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# OPINION

editorials, letters, commentary and perspective

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## High Stakes in Finance Reform

**OUR OPINION:** Politicians have no incentive to fix campaign finance rules

There are always certain issues that dominate the political scene. A while ago, it was welfare. Today it is campaign finance reform. The idea started years ago as another campaign promise; the kind of promise politicians make when they are running for office and then promptly forget about after the election.

However, as the years have gone on, and more and more cases of illegal donations to political campaigns have been uncovered, the issue of reforming campaign finance rules has gained popularity. Even President Clinton, who received a great deal of heat during his last run for president for accepting illegal contributions, pledged to fix the system once and for all. While all campaign promises should be viewed with some skepticism, promises by both Republicans and Democrats about campaign finance reform are particularly hard to swallow.

One problem with campaign finance reform is illegal donations to politicians' campaigns. During the last presidential campaign, Clinton was accused of accepting illegal donations of up to \$425,000 from Indonesian businessmen to finance his campaign. While Bob Dole made a big issue out of this in his run for president, he has been just as guilty of accepting questionable donations in the past. The former vice-chairman of Dole's campaign finance committee recently received a \$1 million fine for finance violations.

The problem of campaign finance reform goes beyond individual parties. Republicans and Democrats both receive millions of dollars every year from individual interest groups to help fund their campaigns. With the cost of a presidential campaign ranging from \$250 million for the

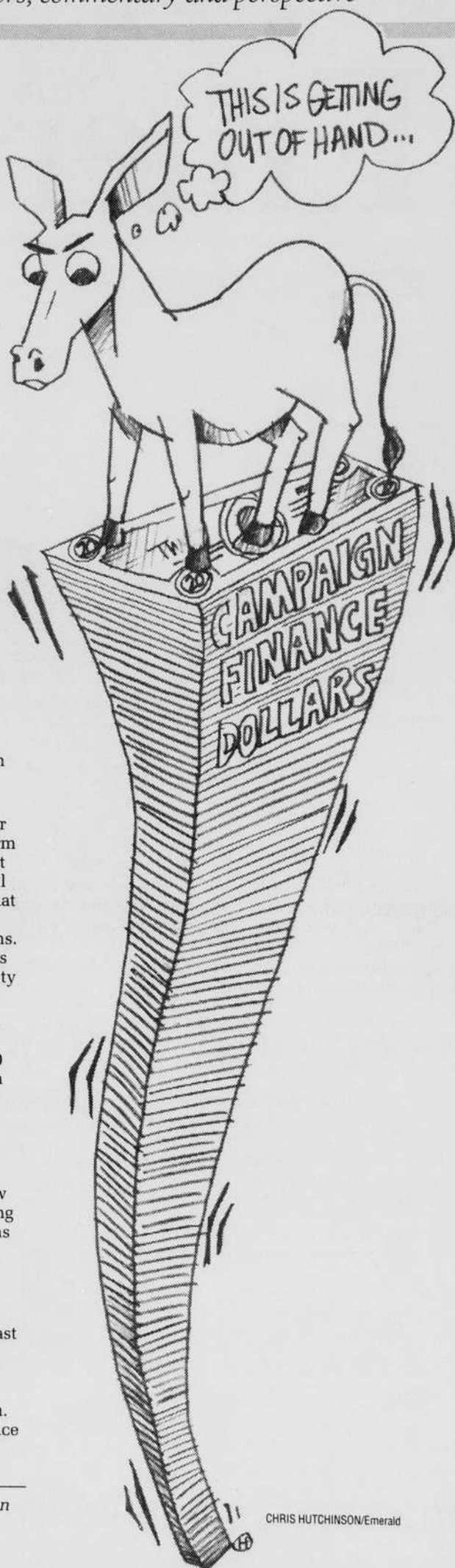
Democrats to \$400 million for the Republicans, campaign donations are more than a luxury in running for office — they're a necessity.

Because campaign donations play such a central role in running an effective campaign, it is easy to see why politicians would be reluctant to reform the system. After all, they are the ones benefiting from the "problem." Why would they want to change a system that allows them to take in donations as big as \$100,000 at a time? Clinton's renewed enthusiasm for cleaning up campaign finance reform is a reflection of the public's disgust with finance violations. The general belief in Washington seems to be that the public is fed up with special interest groups buying off politicians. While this may be true, the public is probably more fed up with the empty promises than anything else.

