the system, Velazquez says, “I think there needs to be public financing of elections—it doesn’t need to be full financing. If you raise \$100,000 and you’re viable, then we’ll match it. It’s a legitimate expense for government, to ensure you get your message out.” Small contribution incentives also are “a great idea,” Velazquez maintains. “I would fully support a tax credit of up to \$250.”

As for running again, she says, “I’d consider it. But I wouldn’t run against an incumbent again just to do it because I’d lose again. In terms of

the time and effort involved in raising money, I wouldn’t run again unless it was an open seat.”

*In the general election against incumbent Congressman Dennis Rehberg, Tracy Velazquez attained 33% of the vote and raised \$128,000. Congressman Rehberg had a fundraising advantage of five to one, totaling nearly \$670,000.*



## NEBRASKA

### **Janet Stewart**

*Attorney*

*Democratic Primary Candidate in the 1<sup>st</sup> District*

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Janet Stewart is a lifelong Nebraskan with a law degree and master of social work. She worked in the law department at Mutual of Omaha Insurance Company for 24 years. Ms.

Stewart has wanted to run for Congress for 25 years and decided to enter the fray in 2004 because Democrats had failed to field a candidate in the first district in the previous election cycle. The “incumbent ran unopposed and I thought that wasn’t right,” Stewart says. “Someone needs to step up to the plate and throw their hat into the ring.”

This time around, four Democrats sought the party nomination to compete for a newly open seat. Stewart finished second, losing the primary to Matt Connealy 50% to 33%. She believes Connealy’s connections within the party and to different lobbies, as well as his significant financial advantage, explain her loss.

Connealy raised approximately \$200,000 for the primary, easily outdistancing Stewart, who managed only \$61,000. “I knew that fundraising would be a challenge,” she said, “but it was even more difficult than I thought it would be.”

This financial disparity proved a critical factor in the race, according to Ms. Stewart. “The press particularly will report on the amount of fundraising that each candidate does,” she says. “A lot of people don’t care about your stance on the issues, they just want to see if you’re a viable candidate. This is especially true inside the DC beltway. You have to have money to get money.” She points to EMILY’s List as a specific example. She understood that in the past they would give a lot of early start-up money to women. “Now,” says Stewart, “you apparently have to have quite a bit of money before they’ll consider giving you money.”

In the end, Ms. Stewart felt that her inability to compete financially determined her fate. Given that this was her first race, Stewart says “the question mark of whether I could raise money made people sit on the sidelines and the fact that I ultimately didn’t raise much sealed the deal.”

Stewart says our big money campaign finance system was one of the major factors keeping her on the sidelines for 25 years. “I thought ‘there’s no way I could raise enough money,’” she says. “It’s too bad if you discourage good people from running just because they’re not personally wealthy.”

She believes “it was mistake to increase the contribution limits from \$1,000 to \$2,000—that doubled the disadvantage of folks like me because now you’re competing with an opponent’s ability to raise \$2,000.” She favors lowering the contribution limits, public financing, and giving a tax credit or deduction for smaller contributions.

When asked about her future plans, Stewart says, “I wouldn’t run again for federal office unless I had some assurance that I had some help in the fundraising arena. I’m not a wealthy person and I can’t afford to put my own money in again.”

*Despite raising only \$61,000, Janet Stewart received 33% of the vote and finished second in a four-way Democratic primary in Nebraska’s 1<sup>st</sup> District. Matt*

*Connealy raised approximately \$200,000 for the primary and garnered 50% of the vote. Connealy went on to raise slightly more than \$1 million, but lost the general election 54% to 43% to Republican Jeff Fortenberry, who raised \$1.2 million.<sup>31</sup>*



## NEVADA

### **Mark Budetich**

*Electrician and Merchant Marine*

*Democratic Primary Candidate in the 3<sup>rd</sup> District*

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Mark Budetich is a member of the Marine Fireman’s Union and a chief electrician in the U.S. Merchant Marines, where he has been employed since 1990. He ran for Congress in 2002 and again in 2004 because he feels “the average working person in America is getting the short end of the stick,” and poorer citizens are being denied the opportunity to lift themselves out of poverty.

The political class has not exactly welcomed Mr. Budetich with open arms. “Labor leaders and seated politicians discouraged me” from running, he says, “because they would rather have a multi-millionaire candidate than a working class citizen candidate.”

Opponent Tom Gallagher raised more than \$1 million and defeated Budetich and five other candidates with 68% of the vote in the 3<sup>rd</sup> District Democratic primary. When asked why he lost his primary, Budetich starts with one word: “money.” Budetich raised very little, admitting he’s an inexperienced fundraiser, and put \$30,000 of his own funds into the campaign. He faced an opponent who was personally wealthy and enjoyed the support of the Democratic Party. Even though he ran in 2002 and garnered 31% of the primary vote, and even though “the Democratic Party isn’t supposed to

campaign during the primary,” Budetich attested that “the party picked the winner in March and the primary wasn’t until September. The Democratic Party would mention one candidate’s name because he was a multimillionaire and a good friend of Senator Harry Reid’s.”

According to Mr. Budetich, his financial deficit hurt him on the campaign trail. “I didn’t have the ability to be on TV or to hire a full time staff,” he says. “It was me and free volunteers...against a guy that had spent over \$500,000 by the time I quit spending and \$90,000 a week after that.”

Budetich claims the news media virtually ignored his candidacy because he didn’t have enough money. “TV news in May and April, and especially June and July, were talking about the race between the incumbent Jon Porter and Tom Gallagher—without mentioning any of the other candidates,” he said.

Budetich thinks the average Nevadan in his district “would be hard-pressed to give \$100, [and could contribute] closer to about \$20.” He added that a “couple of guys in my union gave me \$100 each and my dad gave me \$1,000.” Gallagher, on the other hand, “was able to raise money in larger chunks--\$300,000 in one evening.”

Ultimately, Mr. Budetich believes that the amount of money it takes to run a modern campaign discourages potential candidates from jumping into the fray. “In Nevada it only costs \$300 to get your name on the ballot,” he says, “but everything after that costs money. If you want to advertise, you’d better have money... You’re fighting this entrenched system that’s geared toward big money that comes from the big donors, who are well known by the incumbents.”

Mr. Budetich supports public financing, a limit on the amount of advertising time a candidate can purchase, providing a tax credit or deduction for small contributions, and lowering

contribution limits. On the recent doubling of contribution limits, he says, “at one time I thought it was a good idea, but now you have to think ‘who can afford a \$2,000 contribution?’ Could the average person afford that?” Contributions limits, he feels, should be “based on what 80% of people can afford to do, not 20%.”

Despite his distaste for our big money system, Mr. Budetich is not deterred and plans to run again. “I’m already campaigning for 2006,” he says.

*Mark Budetich raised \$31,000, including \$24,500 of his own money, and finished fifth out of six candidates in Nevada’s 3<sup>rd</sup> District Democratic primary, with 5.3% of the vote. Tom Gallagher raised more than \$1 million for the primary, including a \$300,000 candidate loan, and won with 67.8% of the vote. Gallagher went on to raise \$2.1 million, including \$740,000 of his own money, but lost the general election to Republican incumbent Jon Porter 54% to 40%. Porter raised \$2.8 million.<sup>32</sup>*



## NEW HAMPSHIRE

### **Peter Duffy**

Attorney

Democratic Primary Candidate in the 1<sup>st</sup> District

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As an attorney and a judge advocate in the Army National Guard, Peter Duffy was driven to run for Congress “because I was upset about what was happening in the Guard, and I wanted to address the issues.” He noted that a very high percentage of the members of his National Guard office were called to Iraq, so he had significant insight into the problems there.

Among the issues that should be addressed, Duffy cited the lack of day care for children of National Guard soldiers, the shortage of body

armor for the troops, the inequity in pay between civilian contractors and National Guard and Reserve soldiers, and the fact that retirees from the Guard cannot draw on their benefits before the age of sixty, with the consequence that some grandparents are required to serve in Iraq. “There’s a bipartisan bill in Congress to lower the retirement age,” he said, “but it was slammed by the Department of Defense and the Senate Armed Services Committee.” He is an advocate for progressive military reform and the reduction of wasteful military spending.

His campaign encountered a major impediment when he learned in July that he would be called for active duty in September. “So we knew we had to do something quickly,” he said. “My friends helped me design posters, I went to neighborhood parties and speaking engagements, and I wrote articles on New Hampshire politics. It was a mom-and-pop campaign.”

In addition to the time constraints, Duffy believes money factored into his race in a significant way. “Money has a huge effect,” he maintained. “If I’d had more time, I would’ve had a better chance.” Characterizing his fundraising as “limited,” he explained, “I didn’t do any mailers, just neighborhood parties where people gave \$25 or \$50. I didn’t twist arms—I didn’t want to spend the time. I chose to go out and speak and take advantage of the free media that was available.” Most of his contributions fell in the \$25 to \$100 range, near the \$50 amount that he estimates his constituents could afford.

His opponent and primary winner Justin Nadeau was able to do more than grassroots fundraising. “He was wired into the Democratic machine and handpicked by the Democratic leaders,” asserted Duffy. “They connected him to the right people and the party machinery.”

