THE USE OF INDEPENDENT EXPENDITURES IN U.S. HOUSE ELECTIONS

by

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(Under the direction of M.V. Hood, III)

ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the factors that impel political parties and interest groups to use independent expenditures in U.S. House elections. Using data from House elections in which an incumbent sought reelection from 1992-2004, Generalized Linear Model analysis was employed to ascertain which factors, namely race competitiveness and incumbent ideology, were most determinative of the level of independent spending by selected interest groups and political party committees. In nearly all cases, race competitiveness was a statistically significant cause of independent spending. Other models also measured whether race competitiveness affected the prevalence of negative spending, and whether incumbent ideological extremeness increased independent spending, generally.

INDEX WORDS: Independent Expenditures, Congress, Campaign Finance, Interest Groups

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The influence exerted by Political Action Committees (PAC) and other outside groups, derisively referred to as special interest groups, on federal elections has long been criticized by campaign reformers. Armed with vast resources and parochial agendas, interest groups are often seen as pernicious entities in American politics, aiming to buy access to election officials through myriad, and some argue insidious, campaign activities. While campaign reform has typically been identified as the ideological purview of the Democratic Party, both sides of the political spectrum have enjoyed the largesse of interest groups. PACs come in all shapes and sizes and they advocate for labor groups, corporate groups, and single issues, such as the environment or abortion rights, among many, many others. This is to say nothing of the vast sums of money spent by the parties themselves. PACs, however, are not the only entities that spend extravagantly on political campaigns. The political parties also spend lavishly each election cycle on countless campaigns across the county.

In this paper, I will examine one relatively unexamined aspect of campaign finance—independent expenditures, which are funds that can be spent in unlimited sums by groups (from PACs to party committees) or individuals on behalf of or against a candidate—so long as they are spent completely independently of that candidate's campaign. Specifically, I will look at which factors prompt groups to use independent expenditures. First, in this chapter, I will present a brief history of independent expenditures, highlighting their most prominent appearances on the campaign finance radar. Second, I will present a review of the relevant literature on this subject. Then, I will offer theoretical arguments for why groups use independent expenditures and offer specific hypotheses to be tested. Next, a research design will be presented, followed by results of the empirical tests. Finally, I will conclude this examination with some closing thoughts on the results of this study and suggestions for future research on independent expenditures.

A History of Independent Expenditures

Influence, the coin of the realm in politics, is generally thought of as the objective of interest group campaign activity. Conventional political wisdom suggests that in order to attain influence a person or group must demonstrate influence. The 2000 presidential election notwithstanding, determining winners and losers in politics is generally quite easy. Determining what factor or factors shape wins or losses is an altogether different undertaking. It is by plainly demonstrating that they are a factor in determining an election outcome that interest groups gain political currency.

If federal law limited interest groups to direct, and limited, contributions to candidates, their ability to claim credit for an election victory would be a tough sell. Fortunately, for interest groups, courts have been accommodating. The Federal Election Campaign Act (FECA), enacted in 1971 and revised in 1974, aimed to curtail the ability of individuals and groups to spend unlimited sums of money on federal campaigns. FECA, as enacted in 1971, strengthened the disclosure requirements placed upon federal candidates with respect to their campaign receipts and expenditures. Sabato (1984) notes that on the day before the new requirements went into effect certain Washington, D.C., banks extended their hours of business in order to facilitate large last-minute cash transfers to candidates from lobbyists who wanted to avoid public scrutiny one last time.

Another key provision of the initial version of FECA, and perhaps the most important provision that impinges upon independent expenditures, authorized corporations and labor unions to set up political actions committees and to cover the attending organizational expenses from corporate or union finances. PACs, which would later play such an instrumental role in bankrolling independent spending campaigns, were given official sanction by this provision.

While campaign reformers were undoubtedly pleased by FECA, they were certainly not satisfied after the events of Watergate brought to light the machinations of the Nixon Administration before, during, and subsequent to the 1972 presidential election. Consequently, Congress amended FECA in 1974 with sweeping new restrictions on contributions to candidates (they were capped at $1,000 per election cycle and $25,000 total that an individual could give to all federal candidates in a calendar year), and the amount an individual could spend independently of a campaign in order to affect an election at $1,000. This, of course, constituted an independent expenditure, and, given the cap, rendered such spending virtually ineffectual.

However, in 1976, the Supreme Court, in the landmark campaign finance decision, *Buckley v. Valeo*, ruled that restricting the ability of individuals or groups to freely spend money on behalf of, but independent of, federal candidates was unconstitutional, violating the First Amendment's guarantee of free speech. The Court's decision essentially sanctioned unlimited independent expenditures. Eight years later, the Court once again countenanced the constitutionality of independent expenditures, invalidating a FEC regulation that placed a $1,000 cap on independent PAC expenditures supporting a presidential candidate receiving federal matching funds[1]. The Court reasserted its belief that the only compelling interest for restricting campaign finance activities was to prevent corruption, and that PACs' use of independent expenditures did not raise such concerns.

It is important to reiterate exactly what is meant by the term independent expenditures, which without precise definition could be confused with soft money, and more recently, section

[1] See *FEC v. National Conservative Political Action Committee,* 470 U.S. 480 (1985)

527 group spending. Independent expenditures, as authorized by the courts, are funds spent using hard money expressly on behalf of or against a candidate for public office. Alternatively, soft money is money collected in unlimited sums and used to fund party-building activities or to promote issue awareness, while not ostensibly supporting or targeting or a specific candidate. Meanwhile, the 2004 presidential campaign heralded the rise of groups popularly known as “527 Groups,” which denotes the section of federal law that sanctions their existence and activities. Similar to soft money activities, “527 Groups” do not explicitly advocate for the election or defeat of a candidate and their finances do not emanate from hard money donations. Unlike what we generally think of with soft money activities, 527 spending derives from private individuals and organizations and not political party committees.

Federal law, however, did mandate that independent expenditures must be independent in every sense of the word, raising questions in many observers’ minds regarding the practicality of enforcing such a requirement, given the many intertwined relationships enjoyed by those who are involved in partisan politics. Despite this concern, the Federal Election Commission (FEC) has not unearthed many instances of demonstrable collusion between candidates and groups using independent expenditures on their behalf (Nelson 1990).

Initially, the impact of the Court’s decision was largely academic. During the 1977-78 election cycle, the first full election cycle subsequent to *Buckley*, individual and group independent expenditures totaled just over $300,000, a paltry sum vis-à-vis the costs of federal campaigns by that time. The irrelevance of independent expenditures in 1978, however, was an ephemeral occurrence. By 1980, independent spending would become a highly salient campaign activity. Its advent was hastened by the growth of conservative interest groups, and, particularly, the National Conservative Political Action Committee.

The National Conservative Political Action Committee (NCPAC)

In 1975, a small coterie of conservative activists, Terry Dolan, Charles Black, and Roger Stone, founded NCPAC. By 1980, their independent expenditure campaign began, in earnest. Targeting six liberal Democratic senators,[2] NCPAC spent $1.2 million in independent expenditures, a sum that constituted more than half of all such expenditures during the 1980 election cycle in congressional races. The overwhelming majority of that money was spent *against* those incumbents, rather than *for* their opponents. Consequently, the notion of independent spending became synonymous with negative campaigning, embodying the worst fears of those cynical of politics. Given the way NCPAC characterized its activities, this tag was not without merit. Perhaps the most infamous description of NCPAC's activities, specifically, and independent expenditures more generally was uttered by Dolan. "A group like ours," he said, "can lie through its teeth, and the candidate it helps stays clean." (Engstrom and Kenny 2002:887)

NCPAC began its 1980 campaign activities as early as June 1979 for certain of its targeted races (Alexander 1983). Dolan believed that its success hinged upon not merely articulating a point-by-point refutation of liberal policy positions, presumably held by each of the targeted Democratic incumbents, but more importantly on creating a new image of the incumbent within voters' minds. This could not be achieved, Dolan believed, "unless you begin early and repeat the message often enough." (Alexander 1983) Among the results of the Dolan vision were television advertisements in South Dakota depicting George McGovern as someone who was "touring Cuba with Fidel Castro while the energy crisis was brewing." While McGovern was well known by 1980 as a liberal champion, having been his party's nominee for

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[2] Senators Birch Bayh of Indiana, Frank Church of Idaho, John Culver of Iowa, George McGovern of South Dakota, Alan Cranston of California, and Thomas Eagleton of Missouri

president in 1972, NCPAC, by invoking Castro, succeeded in portraying the South Dakota Democrat as so out of step with mainstream American values, and certainly more conservative South Dakotan sensibilities, that voters could no longer bear the thought of their interests being represented by such an ‘extremist,’ despite his high-profile and seniority.

The results of the 1980 elections solidified NCPAC’s status as a formidable foe to the elected officials it targeted. Four of the six Democratic senators NCPAC targeted lost,[3] and NCPAC, deservedly or not, received much of the credit for these outcomes. Emboldened by its success in 1980, NCPAC ramped up its efforts for the 1982 mid-term elections, releasing a list of targeted senators[4] early in the election cycle. Despite a better-funded independent expenditure campaign, NCPAC could not repeat the success it enjoyed in 1980. Only one senator targeted by NCPAC was defeated in 1982. In fact, NCPAC’s involvement in a race sometimes became an albatross around the neck of the candidate whom the group was trying to help, since by 1982 NCPAC’s reputation of cutthroat campaign tactics preceded it in the states in which it mounted independent expenditure campaigns. Moreover, a glance at the preliminary list of targeted races suggests a certain measure of hubris felt during the heady days following the 1980 election successes. Among the targeted races were those in Massachusetts, New York, and Maryland—all reliably Democratic states. Additionally, Democratic groups, now wise to the potential of independent expenditures, launched several, although more modest, independent spending campaigns. For instance, groups such as Democrats for the ‘80s and the Progressive Political Action Committee were able to partially blunt the effects of NCPAC’s attacks on Paul Sarbanes in Maryland.

