

PERSONALLY SPEAKING

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FOLLOW THE MONEY

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Presidential candidates are backed financially by contributors who donate directly to their campaigns and by independent organizations which use their financial resources to indirectly support one candidate and oppose another. Most of the financial backing comes through direct contributions which this year will exceed \$1billion.

Even so, independent organizations support the candidates in various indirect ways including radio and TV ads, media production and placement, focus groups, phone banking, canvass staff and other expenses, phone/mail communication, postage, and internet ads. Those expenditures supporting or opposing the two major party candidates already surpass \$131 million.

Based on data derived from the website maintained by the non-profit, non-partisan Center for Responsive Politics, Mayo Research Institute has compiled a listing of independent organizations which over the campaign cycle have spent \$100,000 or more supporting one candidate or opposing the other. The data cover total expenditures reported to the Federal Election Commission as of October 19.

	<i>expenditure</i>
SUPPORTING McCain	
Legacy Committee	\$ 202,000
National Campaign Fund	304,000
Republican National Committee	136,000
OPPOSING McCain	
AFL-CIO	123,000
Citizens United	105,000
DNC Services Corp	675,000
Moveon.org	676,000
NARAL Pro-Choice America	990,960
National Education Association	595,000
Service Employees International Union	1,650,000
Sierra Club	178,000

	<i>expenditure</i>
SUPPORTING OBAMA	
Change to Win	\$ 829,000
Chauffers, Warehousemen & Helpers Union	164,000
Culinary Workers Union Local 226	396,000
Moveon.org	463,000
NARAL Pro-Choice America	129,000
Service Employees International Union	14,836,000
Sierra Club	183,000
UNITE HERE	260,000
United Food & Commercial Workers	771,000
Vote Hope	106,000
OPPOSING OBAMA	
American Fed of State, County, Municipal Employees	234,000
Life and Liberty PAC	599,000
National Right to Life	401,000
Republican Majority Campaign	668,000
Republican National Committee	5,728,000

For Obama, there is both good news and bad news in this data. The good news is that his support among independent organizations is much more substantial than McCain's. The bad news is that the Service Employees International Union holds a very large IOU payable by Obama on demand should he win the election.

The bad news for McCain is that he faces substantial resistance from five independent organizations each one of which has spent more than \$500,000 opposing his candidacy. The good news is that there are no independent organizations holding IOUs payable by McCain if he is elected president.

The American democratic ideal is "one man, one vote." However, the American election reality is that money talks and big money buys influence. To find out who will surface as the movers and shakers behind the next president, follow the money.

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