As a general rule, Duffy says, “Money and inertia have quite a bit of influence on elections. It takes an embarrassing event or lavish spending to unseat an incumbent. When you’re not the

incumbent and you’re not known, it takes so much money to get your message out . . . There’s just too much money required to run for public office.” Furthermore, he notes, there is a “*quid pro quo* problem” in our campaign finance system. “The contributions of defense contractors in elections,” he argues, “corrupt our election process.”

In Mr. Duffy’s opinion, all the money in the system discourages people who might otherwise make good candidates. Many people are not interested in running “because you have to prostitute yourself to get money. It’s hard to get solid, issue-oriented people running . . . There are a lot of people who should be in office and aren’t . . . I wish there was a better way for average citizens to run.”

In order to bring federal candidacy within the reach of ordinary people, Mr. Duffy contends, “we need some mechanism to provide equal access to the media for all candidates.” Unfortunately, he believes, we’ve been headed in the wrong direction recently. “527 organizations have made a farce of campaign finance regulations. We need some way to control the private organizations, and then to level the playing field.” As for the doubling of the individual contribution limit, he says, “I’d rather see it lowered—large contributions get rewarded.”

According to Mr. Duffy, one reform that would help is the provision of vouchers or tax credits to small donors. “It would encourage contributions across the board,” he attested. “It would’ve helped a candidate like me.”

If he runs for office again, Mr. Duffy intends to start his fundraising drive much earlier. “If I’d won,” he points out, “I would’ve needed tremendous resources to compete with Representative Bradley.”

*Peter Duffy captured 25% of the vote in a four-way primary and was the runner-up to Justin Nadeau, who earned 53% of the vote. While Duffy raised under*



*\$5,000, Nadeau accumulated \$369,000 in the primary election. Nadeau lost the general election to incumbent Jeb Bradley, who out-raised Nadeau \$1 million to \$676,000.<sup>33</sup>*



## **NEW JERSEY**

### **Anne Wolfe**

*Former Public Official*

*Democratic Nominee for the 5<sup>th</sup> District*

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Anne Wolfe is the former Chairwoman and Commissioner of the Bergen County Improvement Authority, an organization dedicated to the improvement of the quality of life and health care in the county.

During her eleven-year tenure there, she worked to control government spending while improving the quality of and access to healthcare for Bergen County citizens. She was able to bring her years of experience as a corporate trust officer in the banking and financial industry to bear in directing “sensible pro-growth economic policies.” Furthermore, she has served as a regional enforcement administrator for the Environmental Protection Agency as well as the President of the Bergen County League of Women Voters.

Concerned about the quality of public education, citizens’ access to healthcare, protecting the environment and promoting smart growth policies, Ms. Wolfe ran for office because she felt that her background put her in a position to address these issues effectively. She also believed that the incumbent, Congressman Scott Garrett, “was not an appropriate representative for the district.” Many people discouraged her from running, because “they had the impression that Democrats can’t win in the district,” she said. “But I disagree—this isn’t a Republican district, it’s an undecided district.”

“Money, plain and simple” was the major reason she lost to Representative Garrett, she believes. “If I’d had three times as much, we could’ve won,” she said.

A candidate’s greatest need in an election, she acknowledges, is funds. Raising money, however, “is tremendously difficult—it’s difficult for people to bet on a horse . . . The pundits said there was no possibility of my winning, and everyone expected me to lose badly, so my doing well raised eyebrows. I received three endorsements from newspapers, which is extraordinary, and my volunteers waged a serious ground game, but I couldn’t get endorsements from Washington . . . When I asked for money, so many people were tapped out . . . Washington can’t help you unless you raise \$250,000,” she attested. “I felt like a candidate going for my first job.”

Her average contribution, she estimated, was under \$200, with a lot of donations coming in the \$25 to \$50 range. In order to ensure attendance at her fundraising events, she hand-delivered invitations to every undecided or Democratic voter in Ridgewood. “The event didn’t reap a lot of money,” Wolfe said, “but I won Ridgewood by two votes—the personal invites helped.”

According to Ms. Wolfe, her opponent was able to raise a lot of money for three reasons—“One, he’s an incumbent; two, he was endorsed by the Club for Growth, the NRA, and HMOs; and three, incumbency gives you the ability to raise money from special interest groups.” In Congressman Garrett’s case, “he received lots of money after the assault gun ban lapse went into effect—he reaped the rewards from supporting [the lapse]... The whole system encourages incumbents to win—it’s self-perpetuating,” she concluded.

She believes many good people do not consider running for office because of money’s role in the process. Furthermore, she says, campaign finance reform legislation has thus far been

ineffective in dealing with the problem. “Campaign finance reform did nothing on the expenditure side,” she points out. Ultimately, she says, “the faster we move to public financing, the better off we will be.”

Right now, she says, the media is the greatest beneficiary of high campaign expenditures. “As a challenger, you’ve got to spend money on the media—it’s a tremendous amount of money . . . The media is reaping tons of money, making billions on the business of elections.”

Citizens, on the other hand, are the ones who are losing out in the current arrangement. “I’m extraordinarily concerned about people who don’t know who they’re voting for and why,” Ms. Wolfe proffered. “A lot of people literally don’t know who their member of Congress is. We don’t do a good job of disseminating election information or promoting civics education . . . A government of, by, and for the people—we need to get back to that.”

Thinking forward to the next election, Ms. Wolfe is already concerned about the prospect of fundraising. “The biggest problem is money,” she worries. “I have to convince Washington I’m viable.” Having made “a tremendous commitment on our part” by investing \$250,000 of her own money in the last election, “we don’t have the money to invest twice—but it would be a shame not to try again,” she said.

*Anne Wolfe attained 41% of the vote and raised \$465,000 in her bid to defeat incumbent Congressman Scott Garrett, who raised \$1.3 million for his reelection, at a nearly three-to-one fundraising advantage.*



## NEW MEXICO

### Jeff Steinborn

*Congressional Staff Member*

*Democratic Primary Candidate in the 2<sup>nd</sup> District*

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Jeff Steinborn professes a longstanding fascination with public policy issues. After obtaining a degree in political science, he discovered public service when he worked as a consumer advocate for the nonprofit watchdog group Public Citizen. He also worked as a legislative aide to then-Congressman Bill Richardson, now the state’s governor, and then as a field representative for U.S. Senator Jeff Bingaman. In his local district, he serves as the Democratic Party’s director.

He was drawn to running for federal office by the current issues Congress is facing, such as the national debt and the country’s role in international affairs. Although he received a lot of encouragement from his family and coworkers, Mr. Steinborn reported that his father, a former politician, expressed skepticism because of fundraising concerns.

In political campaigns, Steinborn believes that money is the most important factor. “Name recognition is everything,” he said. “And it’s hard to get name recognition because it’s directly related to money and the amount of paid communication that is necessary. This is one of the biggest districts, with ten media markets . . . My opponent is nearly a household name because his father was a three-term governor and he had also run for governor . . . I just didn’t have enough money to overcome that, even though I had the endorsements of nine mayors in the congressional district.”

Fundraising itself, he attested, is a thankless task. “It’s incredibly challenging, calling people you don’t know. It’s a shameless job, to be locked away in room every single day. The amount of

money I could raise was more important than the number of hands I could shake.” Furthermore, he said, “Being a challenger against a presumed favorite, it’s hard to raise money. PACs give to incumbents and it’s tough to get money in a contested primary—you need to show donors you’re viable.”

Mr. Steinborn thinks most of his donations came in smaller amounts. “More people gave \$100 than any other amount,” he said. “But make no mistake, you cannot raise large sums of money without bringing a lot of big checks as well.”

According to Mr. Steinborn, our current system of campaign financing makes running for office particularly difficult for challengers. “[The system] protects incumbents because there’s so much money in the system. Money is tilted towards incumbents, so there’s huge financial disincentives [for challengers] . . . Being a maverick outsider is not realistic when you’re up against a \$1 million ad buy.”

“Most people can’t fathom how to raise that kind of money,” he added. “You end up spending all your time raising money.”

Among the problems with the electoral system, he cites the fact that elections are not publicly financed and that candidates do not have free access to the airwaves. “Such changes could go a long way towards leveling the playing field,” he declared. “Then corporate interests wouldn’t own the seats in Congress.”

When asked if he would run for Congress again, Steinborn replied, “Perhaps someday. It’s daunting because of the money. I’d have to be willing and able to raise the money.”

*Jeff Steinborn garnered 35% of the vote in the 2<sup>nd</sup> District Democratic primary and raised \$169,000 to winner Gary King’s \$215,000. King lost the general election to incumbent Steve Pearce, who out-raised King \$2.0 million to \$1.1 million.*



## NEW YORK

### **Michael Collesano**

*Attorney*

*Democratic Primary Candidate in the 27<sup>th</sup> District*

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Michael Collesano is an attorney practicing in Buffalo and New York City and a former legislative counsel to Congressman John LaFalce. He decided to run for the Democratic nomination for the 27<sup>th</sup> District of New York when the unexpected retirement of Congressman Jack Quinn left an open seat. He ran because he feels that “entrenched politicians” in western New York “have the deck stacked for them” and aren’t doing enough to address the challenges the region faces.

He says the local Democratic Party discouraged him from running because Brian Higgins “was their standard-bearer who was going to run against Quinn.” Money, Collesano feels, was a significant reason that he lost. Although Collesano raised approximately \$30,000 and put in a significant amount of his own money, Higgins raised nearly \$800,000 and spent \$684,000, winning the five-way primary with 44% of the vote.