[3] Only Cranston and Eagleton survived.
[4] The initial list included Democratic Senators Edward Kennedy of Massachusetts, Paul Sarbanes of Maryland, Howard Metzenbaum of Ohio, Donald Riegle of Michigan, Henry Jackson of Washington, Daniel Patrick Moynihan of New York, and Republican Senator Lowell Weicker of Connecticut.

The campaign against Paul Sarbanes in Maryland embodied the difficulties NCPAC faced in 1982. NCPAC budgeted over a half a million dollars to the effort to oust Sarbanes. Republican Congresswoman Marjorie Holt was identified by NCPAC polling as the best candidate to take on Sarbanes. NCPAC's heavy presence in Maryland, however, may have had the ironic effect of deterring Holt from mounting a campaign. A Holt aide even suggested that NCPAC's advertising campaign against Sarbanes, which began in March 1981, twenty months before the 1982 general election, may have helped Sarbanes more than Holt. (Alexander 1983) NCPAC was indeed a victim of its own success. Liberal political action committees, by now painfully aware of NCPAC's tactics and potential effectiveness, rallied to the defense of Sarbanes. Sarbanes was even able to use NCPAC's involvement as a fundraising tool, raising $12,000 at a one anti-NCPAC event in September of 1982. (Latus 1984)

NCPAC's successes in 1980, and subsequent failures in 1982, leave us with a mixed portrait of the utility of independent expenditures. Even a cursory glance at Dolan et al.'s track record in 1980 suggests that well funded and, perhaps as important, well selected independent spending campaigns can be potent political weapons. On the other hand, the 1982 mid-term election results highlight the dangers of overreaching with independent expenditures. Pointed, some might argue over the top, advertisements linking George McGovern to Fidel Castro might play well in South Dakota, but can clearly backfire if used in Maryland or Massachusetts. In the years to come, independent spending campaigns would take on new contours. Democratic-leaning groups would gain prominence, the tenor of independent spending campaigns would become less shrill and strident, and, eventually, political parties would take the lead in spearheading these efforts.

While NCPAC's standing as a potent political force was momentary, the pervasiveness of independent expenditures was not. Interest groups across the ideological spectrum as well as political parties have seized upon this relatively little known campaign spending mechanism. Observers have noted that PACs generally use independent expenditures for one or more of the following reasons.[5] They are:

1. The PAC has already given the maximum to a campaign, but wants to provide additional financial support. This typically characterizes the behavior of a large PAC, with a sizeable treasury.
2. The PAC has money, but the candidate it wants to support does not.
3. A national party committee will often launch independent spending campaigns if it believes its expertise is greater than that of a candidate, typically a non-incumbent.
4. A PAC wants to send a specific, direct message to voters.
5. The PAC wants to elevate its stature with a highly visible independent spending campaign.
6. A candidate with a well-known record is in a race, typically an open seat, before the opposing party has a determined a nominee.

In this vein, the research to follow will build on existing theory concerning rational political action by focusing on what impels independent spending, noting specific electoral conditions that make spending more or less likely, and empirically test the propositions offered in that theory. Among the factors to be examined is whether the competitiveness of a particular race changes the calculus of certain groups more than other groups when deciding whether or not to use independent expenditures. I will also examine to what extent incumbent ideology affects

[5] From "Independent Expenditures and Issue Advocacy": Campaigns & Elections June 1998, vol. 19, issue 6, p. 26.

independent spending. In sum, this paper seeks to fill a void in political science scholarship. Many areas of congressional campaigns and campaign finance have been exhaustively researched; independent expenditures could hardly be classified as one of those areas. What's more, much of the research is, to a certain extent, anachronistic. Political party committees only recently have been granted legal sanction to use independent expenditures. Prior to 1996, parties could not engage in independent expenditure campaigns at all. However, in 1996, the Supreme Court, in *Colorado Republican Federal Campaign Committee v. Federal Election Commission*, ruled that parties could use hard money for independent expenditure campaigns in congressional races. It was not until the 2004 presidential election that the FEC finally allowed national party committees to make independent expenditures in presidential campaigns. This development has dramatically changed the landscape for independent spending campaigns, and raises many new empirical questions.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Despite a history that spans nearly three decades, independent expenditures have received scant attention from political scientists. For this examination, I will first offer a review of research on money and U.S. House elections. Then, I'll address the literature that does exist on independent expenditures.

Money and U.S. House Elections

A principle feature of the analysis to follow is illuminating aspects of the role of interest groups in campaigns, specifically in congressional elections. Researchers have examined facets of this role. Eismeir and Pollock (1986) examined the behavior of PACs in congressional campaigns and what factors into the strategic choices PACs make. The many relatively small corporate PACs, they find, behaved, by and large, according to conventional wisdom—overwhelmingly supporting Republican candidates, though sometimes focusing on incumbents, and other times focusing on challengers. Similarly, labor PACs overwhelmingly supported Democrats, though they did not appear to be as adaptable as corporate PACs in their strategies in light of changing electoral factors. Another study argued that PACs would often launch independent spending campaigns simply out of a desire to impede an unfavorable incumbent's reelection chances, even if the PAC did not believe an election victory was likely (Cohen 1986).

Other research has explored whether majority party status impacts corporate and labor PAC contributions. Rudolph (1999), in an examination of House elections, finds contrasting results for the two groups. Corporate PACs, he finds, seem to favor the party that holds majority status in the House. Alternatively, labor PACs do not seem to alter their behavior depending based upon whether or not a party controls the House. Intuitively, this would seem to be consistent with conventional wisdom. While corporate PACs tend to lean Republican, we would expect them to be more access-seeking than labor PACs, which tend to be more fiercely loyal to their partisan leanings, regardless of who is in power.

Although not an examination of the use of money in congressional elections, Hoddie and Routh (2004) look at the factors that drive the allocation decisions of another important campaign resource—a sitting president's time. They find that presidential popularity and the quantity of competitive races occurring that year in a state are the most influential factors when a president and his staff make tactical decisions relating to presidential visits.

While independent expenditures have, for the most part, lived a life of obscurity within the world of political science scholarship, the more general subject of congressional campaign spending has engendered considerable research. Jacobson (1980), in one of the earliest and foremost studies of the role money played in congressional races, found that challenger spending exerted a much greater influence on election outcomes than did incumbent spending. Moreover, incumbent spending often had a counterintuitive influence on incumbent vote share. Jacobson argued that incumbent spending is often reactive, increasing with the strength of the challenge faced. Additional research has further illuminated the role of spending in congressional elections and its effects (Jacobson 1990; Kenny and McBurnett 1994).

Among the many reform measures proposed to curb the seemingly perpetual and uncontrollable rise in campaign spending have been efforts to cap the amount which candidates spend. One study examined what impact such spending limits would have on Senate campaigns (Abramowitz 1989). This study raises the interesting question of what impact spending caps would have on independent expenditures. Abramowitz argues that Republicans, who at that time were the prime beneficiaries of independent spending campaigns, might be helped in the long run by candidate spending restrictions as a result of their skill at employing alternative spending mechanisms.

Between 1976, the year of the *Buckley* ruling, and 2002, campaign finance law remained fairly static. While court decisions occasionally tweaked the edges of FECA, the fundamental structure of contribution limits, soft money, and other hallmarks of the federal campaign finance system were not altered. This all changed in 2002 when Congress, after years of debate, passed and President George W. Bush signed into law the Bipartisan Campaign Reform Act (BCRA).[6] The most salient provision of this new law was a prohibition on national parties raising or spending soft money. BCRA also included new restrictions on the ability of parties to launch independent spending campaigns. Prior to BCRA, national party committees[7] could spend both coordinated expenditures and independent expenditures on behalf of a candidate. Many campaign reformers felt that there was an inherent flaw in a system that allowed a party committee to spend certain funds in consultation with a candidate, which amount to coordinated expenditures, and separate funds on behalf of the same candidate, but independent of him or her. Consequently, BCRA required that party committees could choose to spend either coordinated expenditures on behalf of a federal candidate or independent expenditures on behalf of that candidate, but could no longer do both.

On balance, BCRA does very little to restrict the use of independent expenditures. Though their use has drawn the ire of many who have championed campaign finance reform, the Supreme Court seems unwilling to open the door to sweeping restrictions. And, given the effective end of soft money, independent expenditures, potentially, could become even more

[6] This law is also commonly referred to as McCain-Feingold or Shays-Meehan after its principle sponsors in the Senate and House, respectively.
[7] The national party committees that focus on congressional elections are: the Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee, the National Republican Senatorial Committee, the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee and the National Republican Congressional Committee

prevalent. They now stand as one of the few mechanisms by which a wealthy donor can spend unlimited sums of money to influence an election. Although someone who was so inclined to do so would have to, by law, fund such an effort totally independent of a campaign he or she was hoping to aid, it is not inconceivable that corporations and wealthy individuals may elect to launch independent spending campaigns in lieu of now illegal exorbitant soft money contributions. Moreover, although independent expenditures can only be made with hard money, it seems likely that political party committees will ramp up their independent spending activities in light of the prohibition of "issue advocacy" advertisements, which had been funded by soft money.

In light of the role that negative campaigning will play in portions of this examination, some commentary regarding what past research has found on this matter is warranted. Given the often murky nature of what constitutes a negative campaign tactic, it is instructive to review how past researchers have addressed this issue. Lau and Pomper (2002), in an examination of the effectiveness of going negative in U.S. Senate campaigns defined negative versus positive campaigning as the following: "Negative campaigning is talking about the opponent—his or her programs, accomplishments, qualifications, associates, and so on—with the focus, usually on the defects of these attributes. Positive campaigning is just the opposite: talking about one's own accomplishments, qualifications, programs, and so forth." (p.4) Skaperdas and Grofman (1995) in their study of negative campaigning adapt a definition used previously by Surlin and Gordon (1977) arguing that the term refers to a campaign tactic that "attacks the other candidate personally, the issues for which the other candidate stands, or the party of the other candidate."

