

Reform...

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Elections Commission (FEC). In 1976 the Supreme Court cast out expenditure limits on First Amendment grounds and held that disclosure requirements as well as contributions to non-candidate political organizations would only apply when the recipient group *explicitly advocated election or defeat of a candidate*.

Still, the remaining sections of the law severely regulated and limited U.S. politics. McCain-Feingold heaped more restrictions on public expression saying that a candidate support committee could not respond to broadcasts that may be untrue, issued just prior to an election. The same Supreme Court decision has now lifted that ban.

Campaign finance reformers often claim to seek something more than eradicating corruption—*equalizing political influence*. During the debate over McCain-Feingold, members of Congress repeatedly used this theme: "It's time to let all our citizens have an equal voice;" or, "Special interests have an advantage over average, hard-working citizens."

There are some noted examples of ordinary citizens being entrapped by FECA and the FEC. In February 2006, Norm Feck learned that Parker, Colorado was considering annexing Parker North, where he lived. As he didn't want more taxes and bureaucracy, Feck and five other locals wrote letters to the editor, handed out information sheets and formed an internet discussion group. Annexation supporters responded by filing a lawsuit under FECA rules and now Feck and his associates are having to defend themselves of violating election advocacy laws. Another "big fish" caught in the net of FECA and the FEC is NASCAR driver Kirk Shelmerdine, who in 2004 spent \$50 to affix a Bush-Cheney '04 decal to an unused spot on his car's advertising space. The FEC admonished him for making an unreported campaign expenditure.

Such cases are not merely examples of bureaucratic excess. Under today's intrusive laws, Kirk Shelmerdine's activities demanded an FEC inquiry. Meanwhile, Michael Moore's "Fahrenheit 9/11" slipped through the FEC because the film was deemed a commercial venture and not a political effort. When the conservative Citizens United organization tried to release a film responding to the anti-Bush assertions of "Fahrenheit 9/11", the FEC advised that any public broadcast close to the election would be subject to McCain-Feingold. Why? Citizens United wasn't regularly in the movie business—Michael Moore was.

So what kind of reform would actually reform campaign finance? Well, what are these election laws really trying to accomplish? **Inform voters of what the issues are and where each candidate stands on them.** How about this simple proposal: *Have no restrictions on campaign giving, but require a donor to list his name and any political or business affiliation for*

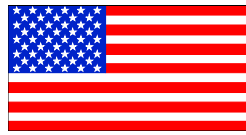
A Lesson in Inconsistency

The Auburn City Council exercised rare intestinal fortitude in overriding its staff's and Economic Development Commission's dictates. On July 9, the Council voted unanimously to deny its alter-ego, the Auburn Urban Development Authority, the power of eminent domain, taking one person's property to benefit another, in the newly-created Redevelopment Area. *This action was right.*

Less than five minutes later, the Council unanimously voted to permit the Auburn Urban Development Authority to retain the authority to take one person's property to benefit another in the old Redevelopment Area. *This action was wrong.*

The Council has failed to explain why they believe taking property from one person to benefit another is right in one part of the city but wrong in another part.

— Dan Sokol



In Memorium



James Eddy
Max Edmonds
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any donation of \$1,000 or more and file it immediately on the internet and notify the media within 24 hours.

The public would quickly know who is funding a campaign and what their interests and background are. The public can then evaluate what interests are backing a candidate or an election issue and more easily judge where to cast its vote. All open and all above board.

If trial lawyers are backing an issue or a candidate, the public is immediately informed. Likewise, if large corporations place their money on candidate A or issue B, the public is informed, and if an issue or a candidate is heavily supported by a certain union, the public can consider this information.

Campaign finance reform doesn't require a whole passel of rules, regulations, bells and whistles to inform the voter—just timely information about who is supporting what or who.

— Excerpts, Wall Street Journal
Wally Reemelin

Timing is Everything, When Pulling the Wool Over the Ratepayers Eyes

The Placer County Water Agency (PCWA) recently announced that the agency is replacing its water meters with meters that will register larger water use for the same quantity of delivery. The increase is estimated to be 5-15% or more. Based on the demonstrated integrity of the PCWA, this estimate is certainly suspect.

Because of the cost of the new meters is being paid by the taxpayers in the form of a federal grant, PCWA will receive a 10% increase in revenues. Because PCWA will not be obliged to deliver even a single drop of water to get this additional revenue, this money is 100% profit. Thus, PCWA will

have about 10% more of the taxpayers hard-earned oney to squander. The 10% figure is based on PCWA's announcement, the correct figure is probably much higher.

The announcement follows a two digit rate increase that probably could be reduced by half if the increased revenue from higher-registering meters had been considered. The announcement also follows the obscene 29% salary increase granted to the Chief Executive Officer of PCWA. Can the sequence of announcements be a coincidence?

— Dan Sokol

The Venezuelan Mosquito District of Placer County?

The Placer Mosquito District claims that according to Proposition 218 an election is not necessary to raise the taxes of property owners within the district, but Mitch Bernstein, District General Manager, claimed that the District did not need to send out ballots. The District sent out mail-in ballots just to be nice.

Unfortunately, the facts are not kind to the mosquito folks' case; there are a number of disturbing issues raised by the process the District used to raise taxes.

First, the public officials in charge of the sham election were never elected.

Second, A voter's identity is not verified. In an election, a voter's signature is compared against a signature on a registration card. The Mosquito District accepted the signature of whoever signed the ballot, without considering if that person was authorized to sign it!

Third, government agencies voted against you!. The national forest and numerous other government agencies were able to vote and cancel out your vote in this election. You did not need not be a citizen to vote and even foreign corporations

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