Mr. Collesano, who came in third with 12%, reports that “fundraising was very difficult.... A lot of people were deterred from giving money because they didn’t want to appear to challenge the anointed one.” He was disappointed that he didn’t get more financial support from issue organizations. “Some of the causes I was more identifiable with,” he says, “for example pro-choice, death penalty...had a hands-off policy for primary funds, or they were giving against what appeared to be their interest. Being a naïve first-time candidate, that seemed surprising.”

Mr. Collesano says he “ran a very traditional but unconventional grassroots campaign—we knocked on over 20,000 doors; I personally

knocked on more than 5,000; and we made tens of thousands of phone calls.” However, this grassroots campaigning didn’t earn him enough attention to overcome his financial disadvantage. “The news folks didn’t consider that credible,” he says. “They didn’t veer to explore candidates in depth beyond the endorsement of the county party.”

Mr. Collesano recommends limiting the role of PACs in primary races. “The campaign would have been run differently if [Higgins] didn’t have an air of legitimacy that he got from the early PAC money,” he says.

Mr. Collesano would consider running for federal office again, but says that his ability to raise sufficient funds will be a significant factor. “I wouldn’t go forward unless I have the resources...Certainly money would be high on the list of checks before I go anywhere.” He does feel he’d have a better chance of winning under a different campaign finance system. If money wasn’t of such singular importance, he says “the entire dynamic of the campaign would have been different—the media would have covered it differently; and I would have been taken more seriously.”

*Michael Collesano raised \$80,000 and spent \$119,000, coming in third out of five candidates in New York’s 27<sup>th</sup> District Democratic primary with 12% of the vote. Brian Higgins won the primary with 44% of the vote, having raised \$797,000 and spending approximately \$684,000. Higgins ultimately raised nearly \$1.4 million and narrowly defeated Republican Nancy Naples in the general election, who raised \$1.6 million.<sup>34</sup>*



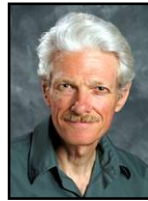
## NORTH CAROLINA

### Mark Ortiz

*Race Car Consultant*

*Democratic Primary Candidate in the 8<sup>th</sup> District*

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Mark Ortiz is a race car chassis consultant with a monthly column in *Racecar Engineering* magazine and a 35-year history of unpaid progressive activism. He has worked as a mechanical designer/draftsman, an engineering technician, a landscape laborer, an industrial furnace assembler, a computer assembler, a bicycle mechanic, a correctional halfway house staff member, a restaurant cleanup person, an ice cream vendor, a pizza delivery driver, and a cab driver. Ortiz’ campaign literature says, “I know what it is to work with your hands, and with your head. I know what it is to work for low pay, in hazardous conditions, with no benefits or security. I know what it is to sink into debt just trying to keep a roof over your head. I know what it is to face eviction.”

Mr. Ortiz says he decided to run for Congress “because there were at least two big issues that I didn’t see anybody else addressing.” First is “massive deception over 9/11” that has led to “the war on terror, suspension of civil liberties, at least two wars of aggression...Second, we have bogus elections. The votes are counted inside mysterious black boxes where nobody can see and we have no way of verifying results... We don’t have real elections anymore.”

Ortiz raised just under \$5,000—including \$3,000 of his own money. He knew going into his race that that his political positions would make it very difficult for him to raise big money—and therefore difficult to win. “When I first went to the county chair of the Democratic Party and asked if they had any other candidates, the first



thing he asked me was ‘how much money have you raised,’” says Ortiz. “I said ‘hardly any’ and he said, ‘let me tell you about the realities of what you’re trying to do. To run with any chance of success whatsoever, you need to raise at least \$300,000-400,000.’ Before the primary Mr. Hayes had already raised more than \$1 million.”

“The only money I had a shot of getting,” Ortiz said, “were small contributions from individuals. I am so profoundly anti-corporate, that the probability of me getting money from corporate PACs or rich people is very small. I did a certain amount of going door-to-door, but mostly I was after people’s votes. Most contributions I got were from people I already knew from political activity.”

Despite his lack of spending, Ortiz received 27% of the vote. He says that of the eight two-way primary races in the state, only three were closer than his, and that he outpolled anyone in the entire country running on what he calls a “9/11 truth platform.” “So all things considered,” Ortiz says, “considering the heretical nature of my positions, you could say I did surprisingly well.”

Nonetheless, Ortiz feels that not having access to big money impaired his ability to get his message out to more citizens in the 8<sup>th</sup> District. Unlike in many races, his opponent Beth Troutman didn’t necessarily outspend him on advertisements in a dramatic way; but Ortiz says that the “internal dynamics” of the race, including the actions of the media and Democratic Party “are indirectly influenced by the principle that capital rules.”

Ortiz supports campaign finance reforms such as public financing and free airtime. He cautions, however, that these solutions will be inadequate as long as there remains a wide gap between rich and poor. “I’m not sure there’s a way to have a good system when wealth is so extremely concentrated,” he says. “Even when measures are taken to try to level the playing field, money will find its way around the edges...The larger discrepancy has to be addressed by changing the

way we control the means of production. We should have a wealth tax and prohibit corporations from owning each other. We need to address the concentration of capital...The kind of economic system I’m for is one where corporations would be required to be internally democratic—people who work there would have the preponderance of voting weight.”

*Mark Ortiz raised less than \$5,000 and lost North Carolina’s 8<sup>th</sup> District Democratic primary to Beth Troutman, 73% to 27%. Troutman raised \$70,000 for the primary and went on to raise \$231,000, but lost the general election 56% to 44% to incumbent Congressman Robin Hayes, who raised \$1.7 million and faced no primary opposition.*



## NORTH DAKOTA

### Mike Liffrig

Attorney & Small Business Owner  
Republican Nominee for Senate

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As an attorney who has practiced law for the past fifteen years, a small business owner, and the operator of a ranch, Mike Liffrig has a wide range of experience to offer as a Senate candidate. Among his qualifications for federal office, he also cites the fact that he is a native North Dakotan and the father of nine children. He feels that this diverse background gives him “the leadership qualities the country needs.”

His decision to run for the Senate was inspired by his concerns about pro-life issues, especially on the issue of cloning. He felt that his opponent, Senator Byron Dorgan, was “leading the forces of the wrong side” on that issue.

According to Mr. Liffrig, the biggest reason for his electoral loss was “the inability to get my message out because of lack of funds.” The

influence of money on elections, he says, is enormous. “Incumbents have such big name recognition that the only way to get through it is by buying airtime.”

Fundraising, however, was far from an easy task. One complicating factor was that “people in DC weren’t interested in contributing until the poll numbers showed I was very, very competitive,” he attested. “It’s like going to the bank—the bank will only give you money when you don’t need it. When you do need it, they won’t give it to you. Everybody thought my opponent was invincible, so they didn’t want to give money to me.”

Another obstacle he encountered was the Republican Party’s unwillingness to support him financially. “Before the election, I was told by party officials that we’d have \$40,000,” he recalled. “But after the race started, they backed away from that promise. It was a major disappointment that they didn’t hold to their promise.”

Mr. Liffbrig raised most of his contributions in smaller amounts, estimating that his average contribution over the Internet was around \$30, with an approximately \$50 to \$75 average overall. At the most, he feels his constituents in North Dakota can generally afford to contribute around \$250. He observed, however, that his opponent’s contributions tended to be higher, coming in \$1,000 and \$5,000 amounts.

Reflecting on the problems with the current campaign finance system, Mr. Liffbrig contends “the seats in the United States Senate are being purchased by out-of-state interests.” To reduce the influence of outsiders on North Dakota elections, he believes out-of-state contributions should be banned. “That would’ve been a real leveler,” he declared. “And it would tie incumbents and officeholders to the interests of their state.” Such a change, he believes, would enhance his prospects of election. Providing federal incentives for small contributions, such as

vouchers or tax credits, also would help his campaign.

While he is willing to consider another run for federal office, he admits he would deliberate carefully before doing so, and that fundraising concerns would factor into his decision.

*Mike Liffbrig secured 32% of the vote and raised \$334,000 in his challenge to incumbent Senator Byron Dorgan, who out-raised him by a factor of ten, reaching a total of more than \$3.6 million and spending \$2.3 million.<sup>35</sup>*



### **Ben Konop**

*Attorney and Professor*

*Democratic Nominee for the 4<sup>th</sup> District*

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Ben Konop is an attorney who has practiced law in Washington, DC and worked for U.S. Representative Marcy Kaptur. He is now a law professor at Ohio Northern University’s Pettit College of Law. As a second generation American, Professor Konop wanted to serve in Congress to give back to a country he feels has given his family so much. He says he was eager to challenge incumbent Representative Mike Oxley because “from what I could gather, he was looking out for the big corporate special interests instead of his constituents and someone needed to step up and mount a challenge. He’s basically gone unchallenged for 20 years.”

Professor Konop knew beating the incumbent in one of the safest districts in the country would be a tough challenge, but he says the fundraising discrepancy between the two candidates was the “number one” reason he lost. Although he raised more than \$180,000, he was unable to compete with Oxley’s \$1.8 million. “If we had



equal resources I think we would have won,” Konop says. “We were outspent by about \$1.5 million. It’s difficult to get your message out, especially in a district this large...We had to rely on earned media; but there wasn’t much to get.”