Both of these definitions allow for considerable discretion. If one were to take an expansive view of either of these definitions, one could argue that any statement by a candidate critical of his or her opponent's views on the environment or taxes, for instance, could be construed as negative campaigning. However, it is a wholly different brand of negativism to disagree with someone's vote on a tax cut as opposed to attacking someone's integrity or personal life.

In the examination to follow, independent expenditures that target candidates are explored. Consequently, a brief review of what researchers have found regarding the effectiveness of negative campaigning seems appropriate. In their earlier referenced study, Lau and Pomper (2002) in their examination of negative campaigning in U.S. Senate elections found mixed results. Interestingly, they find that incumbents hurt themselves by going negative, while challengers tend to benefit from it, but still are typically unable to win unless they not only go negative but also outspend their incumbent opponent. Damore (2002), in a study of particular relevance to this research, looks at what factors impel a campaign to go negative, though he focuses only on presidential candidates. He finds that the decision to go negative is heavily influenced by poll standing. In short, a candidate who is trailing has little to lose by going negative, or, at the very least, the potential benefits outweigh the costs. Moreover, Damore finds that the decision to go negative is also influenced by proximity to the election. Early on, he finds candidates attempt to establish their own credibility and bona fides as presidential material. But, as the election nears, candidates can do little to buttress their own image with positive messages and so endeavor to undermine their opponent's support.

Lau, Sigelman, Heldman, and Babbit (1999) in a meta-analysis of research on negative political advertisements find little evidence to support the notion that negative advertisements are effective. They do emphasize, though, the disconnect between this finding and conventional wisdom. They point out that, "…both practitioners of negative advertising and its harshest critics believe that it 'works.'" (p. 852)

The decision for a presidential candidate to go negative and the decision for an interest to group to mount a negative independent spending campaign against a congressional candidate are undoubtedly two different calculations. First, presidential candidates have much more to lose if the decision goes awry. Potentially, if a presidential candidate runs a negative advertisement that is very poorly received, the consequences are borne directly by the candidate. This is, of course, also true for a candidate for Congress. Alternatively, if an interest group mounts an ill-advised negative independent spending campaign against a congressional candidate, any negative repercussions are more diffused and affect the group only in the sense that a candidate favorable to their cause is jeopardized. Thus, while acknowledging that groups do not haphazardly make decisions regarding advertisements bearing the group's name, we might expect that an interest group would be more willing to gamble on a campaign message that doesn't work.

Independent Expenditures

In fact, it was not until 2002 that the first empirical examination of independent expenditures was undertaken. Engstrom and Kenny (2002) examined the impact of independent expenditures on Senate elections, using individual-level survey data. They find that independent expenditures can have a statistically significant effect on vote choice, particularly when they are modeled as endogenous predictors. Additionally, they discerned that the more negative an independent spending campaign was, the greater the influence it had on vote choice. For instance, the strident campaigns of the mid-1990s were more effective than the comparably positive campaigns of the late 1980s and early 1990s. Interestingly, their findings suggest that PACs and other groups that used independent expenditures seemed to refine the practice in each election cycle. While NCPAC demonstrated considerable success in 1980, the effectiveness of independent expenditures was questionable in the elections to follow. The value of independent expenditures by the mid-1990s, however, is plainly corroborated by Engstrom's and Kenny's findings. This study, while only focusing on Senate campaigns, is an important step in the scholarly research on independent expenditures.

Other scholars have traced the relatively brief history of independent expenditures, searching for any noticeable patterns in their use. Sorauf (1988) found three discernible trends in the early years of independent expenditures. First, independent expenditure campaigns focused primarily on the Senate; he reasoned that this was due to the higher visibility and higher stakes of Senate races. Second, he found that, at least during the first ten years of independent spending, Republicans were the prime beneficiaries. Finally, he detected a shift in the tenor of campaigns funded by independent expenditures—from negative to positive. This is likely a byproduct of the fallout experienced by NCPAC following its disastrous 1982 Senate losses.

Given NCPAC's prominent role in thrusting independent expenditures to the forefront of campaign finance, scholars have focused on their role, as well as that of other conservative interest groups, many of whom, collectively, dominated independent spending campaigns in the early 1980s. Besides recounting the relatively brief history of NCPAC, Sabato (1984) touches on why liberal groups at the time demonstrated considerable reticence with respect to launching independent spending campaigns. He asserts that, first, liberal groups had to deal with an organizational and strategic learning curve vis-à-vis conservative groups, many of which had longer histories. This is to say nothing of the often measurably larger budgets enjoyed by conservative groups. Second, many liberal PAC leaders were less willing to give their imprimatur to independent expenditures, preferring more tried and true campaign methods given these groups often limited means. Finally, Sabato contends, liberal groups were more inclined than conservative groups, at least in the early days, to find independent expenditures crass and worthy of only those willing to engage in a more craven form of politics.

Another early analysis of independent expenditures compared spending patterns in Senate races vis-à-vis House races (Malbin 1980). Among other findings, it was discovered that while the vast majority of independent spending on Senate campaigns was negative in tenor, spending for House candidates was much more positive. Perhaps owing to the success of NCPAC in pillorying Senate Democrats in 1980, independent expenditures two years later in House campaigns hewed closer to the Terry Dolan slash and burn school of thought. Moreover, the members who were targeted constituted a veritable all-star list of House Democrats. Among them: legendary House Speaker Tip O'Neill, future House Speaker Jim Wright, and the powerful Ways and Means Chairman Dan Rostenkowski. Of course, all of these members would live to fight another day, but these findings further illuminate the "shoot for the moon" strategy employed by those who carried out independent spending campaigns in their incipient years.

Owing to the ambivalence many observers felt toward independent expenditures in their early years, it should be expected that some scholars would examine this burgeoning campaign finance phenomenon from a normative perspective. Sabato (1989), in his assessment of how elections are financed, concludes that despite some rather odious elements attendant to independent expenditures, the fundamental right of a group or individual to spend freely to support a candidate is indeed enshrined in the First Amendment. However, he believes, that does not mean that certain measured steps cannot be taken to ensure that election campaigns are not taken hostage by the profligate spending habits of unaccountable special interest groups. For instance, Sabato proposes that individuals who are only able to give relatively small contributions to candidates should be given incentives to do so through tax credits. Moreover, he proposes that political parties should be strengthened, and that interest groups that undertake independent spending campaigns should be compelled to disclose additional information, such as direct-mail and fundraising costs. Several reform measures have been introduced in Congress over the years, including a proposal to give free broadcast time to candidates who are targeted by independent spending campaigns,[8] and to compel groups that use independent expenditures for advertisements to display the name of their PAC or organization continually throughout the duration of the ad (Nelson 1990).

Scholars have also examined whether challengers or incumbents are the prime beneficiaries of independent expenditures. One study (Nelson 1990) found that while spending by non-connected PACs on behalf of challengers far exceeded that for incumbents in 1978 and 1980, this gap leveled off by the early 1980s, and by the mid- to late-1980s independent spending on behalf of incumbents dwarfed that of challengers.

Another study questioned the extent to which PACs, historically the main beneficiaries of independent spending campaigns, are held accountable and by whom (Sorauf 1984). Disclosure of PAC activities is one mechanism by which PACs can be held accountable, but Sorauf argues that this tool is only effective in curtailing the most nefarious of political activities. Greater involvement in PAC decision-making by donors is also problematic, he contends, due to the limited access generally afforded to contributors both by federal statute and PAC rules, and by the simple fact that donors generally are drawn to the notion that they can contribute to the political process with little actual involvement. Given these and other limitations on PAC accountability, Sorauf examines what factors are most propitious for ensuring some semblance of PAC responsibility to the electorate it seeks to influence. On balance, he finds that

[8] S. 137, sponsored by Senator David Boren during the 101st Congress

accountability is at its highest levels when PACs with parent organizations make direct contributions to candidates or their intermediaries. Alternatively, accountability is at its lowest levels with PACs without a parent organization engage in independent expenditures campaigns, such as NCPAC.

In crafting any research design, it is imperative that hypotheses and arguments be underpinned by solid theory. Using the best, but limited, research available on independent expenditures, congressional campaigns, and other areas of political science research I will be testing hypotheses that derive from established theory, explained and expanded in the section to follow.

CHAPTER 3

THEORY AND HYPOTHESES

Theory

The singular focus of political parties upon winning elections is a concept that has long underpinned political science theory. Anthony Downs, in his seminal work *An Economic Theory of Democracy* (1957, p. 28), stated: "Parties formulate policies in order to win elections, rather than win elections in order to formulate policies." A rational, economic approach to political decision-making has inspired countless works (Riker 1962; Glazer and Grofman 1989; Conn, Meltz, and Press 1973)—all interpretations of and expansions on this same unifying notion of political actors, specifically parties, behaving rationally. This approach, Downs argued, leads to a single-minded focus on the part of political parties, with the only goal being to obtain and then hold onto power, not to bring to pass an ideological vision. In fact, Downs adds, "fostering ambiguity is the rational course for each party in a two-party system." (p. 141)

This study expands upon theory advanced by Downs and others, building on their perspective that parties and groups behave rationally when making political decisions, specifically contending that this approach prevails, as well, when decisions are made regarding the use of independent expenditures. Parties, I argue, seek electoral gains, primarily. In fact, many scholars have noted the tendency of political parties to focus nearly exclusively on maximizing their congressional representation when deciding whether to allocate resources to a particular race (Damore & Hansford 1999; Cantor & Herrnson 1997; Dwyre 1994). Independent expenditures offer an additional mechanism by which parties can steer financial resources towards favored candidates. Because, by law, independent expenditures cannot in any way be coordinated with a candidate's campaign, parties are able to maintain complete control of their message, crafting it in such a way that provides the greatest chance for electoral success.

Downsian theory, as expressed in *An Economic Theory of Democracy*, can also help us understand the perspective brought to bear on independent expenditures by interest groups—namely single issue interest groups—too. Downs contends that rational men may still vote for a hopeless party if either: a) they are future oriented and the party which they typically support has only recently become politically unviable, or b) they hope to influence another party's platform by so doing. I argue this same perspective drives, in part, the approach employed by ideological interest groups and labor unions when using independent expenditures, particularly the latter notion that influencing a party's platform is a reason why one may vote for a hopeless party and do so rationally. Given that there are no caps on what groups can spend independently, independent expenditures provide an effective mechanism for interest groups to promote their message and themselves through support of a candidate during a period of relatively high public political awareness. In so doing, these groups can, or at least they believe they can, help shape the agenda of the two major political parties.

