Proposals but Few Supporters on Campaign Law as Measures Are Languishing

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Mr. McCain, while conceding at the fight was still up a steep hill, said the variety of bills was promising. "I view it very frankly, as a hopeful sign," he said "I don't think they would be introducing them if there weren't pressure."

Along with Senator Russell D. Feingold, Democrat of Wisconsin, Mr. McCain is sponsoring the most talked about of the 57 varieties of campaign legislation filed so far, and more on the way now that Congress's spring break is ending. McCain-Feingold has modest differences from the Meehan-Shays bill, mostly in the area of being less tolerant of candidates' raising money in large contributions (more than $200).

But if action comes at all, it is likely to start in the Senate, where trouble-makers have freer rein. Mr. Feingold may exaggerate when he says theirs is "the only real proposal," but it tends to be at least a starting point for discussion.

One proposal that will be filed soon in the Senate is an honest-to-goodness public-financing measure, supported by Democratic Senators like Paul Wellstone of Minnesota and John Kerry of Massachusetts. They are working from a plan offered by Ellen S Miller, a veteran campaign spending analyst who heads a group called Public Campaign.

If candidates agree to limit their spending, they would get public money and cut-rate television time. Supporters argue that the public would ultimately support such an approach, though their ability to put that hope to a test is uncertain in a

Four Possible Routes Toward Campaign Finance Reform

	McCain-Feingold	Ornstein & Co.	Doolittle	'Clean Money Campaign Reform'
VOLUNTARY SPENDING LIMITS	SENATE $1.5 million to $8.25 million per election cycle (primary plus general) HOUSE $600,000 per election cycle These limits could be exceeded if an opponent exceeded them	No provision	No provision	SENATE $1.2 million to $6.6 million per election cycle (primary plus general) HOUSE $430,000 per election cycle Could be exceeded if an opponent's spending, plus independent expenditure against the candidate, was 125 percent of the limit
CONTRI-BUTIONS	Individuals and PAC's may give $1,000 in primary and $1,000 in general elections. Whether they agree to limits or not, no candidate may raise more than 20 percent of the spending limit from PAC's in House races or 25 percent in Senate races.	Individuals could give $2,500 or $3,000 in primary and in general election. Individuals could give $25,000 to candidates and $25,000 more to parties. Small donations would be encouraged by a 100% tax credit on the first $100. Present law would govern PAC donations.	Repeals all limits on individual and PAC contributions.	Individual and PAC contribution limits would not change from current law. But candidates abiding by limits and taking public funds may not accept any.
SOURCE OF CONTRI-BUTIONS	SENATE 60 percent of all individual contributions must come from in-state residents. HOUSE 60 percent of all contributions must come from in-state residents Aliens, felons and minors may not contribute. Bundling of multiple contributions collected by PAC's, corporations, unions, partnerships and lobbyists are essentially prohibited. Overall limit of contributions in a year is raised from $25,000 to $30,000.	Small in-state contributions encouraged by a television voucher plan above	No provision	Noncitizens may not contribute
SOFT MONEY *Large, unregulated contributions to parties from corporations, individuals and unions.*	Banned by requiring national parties to raise and spend only "hard money" (funds from PAC's and from individuals) subject to limits. Requires all election year spending, including by local and state parties, that could affect Federal elections (including registration and get out the vote) to be paid in hard money Bars Federal officeholders and candidates from raising unregulated contributions.	Prohibits national parties from raising and using soft money.	No provisions. Sponsors believe that eliminating all restrictions on contributions to parties and candidates would reduce the use of soft money.	Banned by requiring national parties to raise and spend only "hard money" (funds from PAC's and from individuals subject to limits). Requires all election year spending, including local and state parties that could affect Federal elections (including registration and get out the vote) to be paid in hard money Bars Federal officeholders and candidates from raising unregulated contributions
INDEPENDENT EXPENDI-TURES	Requires prompt reporting and permits candidates to exceed spending limits to reply to attack advertisements. Holds that an expenditure is not independent of a candidate if the person making the expenditure has raised money for the candidate or used the same consultant as the candidate.	No provision, but parties would no longer need to use them as a subterfuge because existing limits on how much a party could spend to help candidates would be repealed.	Public financing for Presidential campaigns, which took effect in 1976, would be repealed	No provision.
PUBLIC FINANCING OR OTHER ASSISTANCE	Senate candidates complying with spending limits, if they have raised 10 percent of state spending limit, qualify for 30 minutes of free, prime-time television on stations in their state or adjacent states (no more than 15 minutes from any one station). Complying House and Senate candidates may also purchase television time at 50 percent of the lowest rate. Senate candidates may send two statewide mailing at third class, nonprofit rates. House candidates may send three district-wide mailings at that rate.	Creates a "broadcast bank" of free minutes of radio and television time, to be used in increments of 60 seconds or longer, with the candidate required to be in the advertisements. Some will be allocated to the parties. Candidates would also get vouchers for more time for each $25,000 they raise in in-state contributions of $100 or less. Broadcasters would be assessed a fee, in time or minutes, on all political advertising, but the existing provision requiring them to sell time to candidates at low rates would be repealed	No provision, but parties would no longer need to use them as a subterfuge because existing limits on how much a party could spend to help candidates would be repealed	House candidates get public financing up to limits specified above, after receiving 1,000 contributions of $5 from registered voters in the district. Senate candidates must get 1,000 $5 contributions in a state's first Congressional district and 500 in each additional district. Senate candidates also get 90 minutes of free television [illegible] of 30 seconds to 5 minutes, with no more than 15 minutes from any station. House and Senate candidates can buy additional time at half the lowest rate for 30 days before a primary and 60 days before a general election.
ENFORCE-	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	Expand F.E.C. to seven members, to break