The fact that Ohio’s 4<sup>th</sup> District is considered a “safe” Republican district made fundraising especially difficult for Professor Konop. “You call the DC PACs and they have a book in front of them that shows the performance index,” he says. “When I said I was running in the 4<sup>th</sup> district, they would politely blow me off. I was going after Democratic interest groups who loathed [my opponent], but they saw he was winning 70-30 every time.”

According to Professor Konop, the money he did raise came in small donations through house parties and Internet fundraising. He estimates that his average contribution was between \$50 and \$100, and guesses that opponent’s was closer to \$2,000. Konop thinks the average person in the 4th district can afford to give less than \$100. “It’s not a very wealthy district,” he says. “For a lot of people \$20 or \$50 was a lot of money.”

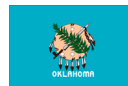
Professor Konop believes our campaign finance system is broken. “It benefits incumbents who are in safe districts and are in a position to really help some very narrow special interests,” he says. “In a broader sense, it hurts everybody because it naturally makes [officeholders] inclined to give better service to those who give [them] more money. Representation is supposed to be one vote per person, not based on how much money you have.”

Time spent on fundraising is also a serious problem for Professor Konop. When one runs for office, he says, “you spend most of your time trying to raise money and that takes time away from talking to constituents. People were recommending I make calls for nine hours per day. There’s very little else you can do for your campaign.” Ultimately, this discourages candidates from running. “Anyone who understands the environment realizes that raising

money will be your number-one goal, and that’s not too enticing to a lot of people who really want to make a difference. You have all this idealistic fervor built up and you realize ‘I’m going to have to sit at a phone cold calling for nine hours per day.’”

“If you took the money out of politics,” says Professor Konop, “it would change the whole dynamic and produce a much healthier, more responsive democracy.” He suggests providing public financing and instituting mandatory debates to produce a more informed electorate with less special interest money. In spite of his distaste for the current system, Professor Konop, who is just 28, says he will likely run for office again.

*Ben Konop raised \$183,000 for his unsuccessful bid to unseat Republican eleven-term incumbent Mike Oxley. Representative Oxley raised \$1.8 million and won the general election for Ohio’s 4<sup>th</sup> District, 59% to 41%.*



## OKLAHOMA

### **Kalyn Free**

*Attorney*

*Democratic Primary Candidate in the 2<sup>nd</sup> District*

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Kalyn Free is a lawyer and member of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma. Ms. Free was the youngest attorney ever hired by the U.S. Department of Justice, where she worked for more than ten years, and the first woman elected as District Attorney in Pittsburg and Haskell Counties in southeastern Oklahoma.

Ms. Free has dreamed of running for Congress since she was 14 years old. Her interest grew when, as DA, she saw “people without hope living in despair” and decided she wanted to do something about it. She decided to run in 2004 because she feels “the people we send to

Washington don't vote in the best interest of the district given its lack of jobs, incarceration rates, under-funded public schools, methamphetamine use" and other problems.

In the primary, Ms. Free faced Dan Boren, son of a former governor and U.S. Senator, and possessor of one of the biggest names in Oklahoma politics. She immediately turned her attention to fundraising. "I spent nine-and-a-half months in a basement ten to twelve hours a day raising money," she said. "We attempted over 50,000 calls to donors. I knew I had to aggressively fundraise in order to be viable and competitive...A lot of the traditional money sources dried up for me when [Boren] announced because everyone knew he would be so well funded." According to Ms. Free, a couple of other candidates even bowed out of the race because they were explicitly warned that Boren would raise at least \$1 million.

Despite Boren's superior name recognition, Ms. Free proved an effective fundraiser, raising approximately \$1.3 million. "I ran a very progressive campaign," she says, "and my money sources reflected that." Ms. Free claims to have had nearly 12,000 donors, only 1,462 of whom gave \$200 or more, for an average contribution of just over \$95 (including PACs and Indian tribes). "I can count on my fingers and toes the people that maxed out to me," she reports.

Her aggressive grassroots fundraising gave her a financial edge heading into the final days of the campaign. Boren, however, was not only well known, but also wealthy. He put in more than \$265,000 of his own money towards the end, giving him a financial edge and ultimately propelling him to victory in the primary.

"People were very surprised with how much I raised," says Free. "So at the end [Boren] was tapped out. So, he dumped \$260,000 at the very end and went hard negative on us regarding my position on choice. Had he not had the personal wealth to have done that" the race might have turned out differently.

Ms. Free supports public financing and putting limitations on the use of personal wealth. "My personal contribution was \$5," she says. "Most people are not able to dump [the] kind of money in [that Boren invested in his campaign]." She feels that our current system discourages average citizens from running for office.

"Most folks serving in Congress are super-wealthy. Regular people do not have the ability to run for higher office...My sisters are schoolteachers and they could never run for Congress. The only reason I'm viable is that I've worked for 18 years to develop a national network and have a natural constituency base that gives me fundraising avenues. It's ridiculous that even with my prowess, I had to sit in a basement for nine to ten months with six people, constantly dialing, when I would much rather have been out meeting the public."

Ms. Free says she'll likely run again if the right opportunity comes up, but that the ability to raise enough money will be an important factor. "If I didn't think I could raise the money," she says, "I would never consider running...I'm starting my own PAC and the reason I'm doing that is because Indian candidates are at a distinct disadvantage. One thing I feel like I'm extremely good at is fundraising. I got the memo and understand that it doesn't matter if you have the best education, experience, qualifications, plan, or the best heart, you can't get your message out without money, big money."

*Kalyn Free raised \$1.3 million and earned 36.2% of the vote to come in second in a four-way race for the Democratic nomination in Oklahoma's 2<sup>nd</sup> District. Dan Boren won the race, raising \$1.64 million for the primary and getting 57.7% of the vote. Almost one-third (\$576,000) of Boren's money came in the 20 days before the primary in contributions of at least \$1,000, including \$266,000 of the candidate's own money. Boren went on to raise \$2 million and beat Wayland Smalley, who raised \$47,000, in the general election, 66% to 34%.<sup>36</sup>*



# OREGON

## Andrew Kaza

Consultant

*Democratic Primary Candidate in the 5<sup>th</sup> District*

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Andrew Kaza is managing partner of Quoin Media Consulting. Mr. Kaza has been President, CEO, or Managing Partner of several media firms since leaving Comcast Cable in

1993.

Mr. Kaza decided to challenge Representative Darlene Hooley for the Democratic nomination in Oregon's 5<sup>th</sup> congressional district because he was tired of sitting members of Congress running unopposed, a situation he attributes largely to incumbents' ability to build up huge war chests. "Democracy isn't working and it's becoming a coronation," Kaza says. "My opponent hadn't had a primary challenger in eight years, so I wanted to raise some issues."

Mr. Kaza reports that his efforts were not appreciated by Democratic officials. "There was plenty of effort to discourage me," he says. "I had phone calls from the top of the Democratic leadership up to the day before I announced trying to talk me out of this, which I found very disappointing. It's like we're supposed to be a bunch of lemmings. It was quite clear I was never going to get any help from the party. They made it very difficult for us to run a decent campaign."

Despite his business background, Mr. Kaza did not focus on securing corporate contributions. "I took no PAC money, no special interest money at all," he insists. He ultimately raised a total of \$64,000, but it was no match for Hooley's fundraising of more than \$1 million by primary election day.

Mr. Kaza says that money played a major role in his race before a dime was even spent. "Money sits out there as a great big deterrent," he says. "It deters people from running in the first place and then deters reporters from covering [the race] and people in the party thinking you have a chance." The media, in particular, is very focused on finances. "What reporting does go on is very much horserace-based, and part of the horserace is how much money is raised. If you're not at what the press considers a respectable number, you're immediately dismissed."

Mr. Kaza doesn't think BCRA has performed as advertised, and to fix the system he feels "the key is to make sure we have campaign finance reform at every level of government." Specifically, he says, "I think public financing is very smart—if you're going to spend your money anywhere in a democracy it seems to me you should spend it in the first instance making sure there is a democracy. I think it's really important that people understand that the U.S. is in the minority on this" compared with other countries that feature some form of public financing. Mr. Kaza also feels the media should be required to play a more proactive role in elections because "the only people benefiting [from the current system] are some big broadcasters."

Mr. Kaza will consider running for federal office again but cites fundraising as a major concern. "The current situation is very discouraging for a lot of candidates," he says, "and the best thing we can do for our democracy is to come up with some ways to level the playing field."

*Andrew Kaza raised \$64,000 while losing Oregon's 5<sup>th</sup> District Democratic primary to incumbent Representative Darlene Hooley, 85% to 14%. Representative Hooley had raised more than \$1 million by the primary date and spent at least \$300,000 to beat Kaza. Representative Hooley went on to raise a total of \$1.9 million and defeat Republican Jim Zupancic, who raised \$1.2 million, 52% to 44% in the general election.<sup>37</sup>*



## PENNSYLVANIA

### **Al Taubenberg**

*Businessman*

*Republican Primary Candidate in the 13<sup>th</sup> District*

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Al Taubenberg, president of the Northeast Philadelphia Chamber of Commerce, has extensive experience in Pennsylvania politics. He served as campaign manager and chief

of staff to a member of the city council and also won his own seat as a committeeman. When he ran in the 13<sup>th</sup> Congressional district Republican primary in 2002, he secured 45% of the vote against Melissa Brown.