Additionally, interest groups, I believe, spend independently, at least in part, in order to later gain access with elected officials, which presumably allow groups to influence policy. Like parties, interest groups also use independent expenditures in an effort to create a governing majority in Congress that they believe would generally champion their agenda. Consequently, I expect that race competitiveness will also, in part, drive interest group spending. However, unlike with party spending, I contend that interest group spending is more nuanced, influenced by more than just a single-minded focus on winning elections, as Downs suggests is the approach taken by political parties.

For this study, I will look at one of the factors that may affect interest group spending: incumbent ideology. I argue that interest groups use independent expenditures in order to support or oppose ideologically extreme incumbents. It should be emphasized, though, that this tendency would most likely only apply to independent spending by ideological or single-issue interest groups, not industry consortiums, whose concerns are rooted more in economic interests, not necessarily self or even cause promotion.

A race featuring an ideologically extreme incumbent may be an attractive target for single-issue interest groups because it is, potentially, a more salient election, offering these groups a better opportunity to promote themselves. This, I argue, is a future-oriented approach to political behavior, a rational political action—not unlike the act of voting for a candidate who has no realistic chance of winning, a future-oriented rational political act highlighted by Downs. Moreover, a described earlier, we have seen evidence of a propensity of a non-party aligned actor, NCPAC, to seemingly target incumbents who were ideologically extreme. This paper will look at this factor, incumbent ideology, specifically to examine whether ideological extremeness, either liberal or conservative, impels higher levels of spending from interest groups.

To better understand these phenomena, let us distill the many elections encompassed in this study into two illustrative examples. From the 2004 election cycle, we find a race that illustrates the near singular focus of political parties on race competitiveness. The Indiana 9th District race between Democratic incumbent Baron Hill and Republican challenger Mike Sodrel proved to be as close as prognosticators envisioned, with Hill narrowly prevailing by 1,425 votes. As expected, both political parties invested heavily in this race, spending more than $2.7 million combined. Despite the hotly contested nature of this campaign, the interest groups included in this study spent a paltry $6,245 between both candidates, all of that from pro-life groups. The incumbent Hill was among the more conservative members of the Democratic caucus—anecdotal support for the notion that the lack of ideological extremity affects the propensity of interest groups to use independent expenditures, but not political parties.

Two election cycles earlier, in 2000, we find an example where incumbent ideology may be driving independent spending, despite pre-election prognostications by *Congressional Quarterly*. Incumbent Congressman Pat Toomey, of Pennsylvania, rated as the most conservative member of the Pennsylvania House delegation. In fact, Toomey was among the more conservative members of the entire Republican House caucus. Consequently, his ideological extremity would seem to be an attractive target for single-issue groups. And, in fact, while his candidacy did not engender independent spending across a wide swath of interest groups, it did impel one lobbying interest, pro-gun control groups, to mount a rather significant independent spending campaign. In total, pro-gun control groups spent $152,102 against the Toomey candidacy, nearly 50% of their total independent expenditures in the 2000 election cycle. What's more, *Congressional Quarterly* rated the campaign as a strong Republican seat. The race proved to be closer than expected—at least closer than the *Congressional Quarterly* ranking would suggest—with Democratic challenger Edward O'Brien receiving 47% of the vote to Toomey's 53%. Perhaps this is due, in part, to the injection of independent spending into the campaign by groups supporting gun control, and opposing Toomey, though this is purely speculative. Nevertheless, this campaign illuminates the idea advanced earlier: interest groups will spend independently as result of incumbent ideological extremeness, sometimes in spite of the expected closeness of the election.

The above perspective on independent expenditures—much of it inspired by existing theory on rational political action—coupled with the aforementioned observations from *Campaigns and Elections* on independent spending, give rise to the hypotheses discussed below.

Hypotheses

Owing to the lack of attention given to independent expenditures by political scientists over the years, several hypotheses will be tested with the hope of painting a fuller picture of this important campaign finance tool and of advancing the theoretical arguments just proposed. As noted earlier, campaign finance law pertinent to independent expenditures has evolved in recent years. Long the purview of special interest groups, party committees are now free to initiate independent spending campaigns. This phenomenon, in many ways, seems to be changing the face of independent expenditures, elevating them to nearly equal status with direct spending by candidates.

First, I will examine whether increased race competitiveness impels greater levels of negative independent spending. What's more, I will examine whether extreme incumbent ideology, generally, impels greater levels of overall independent spending. Then, I will examine whether parties, specifically, lend particular weight to this factor when making decisions on launching independent expenditure campaigns. Finally, I will inject another potential determinant of independent spending levels—incumbent ideology—into the examination of group behavior, testing the proposition that interest groups consider this factor when using independent expenditures.

In light of the fluid nature of campaign finance regulations pertaining to independent expenditures in recent years, there exists a vast swath of uncharted territory for political science research. Fortunately, data pertaining to independent expenditures must be meticulously documented. Every time any entity, irrespective of whether that entity is an individual, PAC, or political party committee, makes an independent expenditure it must file a report with the FEC, listing the candidate the expenditure is meant to support or oppose and whether or not the expenditure is in support or opposition to that candidate

This paper will analyze independent expenditures made in House campaigns beginning in 1992 and through 2004. As mentioned earlier, given the relative lack of previous research on independent expenditures, this is an area of campaign finance rich with possibility for examination. Several phenomena will be examined, including the role political party committees now play with respect to independent spending campaigns, the spending patterns used by different types of political action committees, and whether there are contrasting spending habits of parties and interest groups. Because of the central focus that incumbent ideology will play in this examination, open seat races will be excluded. Moreover, only contested races will be examined.

*Hypothesis A(1)***:**

The more increasingly competitive a House race featuring an incumbent is, the greater the amount of negative independent spending there will be.

I contend that increased competition impels all groups, both parties and single issue groups, to employ tactics similar to those used by NCPAC, as described earlier. While the subtleties in tone will vary depending on the group, I expect that the trend will be that groups take a much more negative tack in more competitive elections.

Hypothesis A (2):

The more ideologically extreme a House incumbent is, the more overall independent spending, both positive and negative, there will be.

Seemingly, an incumbent member of Congress whose voting record resides at either of the extreme points on the ideological spectrum should inspire more intense loyalty, or bitter opposition, from the groups that frequently engage in independent spending. Thus, irrespective of that incumbent's vulnerability, I expect that simply by virtue of making him or herself a pariah or hero of the left or right, as the case may be, ideological extremity should engender higher levels of independent spending.

*Hypothesis B***:**

The more competitive a House race featuring an incumbent is, the more national party committees will spend independently in that race.

This hypothesis will test the notion outlined earlier that national party committees are primarily outcome-oriented actors when making decisions regarding campaign spending, in line with theory advanced by Downs and others.

*Hypothesis C***:**

The more ideologically extreme a House incumbent is, the more single-issue groups will spend independently in that that race.

It is argued that single issue groups, like political parties, will consider the competitiveness of a race when making decisions relating to how much to spend. However, unlike parties, it is argued that an incumbent's ideology will also affect the amount spent by single issue groups. What's more, I argue these interest groups will spend more in races featuring more ideologically extreme incumbents.

CHAPTER 4

DATA & METHODS

In this section, I will first delineate the variables that will be incorporated in the research design before explaining the actual research design used to test the hypotheses listed in the previous chapter.

Data

The data for this examination will be extensively taken from campaign finance disclosures. Of obvious importance to this study will be comprehensive information on all independent expenditures for or against congressional incumbents and challengers during the time period examined. As mentioned earlier, independent expenditures must, by law, be thoroughly documented, indicating whom the expenditure is meant to support or oppose, and whether the expenditure is for or against that candidate. What's more, these data are compiled by and released to the public by the Federal Election Commission. The web site "Political Money Line" compiled and presented these data, which is where the data for this study were taken. These expenditures constitute much of the data used for this examination. The unit of analysis for this study will be the race itself, not the candidates. Every House race from 1992 through 2004 featuring an incumbent running for reelection—and facing a challenger—will be included in the study, though for models which examine spending by political parties, some election cycles will not be relevant, given that campaign finance law during certain election cycles renders them useless.

Independent Variables

Several independent variables will be included in the model. Some will be of primary interest, while others will serve as controls.

Main Independent Variables

1. Race competitiveness
2. Ideology of the incumbent

As most students of congressional politics know, most congressional elections are lightly contested, if at all. However, each election cycle produces a number of very competitive Senate and House elections. The beltway publication *Congressional Quarterly* assesses each race shortly before each election and categorizes races in the following ways: Safe Democratic, Democratic Favored, Leans Democratic, No Clear Favorite, Leans Republican, Republican Favored, and Safe Republican. In 1998, *National Journal* race ratings were used due to the unavailability of ratings from *Congressional Quarterly*. The scheme used by *National Journal* is nearly indistinguishable and should serve as an adequate substitute. For purposes of this study, I will be dropping the partisan direction for each of the rankings, classifying seats, instead, as simply Safe, Favored, Leans, or Tossup. What's more, I will code these rankings so that Safe seats are -3, Favored are -2, Leans are -1 and Tossups are 0. Because Race Competitiveness functions as the main independent variable for much of this study, it was coded so that its expected direction is positively related to the dependent variable.

An incumbent's ideology is also routinely assessed by a number of groups. Researchers have crafted a useful measure known as W-Nominate scores, which range from -1 for most conservative to +1 for most liberal. Because this study examines whether incumbent ideological extremeness, regardless of direction, spurs independent spending, the absolute values of these figures will be used.

