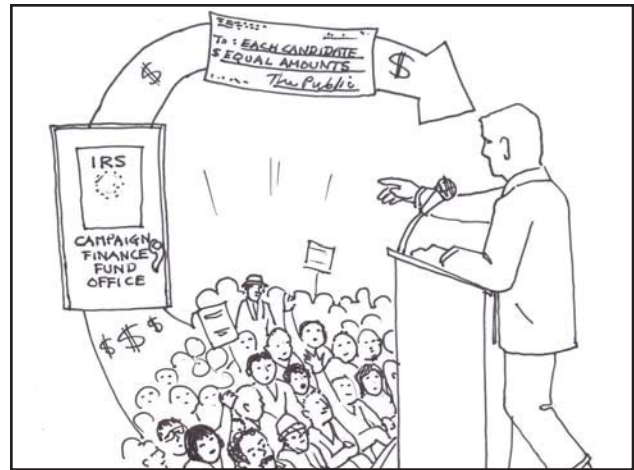
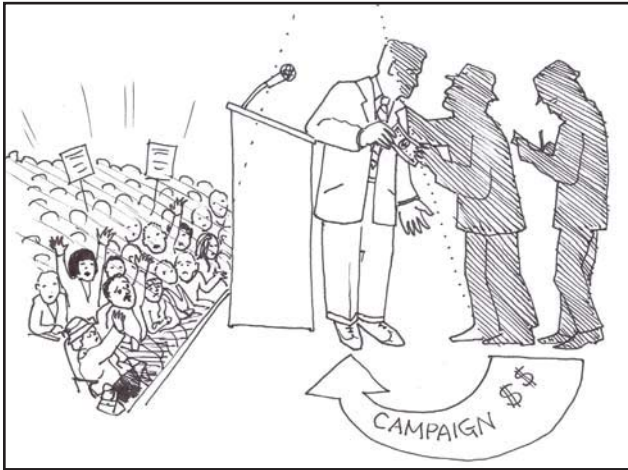


Look at these two illustrations and write about what is happening in each of them.



Joann Wheeler

Which System Do You Want?

Wendy Quinones

"This is an impressive crowd – the haves and the have-mores. Some people call you the elites; I call you my base." –George W. Bush, speaking at \$800-per-plate charity dinner (CBS News, Oct. 20, 2000)

"The truth is, it's about access. When you've got 20 phone messages at the end a long day, you're going to pull out the ones who gave you \$1,000 or \$5,000... I think that kind of access to individuals based on money is hard to erode. It's hard to get out of our system, but Clean Elections clearly takes a good step in that direction. I think it sends a message that the people you want to owe at the end of the day are the people of the state of Maine." –Glenn Cummings, Speaker of Maine's House of Representatives

In most elections, it takes money – a lot of money – to be a candidate, whether you win or lose. In the 2006 elections for the U.S. House of Representatives, for example, the average winner spent

\$1,253,031. Even the losers spent an average of \$622,348.

Where does that money come from? Candidates for office raise and spend as much money as they can, much of it coming from individual contributions. As the quotes above demonstrate, people who give more to candidates get more of their attention. To limit abuse, campaign contributions have been regulated by state and federal law for many years.

But what would happen if campaigns were funded from public money, with each candidate getting an equal amount? Several states and cities have tried this approach. Maine is one state that passed a Clean Elections system. What happened there? (See next page to find out.)

Sources: <www.cbsnews.com>, "Getting a Grip on Money & Politics," Part 1, <www.quantumshift.tv>; and <www.opensecrets.org>.

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