He decided to run for the seat again in 2004 because “I thought I could do a good job and serve the public.” He felt he was the only true conservative in the three-way race and wanted to be sure that conservative values were aired. Mr. Taubenberg noted that the Republican political establishment did not encourage him to run this time around because they did not think he could raise enough money. “That was Melissa Brown’s claim to fame,” he said. “She could raise the money and she had access to wealthy contributors.”

Although he thinks money isn’t everything in an election—“it’s a combination of time, money, and dedication”—he thinks it does count for a lot and it had a significant effect on his primary race. “I didn’t have enough money,” he said. “I needed a bit more to get my message out. I should have won according to ideology.” More money would have helped, he asserted, for getting out mailers and getting on television. “The more you’re on TV, the more real you are,” he acknowledged.

As for the task of fundraising, Taubenberg says, “It’s hard work, begging people for money, calling people who owe you favors . . . You have

to stay on top of it and call every day. You’re constantly on the phone.” As an example, he cited a case where he called one potential donor and found they had a lot of common interests. “It took ten calls, but in the end he gave a sizeable donation. You have to be intrusive,” he said. Most of his donors he classified as giving in the “medium to low” range, averaging about \$50.

He pointed out that the reason his opponents had an easier time fundraising was because they either had money or access to it. “One had the party endorsement, and the other had money,” he said. “The big donors and the PACs would go for the people the party endorsed.”

Taubenberg observed that the amount of money in political campaigns has skyrocketed. He noted that Allyson Schwartz, the eventual winner of the Congressional seat, raised more than \$4 million. “The price of campaigning has gone through the roof,” Taubenberg said. “I’ve been campaigning since 1977, and races used to run to \$200,000—now they’re in the millions. It’s scary—it probably does keep some people out of the race.”

The problem, he believes, is that there is no cap on spending. “The more money you have, the more you can get your message out,” he observed. “If you have a personally wealthy opponent, it’s a problem.” Personal wealth is not the only issue as far as fairness is concerned, however. “Incumbency gives you a leg up,” he said. “The incumbents get entrenched, and we get poor government. The city [of Philadelphia] would be better served with more competition.”

In addition to putting limits on spending—“the spending limit should be set at the amount raised by the candidate who raised the least”—Taubenberg suggests that disclosure of fundraising is very important and that it should be made clearer to the public. A government-funded tax credit or voucher would help him as a candidate. “It would be good for encouraging more participation and more small donors,” he added.

He also mentioned that it would help if candidates were limited in the amount of television ads they could buy. “People complain that we attack the voter with all the ads on TV,” he said. “The public would have a lot more faith in government if elections were concerned not with fundraising, but more with the issues.”

*Al Taubenberger garnered 26% of the vote in a three-way primary, raising \$85,000. His opponent Ellen Bard raised \$310,000, and the winner Melissa Brown totaled \$634,000 for the primary. Brown went on to raise a total of \$3.4 million in the general election, but was defeated by Allyson Schwartz, who amassed more than \$4.5 million.<sup>38</sup>*



## RHODE ISLAND

### Mark Binder

Author and Actor

Democratic Primary Candidate in the 1<sup>st</sup> District

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Mark Binder is an author of children’s books and a professional storyteller, describing himself as moderately well known in the state. Active in his community, he ran the East Bay Coalition for the Homeless for two years. His frustration with the incumbent Patrick Kennedy’s voting record drove him to run for Congress. “Patrick Kennedy kept voting for the war and the Medicare bill and the partial birth abortion ban—and no one else was [running against him].”

Among his qualifications for federal office, he cites the fact that he is a father of three children and a citizen and that “I know how to vote. When dealing with issues of that kind of importance, it’s important to say ‘no,’” Mr. Binder declared. Continuing to list his qualifications, he said, “I don’t know how to

raise money by schmoozing, and I don’t know how to write legislation that favors companies. I do know how to say ‘no’ to a useless war that is not going to produce results and will only serve the special interests and the companies.”

Running against Patrick Kennedy was an uphill struggle, Binder affirmed. “Even the peace movement discouraged me because they didn’t think I had a chance.” He entered the race late, filing in January, because “I was hoping someone else would.” Offering the reasons for his primary loss, he said, “I had no organization behind me and I was running against a Kennedy. By the time I filed, he had \$1.5 million in the bank.”

Mr. Binder conducted a grassroots campaign and decided to forgo fundraising. “It seemed futile to raise money,” he observed. “My platform was ‘don’t give me money, just tell people to vote for me.’” In order to get his message out, Mr. Binder sent out emails, went to press conferences, and worked on getting on the radio. “The newspapers write about who’s spending money,” he lamented. “The story’s about the money, not the issues.” Yet more money, he acknowledged, would have enabled him to pay a support staff and more effectively communicate his message.

As for his opponent’s prolific fundraising, Binder comments, “He’s a Kennedy. His promise was that he will be on the Finance Committee and bring back money to Rhode Island.” He points out that over \$5 million was spent on the Congressional race in Rhode Island, asking, “We have millions of dollars spent—to what end?”

According to Mr. Binder, running for Congress “is such a daunting task that it becomes a huge barrier for ordinary people who want to run. It’s a business—you need a professional fundraiser ... We have a professional political class [in Congress] and we have a professional political class getting them elected. Outsiders need not apply.”



The grip of moneyed interests on the electoral system is so strong that Mr. Binder fears that little can be done to break it. “There is no solution,” he declares. “The people in charge aren’t going to change, there’s no reason for them to. Nader is right—the system is broken.” Enumerating the problems inherent in the campaign finance system, he says, “The media depends on political ad sales. And in general, [campaign] coverage depends on advertising. How many stories were there about the Swift Boat ads?” Binder disapproves of the recent doubling of the individual contribution limit to \$2,000, commenting “the people who are good fundraisers will get elected.” He points out that companies easily take advantage of the high limits—“You have 100 people in your company, they get \$1,500 bonuses, and then they all contribute to one candidate . . . Money becomes your vote.”

Despite his cynicism regarding the current system, Binder suggests that it would be much improved by low contribution limits. In addition, he says, “I would set spending caps based on population. I would have a pool [of money] available to all candidates. It would make it a lot harder to get reelected, so it’s not going to happen.” As for the role of the media, he argues that “the networks should have to air slots [on the candidates]—the public airwaves should be used for those purposes.” His proposition is justifiable because, he points out, “Why do companies broadcast? Because they have a federal license.”

Finding the whole process distasteful, Mr. Binder has no plans to run again. He adds, however, “it’s critical that we get people [in office] who are willing to say ‘no.’”

*Mark Binder garnered 25% of the vote in the Democratic primary while raising less than \$5,000. Having raised \$1.9 million and spent almost \$1.4 million in the primary election period alone, incumbent Congressman Patrick Kennedy went on to win the general election against Republican challenger David Rogers, raising a total of \$2.2 million to Rogers’ \$2.1 million.*



## TENNESSEE

### Janice Bowling

*Teacher, Former Congressional Staff Member  
Republican Nominee for the 4<sup>th</sup> District*

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Janice Bowling has served as a special education teacher, the District Director for U.S. Representative Van Hilleary and on the Tullahoma Board of Aldermen. She currently chairs the Free Enterprise Committee for the Tennessee Federation of Republican Women.

Ms. Bowling was encouraged to run for Congress in 2002 because she was the district director for the incumbent who vacated his seat to run for Governor, and Republicans thought she had the best shot to hold the seat. Even though she was heavily outspent in that race, she held her opponent to 52%; the Republican Party leadership promised to help her in 2004.

Ms. Bowling feels that her comparative lack of funds, and the fact that the Republican Party did not provide her with the fundraising assistance she anticipated, contributed to her loss. “In a local election where people know you, you can run a very close race while being outspent,” she says. “But the 4<sup>th</sup> district is one-ninth of the population but one-quarter of the state’s geography and one-quarter of the counties. So, you not only have to cover that much more geography, you have to make your influence [felt] with that many more political subsets.”

Democratic incumbent Lincoln Davis “was on TV and he did direct mail to the universe,” said Bowling. “He mailed to the entire voter base, which was about 230,000 people, at least three to four times. I mailed to 45,000 people five times.”

Ms. Bowling says Davis’ incumbency also helped him with issue groups. “Ninety percent of his



money came from outside Tennessee,” much of it from PACs, she said. “I received an A-rating, but he received the endorsement of the NRA because he’s the incumbent. The state Right to Life sent out mailings for him even though he refuses to sign ‘life at conception’ legislation [and] I would.”

In contrast, Ms. Bowling says she raised most of her money from average Tennesseans. “I got about 90% of my money from within the district, which is one of the poorest districts in the country,” she says. “I received \$10 and \$25 monthly from some people. I would guess my average contribution was less than \$200.”

This grassroots fundraising was ultimately no match for Davis’ war chest. “The sad thing,” says Bowling, “is that in America today if it’s going to take \$2 million to win, then normal people can’t run anymore. You either have to be very, very wealthy or very, very bought.”

Bowling suggests that 90% of a candidate’s money should have to come from registered voters within his or her district. “This would serve as a deterrent to excesses, force the candidate to return to the people, and would give us what our founding fathers died for—a representative government,” she says. “Right now we’re on the precipice of having a government of the money machine, by the machine, and for the machine.”