Control Variables

1. Whether an incumbent is a member of the House or Senate leadership or the chair of a committee. I will call this an "Elite Incumbent" variable.[9]
    - This control will be included to account for an expected inclination by interest groups to support or target highly visible, powerful members. Previous research suggests a link between PAC contributions and committee assignments. (Romer and Snyder 1994) By extension, one should expect the most powerful and influential members of both chambers to be the targets or beneficiaries of disproportionate levels of spending from independent spending groups.
2. Challenger Quality
    - While this will likely be correlated in many instances to the main independent variable, race competitiveness, it is important to account for the strength of a challenger in an Incumbent race, with the expectation being that, on balance, high quality challengers will engender greater levels of independent spending. A simple measure of coding previous officeholders as '1' and all other challengers as '0' will be employed. This is the standard employed by Professor Gary Jacobson.
3. Whether an incumbent is a Democratic incumbent.
    - This will control for the tendency of parties—here, the Democratic Party—to protect their existing office holders. Democratic incumbents (as this case may be) will be coded '1.' All others will be coded as '0.'

[9]Leadership members included are: House Speaker, Majority Leader, Majority Whip, Minority Leader and Minority Whip.

4. A control for each election year, save one.

    - By including a control for each election year, save one, any trends specific to a particular year can be isolated.

Dependent Variable

The dependent variable is independent spending by House race. For instance, when testing for the effect of race competitiveness on Democratic Party spending, the dependent variable for each observation would be the total spending, in raw dollars, that the party spent in a particular race for that election cycle. However, for Hypothesis A(1) , which examines the tendency of race competitiveness to influence the level of negativity, a percentage will be used—specifically the percentage of independent spending in a race that was *against* a candidate. In every other hypothesis, though, total spending—either for or against the incumbent or challenger in a race—by the group being analyzed will serve as the dependent variable.

Methods

In order to test the hypotheses listed above, it is, of course, necessary to employ a statistical method that measures the extent to which groups are driven by the factors previously enumerated when spending independently. One way to do this, it would seem, is to measure spending as a percentage—more specifically, calculate the percentage of independent expenditures devoted to a particular race by a particular group vis-à-vis the total amount of independent spending by that group in that election year. However, this approach would result in the observations in an election cycle not being independently distributed, due to the likely occurrence of percentages in one race being affected by the percentages in other races. Again, though, for Hypothesis A(1) a percentage will be used in order to assess the relative negativity of independent expenditures in a race.

Because of the clear and unavoidable concerns present by the use of percentages, a statistical method appropriate for the use of raw dollar amounts as the dependent variable must be employed. One such method, the Generalized Linear Model (GLM), satisfies the potential concerns presented by the data used in this study. Moreover, by using GLM, fundamental Gauss-Markov assumptions that govern the use of more conventional linear models are relaxed, including the requirement that the residuals have a mean zero and have constant variance (Gill 2001).

Using the gamma distribution is advisable when modeling terms that are required to be non-negative, such as dollar amounts. However, the data under analysis in the models to follow were not conducive to this approach. Consequently, a more basic variation of GLM will be employed, using what is known as a Gaussian Identity link function, a method that generates maximum likelihood estimates, much like Ordinary Least Squares regression analysis.

CHAPTER 5

FINDINGS

Descriptive Analysis

In light of the relative lack of empirical analysis of independent expenditures it seems appropriate to provide a basic overview of how independent expenditures have been spent across the election cycles to be covered in this examination. Table 5.1 lists the total amount of independent expenditures during each election cycle from 1992-2004. The expenditures are separated into those spent for and against a candidate. Table 5.2 indicates what percentage of total campaign spending was comprised of independent spending. Total campaign spending in this table is defined as total candidate spending plus total independent expenditures.

Table 5.1: Total Independent Expenditures Per Election Cycle

Year	Total For	Total Against
1992	$2,409,254.00	$562,202.00
1994	$1,463,633.00	$555,129.00
1996	$2,865,794.00	$2,193,858.00
1998	$5,417,767.00	$903,678.00
2000	$9,014,709.00	$2,702,966.00
2002	$6,001,780.00	$712,270.00
2004	$46,329,354.00	$42,795,942.00
1992-2004	$73,502,291.00	$50,426,045.00

Table 5.2: Independent Expenditures as a Percentage of Total Campaign Spending

Year	Total Candidate Spending	Total Independent Expenditures	Total Campaign Spending	Independent Exp. As % of Total
1992	$325,811,306.00	$2,971,456.00	$328,782,762.00	0.9%
1994	$340,247,674.00	$2,018,762.00	$342,266,436.00	0.6%
1996	$418,560,601.00	$5,059,652.00	$423,620,253.00	1.2%
1998	$388,597,947.00	$6,321,445.00	$394,919,392.00	1.6%
2000	$508,183,679.00	$11,717,675.00	$519,901,354.00	2.3%
2002	$525,343,822.00	$6,714,050.00	$532,057,872.00	1.3%
2004	$578,841,800.00	$89,125,296.00	$667,967,096.00	13.3%
1992-2004	$3,085,586,829.00	$123,928,336.00	$3,209,515,165.00	3.9%

One notices a dramatic increase in independent expenditures during the 2004 election cycle. In fact, 63% of all independent expenditures over these seven election cycles occurred in 2004. This can be explained by the significant emphasis the national party committees placed on using independent spending during this campaign. These committees did not make independent expenditures in the earlier election cycles covered in this study due to legal restrictions against doing so, as described earlier in this paper. However, national party committees[10] were authorized to spend independently in 2000 and 2002, but appear not to have done so in any pronounced fashion. Table 5.3 documents national party committee spending in recent election cycles.

[10] Here again, the national party committees in question are: the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee (DCCC) and the National Republican Congressional Committee (NRCC).

Table 5.3: Total Independent Spending by Parties in House Races

Year	Total Democratic Spending	Total Republican Spending	Total Party Spending
2000	$1,831,115.00	$548,800.00	$2,379,915.00
2002	$335,628.00	$1,604,427.00	$1,940,055.00
2004	$35,374,521.00	$46,848,913.00	$82,223,434.00
2000-2004	$37,541,264.00	$49,002,140.00	$86,543,404.00

It stands to reason that the recently enacted Bipartisan Campaign Reform Act, described earlier, provided much of the impetus for the sudden affinity by the parties for independent expenditures. Without the powerful campaign finance tool of soft money, parties were restrained in their ability to spend vast sums of money on behalf of congressional candidates. Independent spending, though, seems to be one of the alternatives that parties have employed as evidenced by the more than $82 million they spent on behalf of and against House candidates in 2004. One could expect, barring any unforeseen changes in campaign finance law pertaining to both independent spending and soft money that independent expenditures by national party committees will rise in the years ahead and, consequently, independent spending will constitute a larger portion of overall campaign spending.

Has independent spending grown more or less negative in recent years? Table 5.4 below suggests that there has not been an overarching trend with respect to the tone of independent spending, although the most negative election cycle appears to be the most recent. 2004 was also the cycle that featured, by far, the most spending by national party committees. This suggests, potentially, a predilection for negative spending by political parties.

Table 5.4: Tenor of Independent Spending

Year	Negative Spending As % of Total
1992	18.9
1994	27.5
1996	43.4
1998	14.3
2000	23.1
2002	10.6
2004	48.0

Much of the multivariate analysis that follows will study many, although not all, groups that used independent expenditures in House elections from 1992-2004. The table below shows the total amount of independent expenditures by the groups included in this study. The combined total from these groups constitutes 80.79% of the total independent expenditures in House elections from 1992-2004. For Hypotheses A(1) and A(2), however, all groups that used independent expenditures will be included.

Table 5.5: Distribution of Independent Expenditures in U.S. House Elections, 1992-2004

Group	Total Independent Expenditures
Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee	$37,541,264
National Republican Congressional Committee	$49,002,140
Pro-Choice Groups (Spending FOR)	$1,249,713
Pro-Life Groups (Spending FOR)	$3,646,582
Pro-Gun Control Groups (Spending FOR)	$116,003
Anti-Gun Control Groups (Spending FOR)	$4,027,482
Environmental Protection Groups (Spending FOR)	$956,553
Labor Unions (Spending FOR)	$3,574,274
Other Groups	$23,801,881
Total Independent Expenditures	$123,915,892

Multivariate Findings

Hypothesis A(1)

Hypothesis A(1) states that increased competitiveness in a race increases negative independent spending. Again, the period examined is 1992-2004, and the dependent variable is the percentage of independent spending in a race that is against a candidate.

Table 5.6**:** Percentage of Negative Spending, 1992-2004

	Coefficient	Standard Error
Race Competitiveness	.0758**	.0069
Ideology	-.0076	.0403
Elite Incumbent	.1000**	.0266
Challenger Quality	.0116	.0147
Democratic Incumbent	-.0101	.0126
1992 Election	-.0746**	.0229
1994 Election	-.0294	.0223
1996 Election	-.0080	.0217
1998 Election	-.0490*	.0244
2000 Election	-.0048	.0224
2002 Election	-.0475*	.0232
Constant	4540.20	10337.35
N	1242	
Adjusted R^2	.1131	

Notes: Entries are unstandardized GLM coefficients.
*p<.05; **p<.01
Dependent Variable = Percentage of total independent spending in a race that was *against* a candidate

Race Competitiveness, the main independent variable, is highly statistically significant and in the expected direction, suggesting a relationship between race competitiveness and the propensity of all groups to use independent expenditures *against* candidates: the more competitive a race, the greater proportion of negative spending. Incumbent ideological extremity does not rate as statistically significant.

Hypothesis A(2)

Hypothesis A(2) states the more ideologically extreme an incumbent, the higher the amount of total independent spending in that race. This model examines spending from 1992-2004.

Table 5.7**:** Ideology and Independent Expenditures

	Coefficient	Standard Error
Ideology	-54718.19	33569.00
Race Competitiveness	72724.39**	7053.76
Elite Incumbent	-4819.99	23523.32
Challenger Quality	40946.09**	14140.17
Democratic Incumbent	-6960.91	10715.45
1992 Election	-179290.30**	20277.09
1994 Election	-169480.60**	19889.26
1996 Election	-165742.50**	19332.72
1998 Election	-137805.60**	19961.94
2000 Election	-133794.10**	19492.18
2002 Election	-132434.70**	20071.85
Constant	368111.40	29039.09
N	2280	
Pseudo R^2	.0936	

Notes: Entries are unstandardized GLM coefficients.
*p<.05; **p<.01
Dependent Variable = Total independent expenditures for or against both candidates in a race.