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immediate irreparable harm. Limits commissioners to a single eight-year term instead of multiple six-year terms.

post all campaign reports on the Internet

injunctions, and appeal to the Supreme Court

ADAM CLYMER

Another new idea comes from four scholars and a former journalist, Paul Taylor, who quit The Washington Post to work on campaign-reform legislation. The others are Norman J. Ornstein of the American Enterprise Institute, Thomas E. Mann of the Brookings Institution, Michael J. Malbin of the State University of New York at Albany and Anthony Corrado of Colby College.

Their approach concedes that Republicans will successfully resist limits and that public financing is somewhere over the horizon. So they concentrated on trying to encourage small contributions and prohibiting the use of soft money. They also urge raising the limit on individual contributions to candidates, unchanged since 1974, from $1,000 to $2,500 or $3,000, and they, too, seek to strengthen the election commission.

Mr. Ornstein justified their plan. "The alternatives from the aptly named Doolittle plan, all the way over to McCain-Feingold, not to mention constitutional amendments and full public financing are going nowhere," he said. "What we have is balanced, and it does not generate visceral opposition from either side. It doesn't promise too much."

The Doolittle plan is offered by Representative John T. Doolittle, a California Republican who proposes abolishing all existing limits on donations. Mr. Doolittle argues that ...closure is all the system ...d require daily filing ... and parties, plus post... on the Internet. ...es that soft money and ...nt spending play a big role ...cause individual contribu... ...ave been held down, and says ...tired of "the constant leftward ...a for campaign reform."

"Freedom works," Mr. Doolittle said. "The promoters of the left-wing bills basically don't think freedom works."

If any legislation comes forward, it is unlikely to reflect any single bill. Mr. McCain makes it plain that he will negotiate for anything, so long as it reduces spending and gives challengers a chance. Mr. McConnell might accept curbs on soft money if he got higher individual limits.

And most would-be reformers like one provision of Mr. Doolittle's bill that bars candidates from using contributions if the donors do not specify their addresses and occupations. The law now requires only a "best effort," and the National Republican Congressional Committee somehow meets that standard by getting it right only two-fifths of the time.

Partisan issues may be the least of it. Fred Wertheimer, an architect of the 1974 law, said, "When it comes to political money, we face not a Democratic Party or a Republican Party — we face an incumbency party."