As a direct result of her experience, Ms. Bowling does not plan to run for federal office again. “I realize you cannot compete against the money and the machine,” she says. “I would not subject the people to another exercise in futility...My loss was reflective of the fact that in America today a grassroots campaign cannot compete with a moneyed campaign machine.”

*Republican Janice Bowling lost the general election for Tennessee’s 4<sup>th</sup> District to Democratic incumbent Lincoln Davis, 55% to 44%. Bowling raised \$305,000, and Representative Davis raised \$1.2 million.*



## TEXAS

### **Richard Morrison**

*Attorney*

*Democratic Nominee for the 22<sup>nd</sup> District*

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Richard Morrison is lifelong Texan and an environmental and consumer rights attorney who was awarded the Special Conservation Award by the Houston Sierra Club in 1997.

In 2004, Mr. Morrison took on Representative Tom Delay, Majority Leader and one of the most powerful figures in the House of Representatives. “I thought that my current congressman wasn’t representing the people of this district and we needed one who would have the people’s interest at heart,” he says.

Mr. Morrison feels that money is the primary reason he lost his race. “It came down to not having the money to get up on TV during the last ten days to answer his negative attacks,” he said. “We had an independent poll and an internal poll ten days before the election that showed me within eight points,” Morrison says. “Then he began to run negative commercials against me. We were about \$200,000 short of what we needed.”

Morrison estimates that his average contribution was \$50 to \$60, which is around what he thinks an average Texan can afford to give. He opposes the recent doubling of contribution limits and suggests bringing limits down dramatically. “It would be better for democracy if you had a \$100 limit,” he says. “Most everyone can afford \$100 over the year.”

Morrison also supports public financing and feels he’d have had a better chance against Representative Delay with equal resources. “I felt like I had a chance to win even though I knew he would outspend me,” he says. “It

would certainly level the playing field if we both had [an equal amount] to spend. Then we'd at least know who the best candidate was."

*Richard Morrison raised \$449,000 in his effort to unseat Rep. Tom Delay in Texas' 22<sup>nd</sup> District. Representative Delay raised \$2.8 million and defeated Morrison 55% to 41% in the general election.*



## UTAH

### **Matt Throckmorton**

*Former State Legislator*

*Republican Primary Candidate in the 3<sup>rd</sup> District*

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Matt Throckmorton, a floor contractor and political consultant, served four years in the Utah State House of Representatives. Mr. Throckmorton decided to run for the Republican nomination for Utah's 3<sup>rd</sup> District House seat because he has key differences of opinion with the incumbent on issues such as No Child Left Behind, the national debt, Medicaid, and illegal immigration. He first tried in 2002, but didn't make it past the Republican Convention into a primary. This time around he earned the right to face Representative Chris Cannon in a primary contest.

He says he received mixed signals from within the Republican Party regarding his decision. "I served in the Utah House, so insiders wanted me to play well in the sandbox," he says. "But there were party activists that weren't too happy with [the incumbent's] voting record."

Mr. Throckmorton says money is the main reason he lost the primary to Representative Cannon. "We were outspent about seven to one." He says the perception that he couldn't win because of his lack of finances and the power of incumbency hurt his fundraising

efforts. "After the primary was over I had a lot of Republican donors who were shocked [by how well we did, and they would tell me they] wished they would have helped."

One of the problems, according to Throckmorton, was that he didn't have personal wealth to put into the campaign. "There's generally an expectation in any serious campaign that the candidate would put in \$200,000-\$300,000 themselves," he says. "I'm middle class and just didn't have that kind of money and so a lot of the traditional donors stayed away."

Mr. Throckmorton estimates that his average contribution was less than \$100—which is about what he thinks the average Utahan can afford to give. "[Cannon] raised a lot more money, but we had a lot more donors," he says. "They just weren't as rich."

Mr. Throckmorton feels that our current campaign finance system discourages good candidates from running for office because of the influence of corporate PACs. Since these PACs give overwhelmingly to sitting legislators, he says their influence "makes it almost impossible to break the incumbency chain." He suggests limiting out-of-state and out-of-district contributions to help break the stranglehold of beltway interests.

*Matt Throckmorton raised \$84,000 and garnered 41.6% of the vote in challenging incumbent Representative Chris Cannon for Utah's 3<sup>rd</sup> District Republican nomination. Representative Cannon raised \$430,000 for the primary, including \$65,000 in the last 20 days of the race in contributions of at least \$1,000. Representative Cannon went on to raise \$635,000 and win the general election 61% to 35% over Democrat Beau Babka, who raised only \$35,000.<sup>39</sup>*



## VIRGINIA

### **Andrew Rosenberg**

*Attorney*

*Democratic Primary Candidate in the 8<sup>th</sup> District*

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Andrew Rosenberg is a lawyer for the prominent national firm Patton Boggs and a former staffer for Senator Edward Kennedy. He sits on the board of the Alexandria Red Cross and

is involved with numerous civic organizations, including the Sierra Club and NAACP.

Mr. Rosenberg decided to run in the 8<sup>th</sup> District Democratic primary because he wanted to provide an alternative to Congressman Jim Moran, who had made headlines for ethics questions and inflammatory remarks. In a *Washington Post* biography, Rosenberg commented “the people of Northern Virginia want and deserve a representative who will vote the right way and demonstrate sound judgment.”<sup>40</sup>

Rosenberg says that he ran a grassroots campaign “out of my house with a lot of volunteers and young staff. We had about 250-300 volunteers. We knocked on doors seven days a week for seven to eight months and were at metro stops every day.”

This grassroots effort, however, wasn’t enough. Representative Moran raised more than \$1 million and won the primary 59-41%. “Despite all his controversies,” says Rosenberg, “he had over \$1 million and spent a lot more on mail and distributed money to the local political machine in order to keep its support. I think we got a lot more out of our \$400,000; but at the end of the day, he spread his money around... That, plus his incumbency, was a huge factor.”

Although Mr. Rosenberg raised a lot of money for a challenger, he had difficulty matching the

fundraising power of incumbency. “As a challenger,” Rosenberg says, “you don’t have access to the same type of resources. The incumbents attract the smart money. The so-called “smart money crowd” wasn’t a direction I even tried to go. Primarily I’m referring to corporate interests. I wasn’t going to be any help to them anyway because my politics are more pro-consumer than my opponent’s; and a pro-industry incumbent can always say to them: you’d better give \$5,000 if you want access to me, and they generally will do so.”

Mr. Rosenberg reports that most of his checks were “\$25 and \$50 local checks from people who wanted change.” But, he says, “it takes a lot of \$25 checks to equal one \$5,000 check from a corporate PAC.”

Mr. Rosenberg believes the central problem with our current campaign finance system is large contributions from PACs and wealthy donors—and that incumbents won’t change the rules because they don’t want to be challenged by average citizens.

“The average person who writes \$25 checks isn’t trying to buy access, but it takes a whole lot of their checks to equal one \$1,000 check from an established political player,” he says. In addition, “it’s the PAC money that really helps the incumbents. The challenger can’t get corporate PAC money. Plus, people who don’t want to owe favors to corporate PACs don’t want to take that money anyway.”

Mr. Rosenberg advocates free airtime for candidates and eliminating congressional franking privileges as a way to level the playing field between challengers and incumbents. Franking allows members of Congress to send their constituents mail at government expense.

When asked if he’d run for office again, Rosenberg said, “I wouldn’t rule it out, but I’m not planning on it right now. Fundraising concerns play a huge role. If someone told me they wanted to help me raise a lot of money, that

would be one thing. But if I had to solicit my friends and family for everything I could again—which is what I ended up doing during my congressional campaign—I wouldn't be very excited about that. There's nothing worse than asking your friends for money."

Although not planning an immediate run for office, Rosenberg has stayed involved in politics. He is now heading up a non-profit called New Voice for Northern Virginia that will focus on ensuring high ethical standards among elected officials.

*Andrew Rosenberg raised \$415,000, including \$36,000 from his own savings, and lost the Democratic primary 59% to 41% to incumbent Jim Moran, who raised more than \$1 million. Representative Moran went on to raise a total of \$1.7 million and defeat Republican challenger Lisa Marie Cheney, who raised approximately \$339,000, 60% to 37% in the general election.<sup>41</sup>*



## WASHINGTON

### Heidi Behrens-Benedict

Small Business Owner

Democratic Primary Candidate in the 8<sup>th</sup> District



Heidi Behrens-Benedict is the principal in a small interior design firm in the Puget Sound region who ran for Representative Jennifer Dunn's eighth district Congressional seat three times in the past. "I ran against Jennifer because nobody else would," she said. In 2002, she ran as the Democratic nominee and attained 37% of the vote, while raising \$75,000 to Representative Dunn's \$1.8 million.

Ms. Behrens-Benedict initially became involved in politics when, horrified by a school shooting in Springfield, Oregon, she wrote a letter to the editor of the local paper denouncing the NRA. In response, she received a flood of phone calls

and messages of support, including an invitation to join the gun control group Washington Ceasefire. At that point, she began to realize that "Jennifer Dunn's voting record was terrible on gun control, the environment, kids, and working people—and I decided to run for Congress."

The Democratic Party would have preferred that she didn't run this time around, Behrens-Benedict said, because they had initially handpicked someone who could self-finance. She was undaunted by this, however, because she had won 41% of the vote in 1998 with no help or funds from the party. "Money is a problem for everybody," she attested. "That's why the party wants somebody who self-finances." In 2004, fundraising presented particular difficulties because the "527s took up all the money. People maxed out on Kerry, and the big donors were all giving money to America Coming Together and the 527s."