Here, the main independent variable, Ideology, does not meet our standard for statistical significance, suggesting that total independent spending in House races is not driven by the incumbent's ideology. However, Race Competitiveness does rate as statistically significant, indicating that, generally speaking, independent spending increases as a race becomes more competitive.

Hypothesis B

Hypothesis B, arguing that increased competitiveness increases the amount a political party will spend independently, will be examined next. As mentioned earlier, the main independent variable, Race Competitiveness, is derived from *Congressional Quarterly*'s biennial election year ratings. Race scores range from -3, for safe Republican, to 3, for safe Democrat.

Given that I am only interested in the extent of competitiveness, not which side may or may not be favored, the absolute value of this score will be used as the race competitiveness variable. Other control variable variables already discussed will also be included in the model.

For this hypothesis, which addresses spending by national party committees, I will only be looking at the 2000, 2002, and 2004 election cycles. As was mentioned earlier, the Supreme Court sanctioned independent spending by national party committees beginning with the 1998 election cycle. However parties chose not to use independent expenditures at all during this election. Including this cycle would certainly influence the results, but in such a way that would seemingly disguise the actual influence of the independent variables. Consequently, this model will only include cycles in which parties made the decision to use independent expenditures.

The first model examines the influence of the aforementioned independent variables on spending by the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee *for* House candidates.

Table 5.8**:** Democratic Party Spending FOR, 2000-2004

	Coefficient	Standard Error
Race Competitiveness	68800.41**	6806.43
Ideology	-24186.51	24248.03
Elite Incumbent	-5799.85	18617.33
Challenger Quality	21464.14	11149.78
Democratic Incumbent	-829.23	7671.04
2002 Election	-46940.73**	9187.06
2004 Election	-38239.10**	9234.88
Constant	241900.70	22917.18
N	1178	
Adjusted R^2	.1199	

Notes: Entries are unstandardized GLM coefficients.
*p<.05; **p<.01
Dependent Variable = Total spending by the Democratic Party *for* a candidate in a race.

As expected, Race Competitiveness is highly statistically significant as a predictor of Democratic spending for a candidate. What this indicates is as the main independent variable increases, which in this case means that the race grows more competitive, the amount of total independent spending by the party in that particular election cycle increases. This is expected. Ideology, also as expected, does not rate as statistically significant, offering initial support for the notion advanced earlier that parties maintain a single-minded focus on winning elections.

Next, independent spending against candidates by the DCCC will be examined. The only change from the previous model will be the dependent variable.

Table 5.9**:** Democratic Spending AGAINST, 2000-2004

	Coefficient	Standard Error
Race Competitiveness	16587.45**	1421.38
Ideology	-5151.62	5063.70
Elite Incumbent	-1205.38	3887.85
Challenger Quality	3177.53	2328.40
Democratic Incumbent	314.96	1601.94
2002 Election	-8290.97**	1918.53
2004 Election	-7442.71**	1928.51
Constant	56122.02	4785.78
N	1178	
Adjusted R^2	.1384	

Notes: Entries are unstandardized GLM coefficients.
*p<.05; **p<.01
Dependent Variable = Total spending by the Democratic Party *against* a candidate in a race.

Not surprisingly, this model yields similar results. Race Competitiveness, as expected, is a statistically significant predictor of negative independent spending by the DCCC. Again, neither the Ideology, the Elite Incumbent, the Challenger Quality, nor the incumbent control variable rate as statistically significant. Thus, the models measuring Democratic party spending support the notion that parties spend almost exclusively to affect the outcomes of close elections.

Now, results for spending by the National Republican Congressional Committee (NRCC) will be analyzed. Again, the model will be set up the same as those examining spending by DCCC. The first model will analyze spending FOR candidates.

Table 5.10**:** GOP Spending FOR, 2000-2004

	Coefficient	Standard Error
Race Competitiveness	26184.02**	4755.12
Ideology	-19192.26	16940.22
Elite Incumbent	-859.82	13006.49
Challenger Quality	13545.13	7789.49
Democratic Incumbent	6718.93	5359.17
2002 Election	-17615.30**	6418.29
2004 Election	-12499.60	6451.70
Constant	87067.41	65453.26
N	1178	
Adjusted R^2	.0416	

Notes: Entries are unstandardized GLM coefficients.
*p<.05; **p<.01
Dependent Variable = Total spending by the Republican Party *for* a candidate in a race.

The results for Republican spending appear to be quite similar to those for Democratic spending. Race Competitiveness, again, meets the rigorous p<.01 level for statistical significance. Also, Ideology—as well as all other variables—fails to meet the conventional standard for statistical significance.

Finally, our examination of spending by the two major parties will conclude with a look at GOP spending against candidates. Table 5.11 presents the results from that analysis.

Table 5.11: GOP Spending AGAINST, 2000-2004

	Coefficient	Standard Error
Race Competitiveness	74331.67**	6686.67
Ideology	-3906.26	23821.39
Elite Incumbent	-11633.89	18289.77
Challenger Quality	21063.74	10953.60
Democratic Incumbent	-469.06	7536.07
2002 Election	-55752.86**	9025.41
2004 Election	-45468.43**	9072.40
Constant	255819.10	22513.96
N	1178	
Adjusted R^2	.1421	

Notes: Entries are unstandardized GLM coefficients.
*p<.05; **p<.01
Dependent Variable = Total spending by the Republican Party *against* a candidate in a race.

Consistent with the results of the previous party models we see that Race Competitiveness is highly statistically significant. The Challenger Quality control variable nears statistical significance, though it fails to reach the accepted standard.

Hypothesis C

Finally, I hypothesize that an incumbent's ideological extremeness will increase the amount that single issue groups spend in incumbent House races. This model will examine independent spending from 1992-2004, the full breadth of the data. The first table will examine spending by pro-choice groups *for* a candidate.

Table 5.12**:** Pro-Choice Spending FOR, 1992-2004

	Coefficient	Standard Error
Ideology	621.53	503.63
Race Competitiveness	538.72**	105.83
Elite Incumbent	1.47	352.92
Challenger Quality	214.88	212.14
Dem. Incumbent	101.46	160.76
1992 Election	-236.34	304.22
1994 Election	-150.39	298.40
1996 Election	-18.19	290.05
1998 Election	490.29	299.49
2000 Election	735.80*	292.44
2002 Election	63.72	301.14
Constant	1165.78	435.67
N	2280	
Adjusted R^2	.0163	

Notes: Entries are unstandardized GLM coefficients.
*p<.05; **p<.01
Dependent Variable = Total spending by Pro-Choice groups *for* a candidate in a race.

This first model examining spending by pro-choice groups FOR candidates looks quite similar to the party models. The Race Competitiveness variable is statistically significant, while the other variables, including Ideology, are not.

Table 5.13 below shows the results for spending by pro-life groups.

Table 5.13**:** Pro-Life Spending FOR, 1992-2004

	Coefficient	Standard Error
Ideology	1013.91**	385.50
Race Competitiveness	1612.99**	81.00
Elite Incumbent	-33.25	270.14
Challenger Quality	333.66*	162.38
Democratic Incumbent	-207.22	123.05
1992 Election	-1.03	232.86
1994 Election	504.77*	228.40
1996 Election	205.46	222.01
1998 Election	505.72*	229.24
2000 Election	106.55	223.84
2002 Election	269.64	230.50
Constant	4564.53	333.48
N	2280	
Adjusted R^2	.1817	

Notes: Entries are unstandardized GLM coefficients.
*p<.05; **p<.01
Dependent Variable = Total spending by Pro-Life groups *for* a candidate in a race.

Here, both Ideology and Race Competitiveness meet our standard for statistical significance at the .01 level, and the coefficients are in the expected directions. Pro-life groups, it would seem, consider both incumbent ideology and race competitiveness when spending independently.

Below, Table 5.14 shows the results for the model examining spending FOR candidates by groups supporting gun rights, such as the National Rifle Association. Race Competitiveness, again, is highly statistically significant. Ideology, again, also rates as statistically significant, though in this model at the .05 level, while race competitiveness measures as statistically significant at the more rigorous .01 level.

Table 5.14**:** Pro-Guns Spending FOR, 1992-2004

	Coefficient	Standard Error
Ideology	2126.22*	866.18
Race Competitiveness	2839.08**	182.01
Elite Incumbent	505.77	606.97
Challenger Quality	-14.63	364.86
Democratic Incumbent	-548.99	276.49
1992 Election	-1330.30	523.21
1994 Election	-840.02	513.20
1996 Election	71.95	498.84
1998 Election	780.21	515.08
2000 Election	1041.63*	502.96
2002 Election	132.61	517.92
Constant	7906.94	749.30
N	2280	
Adjusted R^2	.1163	

Notes: Entries are unstandardized GLM coefficients.
*p<.05; **p<.01
Dependent Variable = Total spending by Pro-Gun Rights groups *for* a candidate in a race.

In a departure from the previous two models, Table 5.15 below, which shows results for a model examining spending FOR candidates by groups supporting more extensive gun control measures, indicates that while Race Competitiveness is statistically significant at the .05 level, Ideology is not.

Table 5.15**:** Pro-Gun Control Spending FOR, 1992-2004

	Coefficient	Standard Error
Ideology	116.24	96.01
Race Competitiveness	49.95*	20.18
Elite Incumbent	-40.96	67.28
Challenger Quality	33.62	40.44
Democratic Incumbent	-31.63	30.65
1992 Election	207.04**	58.00
1994 Election	-3.85	56.89
1996 Election	-12.41	55.30
1998 Election	-1.65	57.10
2000 Election	-5.74	55.75
2002 Election	1.12	57.41
Constant	100.15	83.06
N	2280	
Adjusted R^2	.0108	

Notes: Entries are unstandardized GLM coefficients.
*p<.05; **p<.01
Dependent Variable = Total spending by Pro-Gun Control groups *for* a candidate in a race.

