

NEW SURVEY REVEALS AMERICANS' VIEWS ON THE INFLUENCE OF CAMPAIGN DONATIONS ON POLITICAL SYSTEM

Chicago, IL, December 8, 2015—A majority of Americans believe that money influences decisions made by elected officials and favor full disclosure of the source of campaign donations, according to a new national survey conducted by [The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research](#). Despite their concerns, the survey reveals that Americans favor keeping the current system of campaign funding in which candidates raise money through donations.

The AP-NORC survey explores the views of voting-age Americans on an array of factors that shape current day political campaigns, ranging from the limits on campaign contributions to support for public financing of campaigns to the connection between money and freedom of speech.

“With over half a billion dollars spent on the 2016 presidential election so far, the public is concerned about the influence of money on the political system,” said Trevor Tompson, director of The AP-NORC Center. “However there is no consensus on how the system can be fixed.”

Key findings from the survey include:

- More than 4 in 5 Americans—Republicans and Democrats alike—say campaign donations impact the decisions made by elected officials, and half of them say the impact is large.
- Regardless of party identification, more than three-quarters of the public approve of compelling the disclosure of the sources of campaign contributions to Super PACs, and 60 percent say that revealing contributors to all groups would be effective in reducing the influence of money in politics.
- At least half of the public say several measures would be effective in reducing the role of money in politics, including limiting the spending of outside groups, political parties, and the candidates themselves.
- Only about one-quarter of the public, including about one-third of Democrats, favor public financing of presidential campaigns.
- Republicans and Democrats are divided on the idea that political money is a form of speech protected by the First Amendment, with 61 percent of Republicans agreeing that campaign contributions are free speech while 53 percent of Democrats disagree.



The survey was done against a background of significant changes in recent years in campaign finance rules. In 2010, the Supreme Court's Citizens United decision eliminated any cap on independent campaign spending by corporations and unions. In 2014, the Supreme Court struck down the decades-old limit on the total amount any individual can donate to federal candidates in a two-year cycle.

About the Survey

The nationwide survey was conducted November 12-17, 2015, using the AmeriSpeak Panel, the unique probability-based panel of NORC at the University of Chicago designed to be representative of the U.S. household population. Online and telephone interviews using landlines and cell phones were conducted with 1,011 adults from the 50 states and the District of Columbia. The overall margin of sampling error is +/- 3.9 percentage points at the 95 percent confidence level.

About The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research

The AP-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research taps into the power of social science research and the highest-quality journalism to bring key information to people across the nation and throughout the world.

www.apnorc.org

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The two organizations have established The AP-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research to conduct, analyze, and distribute social science research in the public interest on newsworthy topics, and to use the power of journalism to tell the stories that research reveals.

About AmeriSpeak Omnibus

AmeriSpeak Omnibus is a once-a-month, multi-client survey using a probability sample of at least 1,000 nationally representative adults age 18 and older. Respondents are interviewed online and by phone from NORC's AmeriSpeak Panel—the most scientifically rigorous multi-client household panel in the



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United States. AmeriSpeak households are selected randomly from NORC's National Sample Frame, the industry leader in sample coverage. The National Frame is representative of over 99 percent of U.S. households and includes additional coverage of hard-to-survey population segments, such as rural and low-income households, that are underrepresented in other sample frames. More information about AmeriSpeak is available at AmeriSpeak.NORC.org.

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