Regarding her own fundraising efforts, "I raised money one person at a time," she declared. "And I raised more money on an individual basis." She believes, however, that raising enough money to win a congressional seat is a nearly insurmountable obstacle for ordinary people. "It's this side of impossible for a normal person to run for Congress. If you've got name familiarity—you can either have that or money. Unless you have a savings account or money, you can't do it."

"I'm writing a book on it," she says with a laugh. "*The Day I Went Crazy and Ran for Congress.*"

She feels strongly that our system should not function in this way. "It's not what Jefferson had in mind . . . It's impossible for real people [to run for Congress] and it shouldn't be. People should feel that you can grow up to be president, and that's gone. The only people who can are of tremendous means. Congress should be close to the people—and multimillionaires aren't the people!"



Ms. Behrens-Benedict thinks the current system is “all about keeping people out instead of bringing people in.” She feels it’s imperative that we change that system. In order to reform the system, she recommends providing free media to candidates as one solution. “If elections were publicly financed,” she said, “people would go out and meet their constituents. It’s impossible to do that when you’re on the phone six hours a day.” She doesn’t think candidates should be able to opt in or out of the public financing system, but rather that there should be public financing for everyone. “It has to be something that normal people can do.”

Although she would consider running for office again, but perhaps not for Congress, she concedes the undertaking is discouraging. “It just gets beaten out of people,” she maintained. “Others see that and don’t want to run.”

*Heidi Behrens-Benedict won 21% of the vote in a three-way primary while raising \$185,000. The winner, Dave Ross, attained 48% of the vote and raised \$249,000. He raised more than \$1.4 million in the general election but lost to Dave Reichert, who raised \$1.5 million.<sup>42</sup>*



## WISCONSIN

### Bob Welch

State Senator

Republican Primary Senate Candidate

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Bob Welch is a longtime state senator who has served in the Wisconsin legislature for 20 years. During his tenure, he has led efforts to lower taxes and has been involved in welfare reform and anti-crime initiatives.

He first ran for the U.S. Senate in 1994, and, despite being outspent eight-to-one, he garnered 42% of the vote against Senator Herb Kohl, one

of the richest men in Congress. He decided to run for a U.S. Senate seat again in 2004 because “I have a strong commitment to public service . . . and my views are in sync with those of the majority of the people of Wisconsin.”

He believes money played a significant role in the election, noting, “A lot of people didn’t think [Senator] Feingold could be beaten because he raised so much money. There were a lot of open seats, so Republicans didn’t focus much on races with incumbents.” Of the factors in his own race, he stated simply, “I was out-raised.”

“I got pincered between two millionaires,” Senator Welch said. “The biggest problem is that when both your opponents are multimillionaires, it’s hard to get people to support you. They say, ‘I can give money to you, but he’ll just write out a check to himself for the same amount.’ It becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy.”

Although he admits the current campaign finance system has its problems, he is not optimistic about possibilities for reform. The greatest stumbling block, according to Senator Welch, is that “There’s no way to stop rich people from buying their own seat. McCain-Feingold didn’t do that. I’ve never seen a plan that prevented the rich guy from running on his own money.”

Senator Welch believes the current system probably dissuades a lot of good candidates from entering the race at all. As for himself, he is not sure whether he will run for Congress again, but his fundraising prospects will certainly factor heavily in the decision. As he wryly observes, “There’s nobody out there who’s running without first figuring out how much money they can raise.”

*Senator Bob Welch won 23% of the vote in a four-way primary for the Republican Senate nomination. Although he raised more than \$1.1 million, his opponents Tim Michels and Russ Darrow amassed \$2.3 million and \$4.7 million respectively. Michels lost the general election to Senator Russ Feingold, who out-raised him \$10.4 million to \$4 million.<sup>43</sup>*



## WYOMING

### **Ted Ladd**

*Businessman*

*Democratic Nominee for the At-Large Seat*

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With graduate degrees in economics and business, Ted Ladd has a background in business and the high-tech industry in San Francisco. He founded the Hewitt Ladd consulting firm in Wilson,

Wyoming, and was appointed to the Wyoming Business Council, a state board that sets economic policy.

Mr. Ladd was motivated to run for Congress because he felt the incumbent was not doing a good job, and he was concerned for the economic health of the state. His work with the Wyoming Business Council “took me different places around the state,” he said, “and Wyoming has missed out on the American Dream. We’re 44<sup>th</sup> in the country for average wages and last in wage disparity. There’s no longer an agrarian economy, and [our economic problems] are self-fulfilling—people leave, so we have a net drain of 18-to-34-year-olds. Our economy is heading in the wrong direction, and a poor economy creates pain—that’s what drove me to run. . . . [The incumbent] doesn’t understand the economy—too few people in the House do.” In addition, the state’s current and former Democratic governors both encouraged him to run for office.

Although Wyoming is a heavily Republican state, he says, voters have a tradition of electing Democratic governors. Ladd feels it is necessary to challenge the perception that the Republican Party is pro-business. “The people that are [in office] now are unhealthy for the economy in the short and the long term. Companies need to

realize that the people there now are not good for them,” he asserted.

One of the reasons for his defeat, Ladd said, is that he is young and had not held political office before, “although to some, that’s refreshing.” Money played a role because fundraising was very time-consuming. “There were times when I would spend a half-day fundraising instead of walking the streets and talking to people,” he said.

Paid advertising, too, poses a challenge to candidates trying to get their message out. “Wyoming is a vast state,” Ladd notes. “I drove 45,000 miles across the state to reach people in rural areas. In those areas, people aren’t tuned into politics—they’re watching prime time on TV. The only way I can reach them is through advertising . . . That’s where money plays a role—those who pay attention to politics voted for me. But I couldn’t reach the people doing the night shift on the oil rigs.”

He estimates his mean contribution at around \$100, but his opponent, he declared, “was awash in PAC money. I raised almost as much as she did from individual contributors.” PAC money, he says, is clearly one of the biggest problems in the campaign finance system. He recommends limiting or eliminating it.

Discouraged with recent campaign finance reform efforts, he feels there are few reform options without loopholes. “McCain-Feingold was good initially,” he said, “but it doesn’t put a dent in the problem because people find a way around it. So my conclusion is that the only way to ensure that challengers and incumbents are on an equal footing is publicly financed campaigns.”

*Ted Ladd garnered 42% of the vote in the general election against five-term incumbent Barbara Cubin, raising \$367,000 to her \$951,000.*



# CONCLUSION



**O**ur preliminary analysis of the 2004 election cycle has shown that the candidates who raise the most money continue to win office in the vast majority of cases. These candidates tend to receive a disproportionate amount of their funding from a tiny fraction of contributors who do not represent the American public as a whole.

The dozens of profiles in this report illustrate the experience of aspiring office-holders who are unable or unwilling to invest large amounts of personal wealth in a campaign for federal office or to spend the bulk of their time soliciting large contributions from wealthy donors. Their qualifications suggest that many of these candidates would have made talented and dedicated public servants, but they have been eliminated by the “wealth primary.” Common sense and these interviews suggest that many more potential candidates shy away from running because of modern fundraising demands—and are therefore shut out before the first vote is even cast.

## POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

Candidates interviewed for this report supported a variety of policy proposals to create a fairer campaign finance system and give people like themselves a better chance of running competitively in future elections. The following solutions are endorsed by the state Public Interest Research Groups:

### Lower Contribution Limits

Contribution limits for all candidates and all races should be set at a level that average Americans can afford. We should dramatically lower contribution limits, not increase them as

Congress did in the 2002 Bipartisan Campaign Reform Act.

*“It would be better for democracy if you had a \$100 limit. Most everyone can afford \$100 over the year.”*

- Richard Morrison, Democratic Nominee for Texas’ 22<sup>nd</sup> District

*“[Contribution limits should be] based on what 80% of people can afford to do, not 20%.”*

- Mark Budetich, Democratic Primary Candidate in Nevada’s 3<sup>rd</sup> District

*“The \$2,000 limit is too much . . . Those who have the best ideas should win.”*

- Dr. Inam Rahman, Republican Primary Candidate in Hawaii’s 2<sup>nd</sup> District

### Vouchers or Tax Credits to Reimburse Small Donors

Vouchers, tax refunds or credits for small political contributions (up to \$100) would encourage more small contributors to participate in the political process. This would magnify the voices of average Americans, enable candidates to run campaigns geared towards non-wealthy citizens, and provide a counterweight to the money from large donors flooding into the process.

*“It would give the little guy more voice—it would be a good thing.”*

- Scott Rolle, Republican Primary Candidate in Maryland’s 6<sup>th</sup> District

*“It would be good for encouraging more participation and more small donors.”*

- Al Taubenberger, Republican Primary Candidate in Pennsylvania’s 13<sup>th</sup> District

*“It would encourage contributions across the board. It would’ve helped a candidate like me.”*

- Peter Duffy, Democratic Primary Candidate in New Hampshire’s 1<sup>st</sup> District

### **Public Financing**

We should give candidates the option of forgoing all private contributions and receiving limited amounts of full public financing. We should start by providing full public financing for presidential elections and eventually extend this program to include congressional elections.

