

## COLUMNLEFT

**A**s an American, I am saddened by the culture of corruption in Washington, and it's disgusting that any politician is capable of abusing his office. I'm sure no one gets elected so he can be corrupt; it's just something that happens over time. But it still happens.

Campaign finance reform can help to stop some of this, but there is still too much money in campaigns. There are too many lobbyists who are willing to spend too much money on officials in order to influence their votes. Pork-barrel projects are the name of the game since politicians want to get elected by the voters back home, and to get elected, it takes money.

Of course, when was the last time you gave any money to a politician? That's the problem. Most voters are so turned off by politicians that they don't want to donate to them, so politicians have to depend on the lobbyists and special interests to finance their campaigns. Wealthy candidates who are willing to fund their own campaigns are less dependent on these groups, but they are not immune either.

So what is the answer? Perhaps the

public media can provide free time for the candidates. Otherwise, those running for office need to raise millions of dollars to pay for TV ads. Limiting the amount of money a candidate can raise, and by whom, can help, but there are too many loopholes in the system.

Several groups and organizations have PAC (Political Action Committee) money that they can use to support their candidates. This makes it too easy to abuse the system, and corruption soon follows.

We will be having a primary in June for several statewide and local offices, and it's amazing the

millions of dollars that will be spent for an office that pays something over \$100,000 a year. For the governor's race alone, each candidate will spend close to \$40 million.

Enough is enough. The voters need to be more involved in the political process and make it clear to our elected officials and candidates that we want them to represent all of the people, and not only those who contribute to their campaigns.

The reason for term limits was to ensure that no politician stays in office too long, but, inevitably, the best tool for term

limits is the ballot box on election day. If a candidate is not being fair with the people who he or she represents, then that candidate needs to be removed from office.

Maybe it's time for a change in Sacramento in November. It's obvious to me, and most Californians, that Arnold the Terminator has let us down over and over again.

He attacked, for no reason, the very people who put him in office – the nurses, teachers, policemen and firemen – then he wasted our tax dollars on a stupid election. Now he wants us to believe that he cares about the people of California by proposing a budget that is irresponsible.

It's a budget that will only lead to a larger deficit. I thought the Republican Party was the party of fiscal responsibility. What happened under Arnold's reign? Is it possible that he, too, has become corrupt? Here is a man who said he was so rich that he would not have to take any money from special interests, and then turned around to take more money than even Gray Davis took after serving for five years!

It's time for the people to demand that our elected officials and candidates promise to do what is right, or they should plan to be out of a job at election time.

### Power Corrupts

By  
Larry  
Caballero

## **Text of Article**

### **Power Corrupts**

Larry Caballero, Newsletter Editor, Hubert Humphrey Democratic Club

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Campaign finance reform can help to stop some of this, but there is still too much money in campaigns. There are too many lobbyists who are willing to spend too much money on officials in order to influence their votes. Pork barrel projects are the name of the game since politicians want to get elected by the voters back home, and to get elected, it takes money.

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So what is the answer? Perhaps the public media can provide free time for the candidates. Otherwise, they need to raise millions of dollars to pay for TV ads. Limiting the amount of money a candidate can raise, and by whom, can help, but there are too many loopholes in the system.

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