



Three Myths About... *Tax-financed Campaigns*

Arizona, Connecticut, Maine, and New York City are four prominent jurisdictions with “clean elections” programs, in which each state subsidizes the campaigns of participating candidates for statewide and legislative office with Tax funds. Here’s the reality behind three common myths often asserted about Tax-financed campaign programs:

Myth #1: *Tax-financed campaigns reduce corruption.*

FALSE. CCP examined information detailing corruption within Arizona, Maine, and New York City’s “clean elections” programs. Our findings demonstrated that many participants in these programs willfully manipulated the system, exploited loopholes to receive more state funding, and further abused public funds, once elected.¹

Myth #2: *Tax-financed campaigns change legislative voting patterns.*

FALSE. CCP studied the voting patterns of legislators who served in the Connecticut General Assembly in the 2007-2008 and 2009-2010 sessions, and accepted Tax dollars for their 2008 re-election campaign through the Citizens’ Election Program (CEP). We concluded that the CEP failed to change the frequency with which participating legislators voted in favor of the positions of organized interest groups.²

Myth #3: *Tax-financed campaigns diminish interest group influence.*

FALSE. To the contrary, interest groups often organize to help candidates raise the required number of contributions needed to receive state funding. This has happened in Arizona and Maine, as well as in a failed “clean elections” pilot program in New Jersey.³

THE VERDICT: While also failing to achieve their goals, Tax-financed campaign programs waste Tax funds and make participating candidates dependent on the government for funding.

More information on how to access the research described above is available on the back of this brief.

Further Reading

1 Matt Nese and Tom Swanson, “Clean Elections and Scandal: Case Studies from Maine, Arizona and New York City,” Center for Competitive Politics’ Issue Review. Available at: <http://www.campaignfreedom.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/08/Clean-Elections-and-Scandal-August-5.pdf> (August 2013).

2 Jason Farrell, Sean Parnell, and Brett Sullivan, “Meet the New Legislature, Same as the Old Legislature: A quantitative analysis of the Connecticut Citizens’ Election Program,” Center for Competitive Politics’ Issue Review. Available at: <http://www.campaignfreedom.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/11/Connecticut-Clean-Elections.pdf> (October 2012).

3 “Clean Elections Institute loses money stream, seeks donations,” *Arizona Capitol Times*. Available at: <http://azcapitoltimes.com/news/2009/01/02/clean-elections-institute-loses-money-stream-seeks-donations/> (January 2, 2009).



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