*“I think public financing is very smart—if you’re going to spend your money anywhere in a democracy it seems to me you should spend it in the first instance making sure there is a democracy.”*

- Andrew Kaza, Democratic Primary Candidate in Oregon’s 5<sup>th</sup> District

*“I’d like to see the playing field even as far as a better formula. Maybe everyone gets the same amount of money. Then it’s like a chess game—it’s who uses their money better.”*

- Dan Corsentino, Republican Primary Candidate in Colorado’s 3<sup>rd</sup> District

*“If elections were publicly financed, people would go out and meet their constituents. It’s impossible to do that when you’re on the phone six hours a day.”*

- Heidi Behrens-Benedict, Democratic Primary Candidate in Washington’s 8<sup>th</sup> District

### **Limits on Overall Campaign Spending**

Elections should be contests of ideas, not battles for dollars. The use of personal wealth and large contributions in campaigns should be limited through mandatory spending caps so that no candidate has an unfair financial advantage.

*“The fairest thing you can do is put a limit on spending per race—that would level the playing field. It would give campaigns back to the people . . . Candidates would have to face [the people] on the street, in open forums, on talk shows. Right now candidates don’t have to do much—just raise money and get on TV.”*

- Albert Turner, Jr., Democratic Primary Candidate in Alabama’s 7<sup>th</sup> District

*“Limit the amount of money you can get—do that, and you’ll get an even playing field . . . If we put an overall limit on it, then [incumbents] would have to go out and campaign.”*

- Don Hooper, Republican Nominee for Michigan’s 1<sup>st</sup> District

### **Limits on Out-of-District Fundraising**

Candidates should be required to raise all or most of their funds from the constituents they seek to represent. This would make representatives more accountable to their constituents and reduce the influence of outside interests.

*“[I]f a Congressman is doing his job at home I don’t think he’d have anything to worry about. It would make a more level playing field.”*

- Michael Lott, Republican Nominee in Mississippi’s 4<sup>th</sup> District

*“Out-of-state contributions should be banned... [I]t would tie incumbents and officeholders to the interests of their state.”*

- Mike Liffbrig, Republican Nominee for Senate in North Dakota

### **Free Media for Candidates**

Free TV, radio, and mail for candidates would decrease the cost of campaigns and provide an opportunity for those who are not favored by wealthy donors to get their message out. The American public owns the airwaves, which are supposed to be operated “in the public interest,”

so this requirement would not impinge upon the rights of commercial broadcasters.

*“[It] should be easier to have public access to the media...The real challenge in a low-budget campaign is to get your message out. A couple of free 30 second commercials would help.”*

- Tony Zirkle, Republican Primary Candidate in Indiana’s 2<sup>nd</sup> District

*“We should have public interest spots on each candidate for five minutes a night. Free airtime would give everybody a chance.”*

- Joan McGivney, Republican Primary Candidate in Missouri’s 3<sup>rd</sup> District

# METHODOLOGY FOR CANDIDATE SURVEYS



## Survey Technique

Report authors Adam Lioz and Dana Mason conducted all candidate surveys via telephone from October 2004 to January 2005. The report authors selected candidates to research and interview based upon their qualifications, credibility, and fundraising circumstances. Candidates were asked the questions listed below and, whenever possible, were not told the purpose of the survey until it was complete. Some candidates asked the purpose of the questions up front and they were answered honestly.

## Survey Questions

The candidates profiled in this report were asked the following questions:

1. Why did you decide to run for office?
2. Did anyone in particular encourage you to run or discourage you from running?
3. What are your qualifications for holding federal office?
4. Why do you think you lost the primary/general? OR Why did you drop out of the race?
5. Do you think that money influences election outcomes?
6. Did money play a significant role in your race?
7. Please describe the role of money and fundraising in your race.
8. Did you have any difficulties fundraising?
9. Why do you think your opponent was able to raise significantly more money than you?
10. Do you have any specific stories or examples that illustrate your fundraising challenges?
11. What was the size of your average contribution, and how did this compare with your opponent's average contribution?
12. In your opinion, what is the size of the average contribution your constituents can afford?
13. Does our campaign finance system discourage good candidates from running?

14. Are there problems with our current system of financing campaigns? If so, what?
15. What solutions would you suggest?
16. The amount individuals are allowed to contribute to candidates for federal office has just increased from \$1,000 to \$2,000. Is this increase a good idea?
17. Will the new \$2,000 limit have an impact on your ability to wage future campaigns? Will it affect your decision to run for office?
18. If the federal government were to provide a voucher or tax credit to reimburse donors for small contributions, would this help your prospects as a candidate?
19. Would you consider running for federal office again? Will fundraising concerns play a role in this decision?
20. Do you feel you'd have a better chance of winning office under a different campaign finance system?
21. Would you mind if we included a profile of you in our report?

## END NOTES



<sup>1</sup> Amy Keller, “Senate Has at Least 42 Millionaires,” *Roll Call*, June 16, 2003.

<sup>2</sup> *Id.*

<sup>3</sup> Alexander Bolton and Tom Sullivan, “Not all lawmakers are millionaires—shock!” *The Hill*, June 17, 2004.

<sup>4</sup> “Return of the Millionaires,” *CNNMoney*, June 15, 2004.

<sup>5</sup> Jamin Raskin and John Bonifaz, *Equal Protection and the Wealth Primary*, 11 *Yale L. & Pol’y Rev.* 273.

<sup>6</sup> U.S. PIRG Education Fund, *The Wealth Primary*, October 2004 at 8.

<sup>7</sup> *Id.* at 8.

<sup>8</sup> *Id.* at 8.

<sup>9</sup> Center for Responsive Politics, “2004 Election Outcome: Money Wins,” November 3, 2004 (Note: this analysis considered spending, not fundraising; but results are likely extremely similar).

<sup>10</sup> U.S. PIRG Education Fund, *The Wealth Primary*, October 2004 at 8.

<sup>11</sup> *Id.* at 8.

<sup>12</sup> *Id.* at 8.

<sup>13</sup> *Id.* at 8.

<sup>14</sup> U.S. PIRG Education Fund, *Look Who’s Not Coming to Washington*, January 2003 at 7.

<sup>15</sup> Federal Election Commission, “Congressional Campaigns Spend \$912 Million Through Late November,” January 3, 2005.

<sup>16</sup> Center for Responsive Politics, press release, “’04 Elections Expected to Cost Nearly \$4 Billion,” October 21, 2004, at <http://www.opensecrets.org/pressreleases/2004/04spending.asp>, accessed January 20, 2005.

<sup>17</sup> Federal Election Commission, “Congressional Campaigns Spend \$912 Million Through Late November,” January 3, 2005.

<sup>18</sup> The Bureau of Labor Statistics “Inflation Calculator” (available at: <http://www.bls.gov/cpi/#data>) reports that \$1.00 in 2002 has \$1.06 of buying power in 2004 (as viewed on January 15, 2005).

<sup>19</sup> U.S. PIRG Education Fund, *The Role of Money in the 2002 Congressional Elections*, July 2003 at 16.

<sup>20</sup> U.S. PIRG Education Fund, *The Wealth Primary*, October 2004 at 9.

<sup>21</sup> *Id.* at 9

<sup>22</sup> See e.g. The Campaign Finance Institute, *Participation, Competition, Engagement*, September 2003 at 106; Public Campaign, The Fannie Lou Hamer Project and The William C. Valasquez Institute, *The Color of Money*, available at [www.colorofmoney.org](http://www.colorofmoney.org); John Green et al., “Individual Congressional Campaign Contributors: Wealthy, Conservative—and Reform-Minded,” June 9, 1998.

<sup>23</sup> Green et al. at 14.

<sup>24</sup> *Id.*

<sup>25</sup> McDonald primary fundraising: pre-primary plus 48 hour reports

<sup>26</sup> Corsentino primary fundraising: pre-general report

<sup>27</sup> Schneider and Jennings primary fundraising: pre-primary plus 48 hour reports

<sup>28</sup> Rahman primary fundraising: July quarterly report (last available report).

<sup>29</sup> Tauzin fundraising: pre-general and post-runoff reports; Melancon fundraising: pre-general and post-runoff reports.

<sup>30</sup> Hooper fundraising: October quarterly (last available report).

<sup>31</sup> Stewart primary fundraising: July quarterly

<sup>32</sup> Budetich fundraising: October quarterly

<sup>33</sup> Bradley fundraising: pre-general plus 48 hour reports.

<sup>34</sup> Collesano and Higgins primary fundraising: October quarterly reports; Naples fundraising: Center for Responsive Politics

<sup>35</sup> Liffbrig and Dorgan fundraising: pre-general reports.

<sup>36</sup> Free fundraising: year end report. Boren primary fundraising: pre-primary plus 48-hour reports.

<sup>37</sup> Kaza fundraising: pre-general report; Hooley primary fundraising: pre-primary plus 48 hour reports

<sup>38</sup> Taubenberg fundraising: year end report; Brown fundraising: included fundraising from more than one committee.

<sup>39</sup> Throckmorton fundraising: October quarterly; Cannon primary fundraising: pre-primary plus 48 hour reports.

<sup>40</sup> “Biography: Andrew M. Rosenberg,” *Washington Post*. Thursday, June 3, 2004; Page VA17.

<sup>41</sup> Rosenberg fundraising: October quarterly

<sup>42</sup> Behrens-Benedict fundraising: termination report

<sup>43</sup> Darrow fundraising: October quarterly; Michels and Feingold general election fundraising: pre-general reports.