

# EFFECTS OF *CITIZENS UNITED V. FEC* ON FEDERAL ELECTIONS

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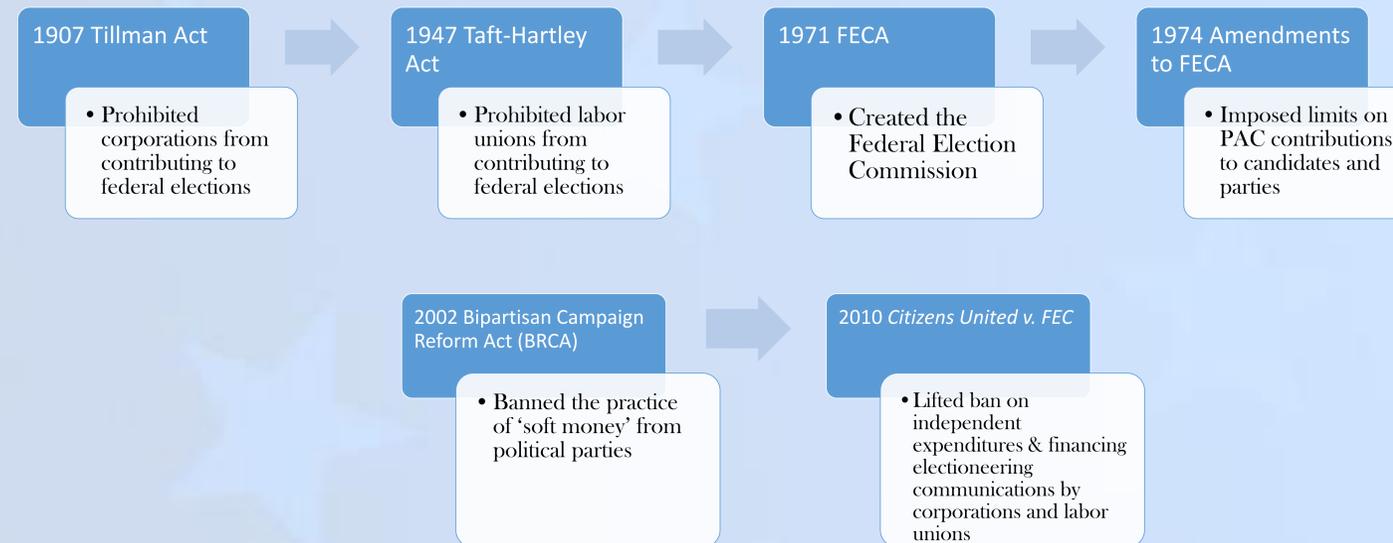
## INTRODUCTION

- January of 2010-- United States Supreme Court issued a controversial 5-4 ruling in the *Citizens United v. FEC* case, a case in which the previous restrictions prohibiting corporations and unions from directly spending towards federal elections were declared unconstitutional.
- Almost immediately, the ruling caused a deep rift, most tellingly along party lines, between those who praised the court's decision, claiming victory for free speech, and those who decried it, believing that special interests have become increasingly influential in federal election outcomes.

## SIGNIFICANCE

- With low voter turnout, recent talks about contested conventions and archaic delegate rules, many voters have lost trust in the U.S electoral process.
- There needs to be more transparency about the electoral process and which interests are furthering whose campaigns. Increasingly, there has been an increasing rift not only between social classes, but also a deep partisanship that has increased tensions among the groups and led to stagnation of progress.

## HISTORY OF CAMPAIGN FINANCE

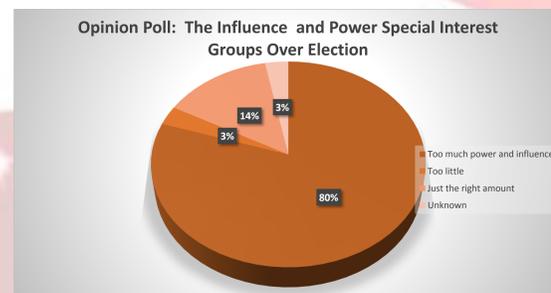


## EXPECTED RESULTS

- With the 2016 presidential election now underway, there is a new opportunity to further analyze the effects of the *Citizens United* case
- We may also begin to catch a glimpse of the bigger picture as a trend starts to emerge as we add another election cycle into the record.
- If there has indeed been a spending increase, I can expect to see a dramatic increase in independent expenditures after 2010, following the ruling.
- If more money equals more votes, then we can expect to see a pattern of candidates with the most money winning elections

## RESEARCH METHODS

- I will be using data collected by the Center for Responsive Politics (CPR), through the website [opensecrets.org](http://www.opensecrets.org).
- **In determining whether spending by non-party groups has increased post *Citizens United*:** I will be looking at **outside spending figures** for election cycles dating back to 1996, 20 years back, noting that midterm election years do tend to have lower expenditure rates than presidential election years.
- **In determining whether one party has benefitted another:** I will be looking at the **spending from liberal groups as well as conservative groups**, also going back to 1996 and looking for any significant changes after 2010.
- **Does more money equal more votes?:** I will be tackling this question by comparing the amount of money spent by the primary candidates of both the **2012 and the current 2016 presidential elections** to determine whether there is a pattern of candidates with the most money, both in their campaigns and their superPACs, winning primaries.



## RESEARCH QUESTION

- Have independent expenditures by non-party groups increased significantly?
- Has one party benefitted over the other from the ruling?
- And finally, does more money in elections mean more influence?

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