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4-20-2015

April 20, 2015: Campaign Finance Becomes an Issue

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Repository Citation

Ledewitz, B. (2015). April 20, 2015: Campaign Finance Becomes an Issue. Retrieved from <https://dsc.duq.edu/ledewitz-hallowedsecularism/925>

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Title: Campaign Finance Becomes an Issue

Date: 2015-04-20T05:13:00.000-04:00

4/20/2015—not two days back from Cleveland and campaign finance has become an issue—for the moment. As I told the Symposium audience on Friday, the simplest answer and most immediate answer is to eliminate caps on contributions. This would end the era of the super PACs. But the fact that Mike Huckabee has now proposed this—if he did before, I was not aware of it—is the problem. For the moment, Democrats and liberals oppose this change. If only a few of them switched on this, eliminating contribution limits would pass tomorrow. So, I asked them to act now. A few phone calls is all it would need and it would accomplish two things—first, put control back with the candidates and therefore with the voters. Right now, voters are told by candidates that they should not be held accountable for independent spending because they are not allowed to control it (which is technically true). Second, because disclosure requirements are strict for candidates, all the sources of money would be known. Actually, this is not even strictly necessary, since candidates themselves would be forced to disclose or pay the consequences. As I will show in an article for the Cleveland State Law Review, none of this is inconsistent with other reforms, such as public financing. No need to fix everything at once.