The public knows that politics is about money. Money talks, and if someone is receiving over \$100,000 from a campaign donor, that person is going to listen. While campaign finance reform would be nice, a better gift to the American people would be for politicians to stop pretending they want to clean up a system that benefits them. We know they have nothing to gain from fixing campaign finance rules and millions of dollars to lose.

Campaign finance reform is a problem that needs addressing. Unfortunately, the people with the power to fix the system have the least incentive to want to fix it. If real reform is going to be achieved, it is going to have to be from an organization outside of Washington. Until that happens, campaign finance reform will remain a plan easier promised than delivered.

*This editorial represents the opinion of the Emerald editorial board.*



CHRIS HUTCHINSON/Emerald

### Overheard

"These pieces of evidence are the voices of Ron and Nicole speaking to us from their graves, telling us that there is a killer in this courtroom, Orenthal Simpson."

*Plaintiff attorney, Daniel Petrocelli, in last week's closing arguments in the O.J. Simpson civil trial.*

"I was extremely torn. Frightened and tense, I took a big gulp and said, 'Go ahead, go ahead, go ahead. Let's go. Let's publish.'"

*Former Washington Post Publisher Katharine Graham, on publishing the Pentagon Papers in 1971, from her upcoming autobiography, "Personal History."*

"What's happened is that my customers have more money to spend in my store. My customers are better off. I'm better off."

*Storekeeper Gary Moore, on stopping the sale of lottery tickets in his O'Brien, CA country store.*

"This has been the longest 20 years of my life. Of course, I'm only 24, but still."

*Eugene Resident Michael Hendrix, while waiting in line for the "Star Wars" re-release on Friday, as quoted in The Register-Guard.*

"We're not naive. We feel that there is still a problem, and that's why we are addressing it."

*Marine Corps Maj. Scott Campbell, on new revelations of troop hazing in elite Marines teams.*

"It's one thing to punish a man. It's another thing to take away his dignity."

*Jesse Jackson, on Dennis Rodman's 11-game suspension and required psychiatric counseling.*

"For a number of years in the community, we've been number three or four in the nation for meth production."

*Eugene police department Sgt. Rick Siel, on the virtues of Eugene, as quoted in the Emerald.*

"It's something I dream about every night."

*Ducks Forward Henry Madden, on hitting the game-winning shot against UCLA on Jan. 30.*

### LETTERS

#### A good game ruined

I was appalled at the unsportsmanlike behavior of some of the Duck fans in the front sections during and after the Ducks-UCLA game.

During the game, members of the UCLA team were subjected to taunts and name-calling by University students that went way beyond friendly competition. After the game, these same students rushed en masse over to the UCLA

bench in mob-like behavior to rumble with the team. Why did they come to the game, anyway?

Unfortunately, the actions of these few people reflects on the University and the city Eugene as a whole. The vast majority of Ducks fans look upon these acts in distaste and although our team won, as one member of the audience remarked, "They succeeded in ruining a good game."

*Ron Tinsley  
Eugene*

#### Racist fans

As fans at Mac Court, we have been called many things: fanatical, maniacs, toughest crowd in the Pac-10. Unfortunately, now we're also racists.

Ron Bellamy reported in Friday's Eugene Register-Guard that fans at the UCLA game shouted racial slurs at Bruin players during the game and then charged them after the game, continuing the insults. Totally disgusting and

repulsive. Who do we think we are? What is it about an exciting basketball game that encourages racism? Absolutely nothing.

We have a serious problem here — not just those who shouted their moronic insults, but all of us who allow this to go on. All of us who hear racial slurs being shouted and don't say something against this blatant disrespect for others are also to blame.

UCLA forward Kris Johnson said that Oregon players were

great to play against and helped get the Bruins off the court after the game. Their actions, as well as the Bruin players' restraint and maturity in the face of racism, should be applauded. I only hope that we as fans can come to have the same amount of class as the players we cheer for.

*Eric Porter  
Eugene*