Finally, an examination of spending by pro-environment groups and labor unions is included below. The results for both models are quite similar. Once again, with table 5.16 below, we find that Race Competitiveness is statistically significant, suggesting a singular focus of environmental interest groups when deciding whether to use independent expenditures. Table 5.17 indicates that labor union independent spending is also driven, primarily, by race competitiveness. The Challenger Quality control variable also rates as statistically significant for labor union spending. This finding lends greater weight to the finding that factors other than incumbent ideology—and, in this case, one that often impinges on the competitiveness of a contest—affect labor union spending

Table 5.16**:** Environmental Groups' Spending FOR, 1992-2004

	Coefficient	Standard Error
Ideology	-1040.53	644.59
Race Competitiveness	759.53**	135.45
Elite Incumbent	98.04	451.69
Challenger Quality	-78.53	271.52
Democratic Incumbent	-228.33	205.76
1992 Election	-506.37	389.36
1994 Election	-406.78	381.91
1996 Election	-234.14	371.22
1998 Election	-89.03	383.31
2000 Election	573.16	374.29
2002 Election	661.04	385.42
Constant	2777.32	557.60
N	2280	
Adjusted R^2	.0167	

Notes: Entries are unstandardized GLM coefficients.
*p<.05; **p<.01
Dependent Variable = Total spending by Pro-Environment groups *for* a candidate in a race.

Table 5.17**:** Labor Unions' Spending FOR, 1992-2004

	Coefficient	Standard Error
Ideology	-88.37	1369.54
Race Competitiveness	1896.74**	287.78
Elite Incumbent	311.11	959.70
Challenger Quality	1834.06**	576.89
Democratic Incumbent	111.60	437.17
1992 Election	-1002.90	827.26
1994 Election	-673.19	811.44
1996 Election	-709.10	788.73
1998 Election	2770.14**	814.40
2000 Election	2555.81**	795.24
2002 Election	113.18	818.89
Constant	4894.40	1184.73
N	2280	
Adjusted R^2	.0433	

Notes: Entries are unstandardized GLM coefficients.
*p<.05; **p<.01
Dependent Variable = Total spending by Labor groups *for* a candidate in a race.

Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) regression analysis was used to generate the adjusted R-squared figures, due to the fact that the GLM results did not produce these values, at least not with the statistical software used for this study, STATA. However, the OLS and GLM results were nearly identical in all respects. Consequently, this seemed like a safe and appropriate approach to examine goodness of fit

The relatively low adjusted R-squared values raise the possibility that substantively relevant independent variables may have been omitted from the models. An analysis of residuals, however, did not suggest an obvious pattern, or at least one that would clearly point to an omitted variable. What's more, R-squared is largely a descriptive measure, one that should not be used to either condemn or extol the virtues of a model. Often, as has been noted by experts, R-squared values may be low due to problematic datasets. To the extent that R-squared values do, in fact, point to a shortcoming of these models, as—or perhaps if—independent expenditures continue to grow in prominence in political campaigns, it is possible, if not likely, that we will learn more about what drives the use of independent expenditures, which might allow for models that produce higher R-squared values.

Given the disproportionate level of independent spending in the 2004 election cycle, it seems appropriate to also examine spending in the years preceding 2004 separately to see if our previous findings still hold. In fact, we find very similar results. Below are tables that analyze spending by the same single-issue interest groups previously examined, only this time excluding spending from 2004:

Table 5.18: Pro-Choice Spending FOR, 1992-2002

	Coefficient	Standard Error
Ideology	685.04	585.06
Race Competitiveness	576.02**	119.18
Elite Incumbent	-22.21	418.84
Challenger Quality	262.67	246.79
Democratic Incumbent	117.58	188.12
1992 Election	-317.15	338.51
1994 Election	-225.17	331.73
1996 Election	-96.11	322.75
1998 Election	422.58	332.78
2000 Election	665.15*	324.94
Constant	1291.33	497.65
N	1948	

Notes: Entries are unstandardized GLM coefficients.
*p<.05; **p<.01
Dependent Variable = Total spending by Pro-Choice groups *for* a candidate in a race.

Table 5.19: Pro-Life Spending FOR, 1992-2002

	Coefficient	Standard Error
Ideology	1168.86**	438.79
Race Competitiveness	1581.55**	89.38
Elite Incumbent	6.53	314.12
Challenger Quality	384.99*	185.09
Democratic Incumbent	-204.32	141.09
1992 Election	-247.81	253.88
1994 Election	255.14	248.79
1996 Election	-48.68	242.06
1998 Election	237.26	249.58
2000 Election	-158.01	243.70
Constant	4667.89	373.23
N	1948	

Notes: Entries are unstandardized GLM coefficients.
*p<.05; **p<.01
Dependent Variable = Total spending by Pro-Life groups *for* a candidate in a race.

Table 5.20: Pro-Gun Rights Spending FOR, 1992-2002

	Coefficient	Standard Error
Ideology	2529.72*	977.32
Race Competitiveness	2873.98**	199.08
Elite Incumbent	386.43	699.65
Challenger Quality	-99.11	412.25
Democratic Incumbent	-463.68	314.25
1992 Election	-1441.49*	565.47
1994 Election	-961.27	554.13
1996 Election	-53.37	539.14
1998 Election	664.52	555.89
2000 Election	913.95	542.79
Constant	7936.97	831.30
N	1948	

Notes: Entries are unstandardized GLM coefficients.
*p<.05; **p<.01
Dependent Variable = Total spending by Pro-Gun Rights groups *for* a candidate in a race.

Table 5.21: Pro-Gun Control Spending FOR, 1992-2002

	Coefficient	Standard Error
Ideology	130.12	111.59
Race Competitiveness	53.73*	22.73
Elite Incumbent	-48.46	79.88
Challenger Quality	40.05	47.07
Democratic Incumbent	-37.01	35.88
1992 Election	205.62**	64.56
1994 Election	-4.57	63.27
1996 Election	-15.24	61.56
1998 Election	-3.22	63.47
2000 Election	-7.66	61.97
Constant	107.4	94.91
N	1948	

Notes: Entries are unstandardized GLM coefficients.
*p<.05; **p<.01
Dependent Variable = Total spending by Pro-Gun Control groups *for* a candidate in a race.

Table 5.22: Pro-Environment Spending FOR, 1992-2002

	Coefficient	Standard Error
Ideology	-1190.67	747.38
Race Competitiveness	804.61**	152.24
Elite Incumbent	33.58	535.04
Challenger Quality	-72.80	315.26
Democratic Incumbent	-236.93	240.31
1992 Election	-1200.08**	432.43
1994 Election	-1092.23*	423.76
1996 Election	-918.78*	412.29
1998 Election	-756.72	425.10
2000 Election	-98.85	415.09
Constant	3635.84	635.72
N	1948	

Notes: Entries are unstandardized GLM coefficients.
*p<.05; **p<.01
Dependent Variable = Total spending by Pro-Environment groups *for* a candidate in a race.

Table 5.23: Pro-Labor Spending FOR, 1992-2002

	Coefficient	Standard Error
Ideology	-348.16**	1589.3
Race Competitiveness	2035.55**	323.71
Elite Incumbent	312.95	1137.64
Challenger Quality	2198.06**	670.33
Democratic Incumbent	118.95	510.97
1992 Election	-1237.80	91946
1994 Election	-863.65	901.03
1996 Election	-901.52	876.64
1998 Election	2613.05**	903.87
2000 Election	2398.47**	882.58
Constant	5447.08	1351.70
N	1948	

Notes: Entries are unstandardized GLM coefficients.
*p<.05; **p<.01
Dependent Variable = Total spending by Pro-Labor groups *for* a candidate in a race.

Plainly, even prior to the explosion of independent spending in 2004, race competitiveness was the driving factor behind the use of independent expenditures by interest groups, although, again, incumbent ideological extremeness is a statistically significant predictor of spending by both pro-life groups and pro gun-rights groups.

Finally, below are models that examine spending during just the 2004 election cycle from the political parties—the main source of the exorbitant independent spending during that year. Again, the results are similar to those yielded by the all-inclusive 2000-2004 party models: Race Competitiveness was clearly the most important factor in determining the amount parties independently.

Table 5.24: Democratic Party Spending FOR, 2004

	Coefficient	Standard Error
Race Competitiveness	233237.30**	19415.72
Ideology	-24859.43	61901.63
Elite Incumbent	-6360.27	41533.72
Challenger Quality	27428.20	29344.03
Democratic Incumbent	-4214.41	19961.63
Constant	705705.80	61925.18
N	399	

Notes: Entries are unstandardized GLM coefficients.
*p<.05; **p<.01
Dependent Variable = Total spending by the Democratic Party *for* a candidate in a race.

Table 5.25: Democratic Spending AGAINST, 2004

	Coefficient	Standard Error
Race Competitiveness	49398.85**	4034.33
Ideology	-7079.10	12862.35
Elite Incumbent	-243.13	8630.17
Challenger Quality	4190.81	6097.1
Democratic Incumbent	9.25	4147.77
Constant	149245.30	12867.24
N	399	

Notes: Entries are unstandardized GLM coefficients.
*p<.05; **p<.01
Dependent Variable = Total spending by the Democratic Party *against* a candidate in a race.

Table 5.26: GOP Spending FOR, 2004

	Coefficient	Standard Error
Race Competitiveness	82335.49**	14696.33
Ideology	-29027.53	46855.15
Elite Incumbent	6237.97	31438.08
Challenger Quality	25058.66	2211.35
Democratic Incumbent	18223.57	15109.54
Constant	246909.50	46872.97
N	399	

Notes: Entries are unstandardized GLM coefficients.
*p<.05; **p<.01
Dependent Variable = Total spending by the Republican Party *for* a candidate in a race.

