

Campaign Finance

WHO REGULATES POLITICAL MONEY?



Regulated by

Certain
expenditures
disclosed

Can operate
partner groups

WHO RAISES POLITICAL MONEY?

CANDIDATES PARTIES TRADITIONAL PACs SUPER PACs "527s" 501(c)4s 501(c)5s 501(c)6s

WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT POLITICAL MONEY?

These groups must abide by federal limits on how much money they can receive and donate.

These groups have no limits on fundraising or expenditures.

These groups regularly disclose all expenditures (527s disclose to the IRS).

The 501(c)s disclose money expressly spent to defeat or elect a candidate.

These groups must disclose donors (527s disclose to the IRS).

501(c)s are not required to disclose donors.



Candidates

Committees formed by individuals running for office, such as Obama for America. Subject to federal limits on contributions.

Parties

Political parties and their subsidiaries such as the Republican National Committee or the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee. Subject to federal limits.

Traditional PACs

Political action committees formed to intervene in campaigns, often in coordination with candidates, such as the National Beer Wholesalers PAC. Subject to federal limits.

Super PACs

Groups, such as House Majority PAC, that can collect and spend money in unlimited amounts so long as they do not coordinate with or contribute to political candidates.

"527s"

All political committees listed above are organized under section 527 of the federal tax code, but the term "527" is commonly used to designate committees that, for technical reasons, file with the IRS rather than the FEC, such as Swift Boat Veterans for Truth.

501(c)4s

The "social welfare" non-profits include long-standing organizations such as the National Rifle Association or Planned Parenthood, that long have been permitted to participate in politics, as well as newcomers organized after a series of 2010 court decisions, such as Crossroads GPS or Organizing for Action.

501(c)5s

Labor unions, such as the AFL-CIO.

501(c)6s

Trade and business associations, such as the U.S. Chamber of Commerce.