Pursuing Campaign Overhaul, Advocate Shifts Fight to the States

By FRANCIS X. CLINES

WASHINGTON, April 5 — After 13 years of mapping the big-money freeways and special-interest byways of American politics, Ellen S. Miller has decided the only way to attempt reform is from outside the capital Beltway.

So Ms. Miller, former director of the Center for Responsive Politics, a nonpartisan authority on political financing, is taking a new approach. She is trying to get a law passed, state by state, in which candidates who accept spending limits and forswear private money would qualify for full public financing.

"I, for one, don't like banging my head against a brick wall; it hurts," Ms. Miller said this week of the political standoff enduring here over campaign financing. "I would rather go to where we can make progress to show Washington something that the public does endorse."

Bypassing the Beltway in search of 'clean money.'

The source for Ms. Miller's effort is a new advocacy group that she has formed, Public Campaign, financed by a multimillion-dollar grant from a foundation that she will name next week. If nothing else, the group provides a measure of what can be spawned by one experienced professional's sense of jadedness with this city's big-money political culture.

But it is more than that. What she and other advocates term the "clean money" proposal has already been adopted by voters in Maine, where a broad-based citizens' coalition forced it onto the ballot by petition last year after state legislators twice rejected the measure.

In explaining why she moved from the strictly informational role of political money tracking to promoting a voluntary system of public financing as the best solution to the current quandary over changing the system, Ms. Miller said, "When I traveled to state-based folks to teach them to follow the money, I began seeing how the state level had much greater potential for reform."

Even before the controversy over the money and methods of the Clinton re-election campaign, Ms. Miller said, broad citizen coalitions had been at work in behalf of public financing for political candidates in a dozen states where Public Campaign will be focusing its first education efforts. She identified the states most promising for action as Connecticut, Vermont, Massachusetts, Michigan, Missouri, Wisconsin, Washington, Idaho, Arizona, Oregon, Georgia and New Mexico.

Ms. Miller insisted that the state-by-state strategy did not imply total despair about ever making headway with the issue on Capitol Hill.

"I think a two-to-four-year approach can blow this system down because everybody hates it," she said. "If we can illustrate that citizens can be engaged in pushing through clean-money reform at the state level, then its viability might finally be accepted in Washington."

In the Maine model, a candidate for a non-Federal office qualifies for public financing by accepting spending limits and renouncing private money except for a threshold number of $5 donations from individual constituents to demonstrate grass-roots support. The system, which is voluntary in order to stay clear of court protections on private political donating, provides a fixed amount of public money for participating candidates' primary and general campaigns. More public money would be extended as "equalizing" funds to keep a candidate competitive against a free-spending opponent unfettered to a limit.

In her years of documenting political money flow, Ms. Miller said, she concluded that the most destructive element among a plethora of problems was the large sums of money being exchanged directly between special interests and candidates. "It's the source," she said. "Who gives the money, what they get in return and, more importantly, who doesn't give it. Right now, less than one-quarter of one percent of the American public makes a campaign contribution of $200 or more."

Public financing, as an alternative, might cost the average taxpayer an estimated $5 a year on the Federal level, she said, while combating the special-interest domination of politics. The public's suspicions about the state of publicly financed Presidential campaigning, Ms. Miller added, was rooted in the fact that the system has become a hybrid. The public financing part has been polluted by the flood of unrestricted funds, or soft money, for political parties, which are stoking the current investigations into the 1966 elections.

"In many cases, the cynicism of the American people is a rational reaction to what's going on," Ms. Miller said, referring to the current agenda in this city, where scandal hunting overshadows problem solving.

"Right now, there's a disconnect," she said. "At one level, 70 percent of the public wants reform. At another, it doesn't diminish the players' reputations, with Clinton's approval rating high and most of Congress getting re-elected."

In her view, the coming Congressional hearings on fund-raising for the 1996 elections, while holding the promise of increasing pressure for changes, might only compound cynicism about ever solving the problem.

"The devil is in the details," Ms. Miller said. "Something that is labeled 'reform' could sneak through and actually be deform, particularly when you have a President on the ropes" on the issue.

"All the more reason to get out of town," the specialist in the ways of Washington said to herself.