Table 5.27: GOP Spending AGAINST, 2004

	Coefficient	Standard Error
Race Competitiveness	266176.40**	17978.32
Ideology	41259.10	57318.86
Elite Incumbent	-9587.77	38458.85
Challenger Quality	24035.58	27171.60
Democratic Incumbent	-3050.96	18483.80
Constant	776545.80	57340.66
N	399	

Notes: Entries are unstandardized GLM coefficients.
*p<.05; **p<.01
Dependent Variable = Total spending by the Republican Party *against* a candidate in a race.

CHAPTER 6

DISCUSSION

What began as a narrative of how independent expenditures evolved over the years, ended with a statistical analysis of what factors impel their use. Like many facets of campaign finance law, it is entirely likely that independent expenditures have taken on a form not envisioned by lawmakers. Whatever their intent, a campaign finance tool that now funnels many millions of dollars into American political campaigns merits empirical study. This research builds on that previously offered on the subject by examining independent spending in House races, which previously had not been closely examined.

The results of this study paint a mixed picture. The hypotheses tested were not universally validated. While Race Competitiveness plainly drives the amount of independent spending by political parties (and, largely, interest groups), Ideology did not play the type of role predicted with interest groups, at least not universally. However, Hypothesis A(1), which predicted that the race competitiveness would increase the percentage of independent spending against candidates in a race, was strongly supported by the model tested. Finally, Hypothesis A(2), which anticipated that an incumbent's ideological extremeness would increase independent spending, was not supported by our findings, further discrediting the notion that incumbent ideology plays a measurable role in the amount of independent spending in House elections.

Among the many findings enumerated in previous chapters, two unifying themes seem to emerge—1) to the extent that one factor reigns supreme as a mover of independent spending campaigns, that factor, plainly, is race competitiveness, and 2) in light of recent changes in campaign finance law, namely the sanctioning of independent spending by political parties, and later the proscription of soft money, independent expenditures remain a very fluid subject. The most cursory analysis of the descriptive results earlier leads one to predict that independent expenditures will become an increasingly more utilized form of spending by both parties and interest groups.

If we accept that it is likely that independent expenditures are bound to become more prevalent in campaigns, what are the consequences for the American voter and our system of choosing public officials? To answer that question in any depth would, of course, require another examination. However, given the nature of the study concluded in this chapter, it seems appropriate to at least broach the subject. One concern is that to the extent that independent expenditures claim a greater and greater share of the political financing pie, their status as independent entities will create a greater distance between candidates and voters. While it would be naïve to posit that campaign communication funded by and created by candidates themselves are, ipso facto, veritable conduits into a candidate's soul, it at the very least originates from the source—the candidate him or herself.

Will independent expenditures serve essentially as a proxy for soft money? To a certain extent, the answer to this question is no. Critics of the pre-Shays/Meehan/McCain/Feingold campaign finance world generally considered the notion of a system that enabled wealthy individuals to contribute unlimited sums of money to candidates as the most nefarious aspect of the system. At the very least, independent expenditures are constrained by limits on what individuals can contribute to a political party or a political action committee, whatever the case may be. However, to the extent that a void was created by the removal of soft money from federal elections, then independent expenditures can serve as a replacement, if not a proxy.

With an emerging political phenomenon like independent expenditures come opportunities for new political science scholarship. This study, of course, focused on factors that impel independent spending. The Engstrom and Kenny (2002) study of the effects independent expenditures have on Senate elections was referenced, but opportunities abound for further examination of the effect independent spending has on election outcomes, particularly in light of the rise of independent spending, beginning in the 2004 election cycle. Moreover, the Engstrom and Kenny study focused exclusively on Senate races, leaving House campaigns as a rich source of scholarship. Furthermore, presidential campaigns present an opportunity for independent expenditure research. Borrowing from this study, are the factors that drive independent spending in presidential elections substantially different than those that drive spending in congressional elections? One could envision that this would be the case, given the different dynamics that exist in presidential campaigns. With the rise of “527 groups,” witnessed most notably in the 2004 campaign targeting the Democratic nominee Senator John Kerry, will independent expenditures potentially become a less attractive option, or will the possibility of more aggressive regulation of these groups further cement the status of independent expenditures as a preferred campaign finance tool of outside groups? This hypothetical further highlights how intertwined campaign finance law and empirical political science research are. It also suggests, to the distress of political scientists, no doubt, how quickly comprehensive studies of political phenomena can become obsolete.

Potential research topics could be discussed ad nauseum, but it seems appropriate to conclude this paper with a final reflection on the study endeavored by this examination. While not all of the hypotheses were fully supported by the models used in this study, hopefully the larger goal of illuminating a subject that heretofore had rated scant attention from political scientists was served. It is altogether likely that as future research sheds more light on this fluid subject, political scientists will find greater success in devising hypotheses that are supported by well-crafted research models. Until then, scholarship in this area should continue to endeavor to paint a more complete picture of this campaign finance tool, a tool that promises to become a more salient fixture of our democratic system.

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APPENDIX

INTEREST GROUPS INCLUDED IN THIS STUDY

Pro-Choice Groups

Emily’s List
National Abortion Rights Action League
Planned Parenthood Action Fund
Pro-Choice Voter
Republican Majority for Choice
Republicans for Choice
The Pro Choice Voter Guide
Voters for Choice/Friends of Family Planning
Your Pro-Choice Voter Guide
Planned Parenthood Advocates
National Abortion and Reproductive Rights
National Abortion and Reproductive Rights Action League
Fairbanks Pro-Choice PAC
Illinois Planned Parenthood
Nebraska Planned Parenthood Voters for Choice
New York State NARAL Inc., Women’s Health PAC
Planned Parenthood Action Santa Barbara
Planned Parenthood AF Bucks Co.
Planned Parenthood AF Central/North Arizona
Planned Parenthood AF of Georgia
Planned Parenthood AF of New Jersey
Planned Parenthood AF of San Mateo
Planned Parenthood AF of Delaware
Planned Parenthood Advocates of Kansas
Planned Parenthood Advocates of New York
Planned Parenthood Advocates of Wisconsin
Planned Parenthood AT/FD San Diego Riverside
Planned Parenthood Houston/SE Texas
Planned Parenthood LA Advocacy Project
Planned Parenthood New Mexico Action Fund
Planned Parenthood of Houston and SE Texas Action Fund
Planned Parenthood of Kansas and Mid-Missouri
Planned Parenthood of Mid-Hudson
Planned Parenthood of MN Action Fund
Planned Parenthood of North Texas Act
Planned Parenthood of St. Lous
Planned Parenthood of SE Pennsylvania
Planned Parenthood Votes/Washington
Pro-Choice Orange County

Pro-Life Groups

American Right to Life
Black Americans for Life PAC
National Right to Life PAC
Republican National Coalition for Life PAC
Ave Maria List
Pro-Life Campaign Committee
Pro-Life Action Committee
Pro-Life Citizens for a Better Society PAC
Susan B. Anthony List Candidate Fund
Human Life PAC
Allen Co. Right to Life
Arizona Right to Life PAC
Arkansas Right to Life PAC
California Pro-Life Council, Inc. PAC
Florida Right to Life PAC
Georgia Right to Life National PAC
Illinois Federation for Right to Life PAC
Iowa Right to Life PAC
Kansans for Life PAC
Kentucky Pro-Life PAC
Louisiana Pro-Life Voters PAC
Madison County Pro-Life Campaign
Maine State Right to Life PAC
Maryland Right to Life, Inc. PAC
Massachusetts Citizens for Life PAC
Metro Right to Life PAC
Minnesota Citizens Concerned for Life Committee for Pro-Life
Missouri Right to Life Federal PAC
Montana Right to Life PAC
Nebraska Right to Life Federal MAC
New Jersey Committee for Life PAC
New Jersey Pro-Life Coalition
New Jersey Right to Life PAC
New York State Right to Life PAC
North Carolina Right to Life, Inc. PAC
North Dakota Right to Life
Ohio Right to Life Society
Pennsylvania Pro-Life Federation PAC
Pro-Life Maryland Federal PAC
Right to Life of Michigan PAC
Right to Life/Oregon PAC
Rhode Island State Right to Life PAC
South Carolina Citizens for Life PAC
South Dakota Pro-Life Committee

Virginia Society for Human Life PAC
West Virginians for Life PAC
Wisconsin Right to Life PAC

Anti-Gun Control Groups

Gun Owners of America Inc., Political Victory Fund
National Rifle Association
NRA Political Victory Fund
Illinois State Rifle Association Congressional Campaign Committee
Montana Hunters-Anglers PAC
Montana Shooting Sports Association PAC
Texas Gun Owners for Constitutional Government

Pro-Gun Control Groups

Brady Campaign to Prevent Gun Violence
Handgun Control (Brady) Voter Education Fund
Washington State Gun Control Association

Environmental Groups

GreenVote
LCV Earth Fund
League of Conservation Voters, Inc.
Ocean Champions
Rachel's Action Network
Sierra Club Political Committee
Environmental Voter, Inc.
California League of Conservation Voters
League of Conservation Voters--San Diego
Montana Conservation Voters
New York League of Conservation Voters

Labor Groups

AFL-CIO Political Contributions Committee
American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees
International Association of Firefighters Registration and Education PAC
International Longshore and Warehouse Union
International Union of Painters and Allied Trades PAC
Machinists Non-Partisan Political League
National Rural Letter Carriers Association PAC
NEA Fund for Children and Public Education
SEIU COPE
Connecticut Education Association

CUNA-COPE Political Contributions Committee
Unite Campaign Committee
Branch 343 National Association of Letter Carriers
International Brotherhood of Electrical Works, Local 98
International Union of Operating Engineers Local 15 PAC
Local 1199 Political Action Fund
Local 32BJ SEIU AFL-CIO
Minnesota Education Association
New Hampshire AFL-CIO
New York State Laborers PAC
Northwest Illinois Labor Alliance
OPEIU Local 153 Vote Committee
Ryder Employees PAC
SEIU Michigan State Council
Southern California Painters and Allied Trades Distribution Council #36
Teamsters Local 523 Drive Fund
Teamsters Local 959 AK Labor Independent Voters Education