

NEXT KCDW MEETING MAY 25TH Yacht Club Broiler – No host lunch – 11:30 am; Meeting – 12:30 pm. Our speakers will be non-incumbent candidates. NO RSVP required. Please bring canned goods for the food bank.

COULD BIG MONEY BE LOSING ITS POWER? - by Jo Fox Burr

Of all the many things that make this 2016 Presidential Primary season so unique, one of them is how little influence big money has played so far compared to previous years.

Let's start with talking about the two most famous GOP big donors – the Koch brothers and Sheldon Adelson. In January of 2015, the Koch brothers announced their intention to insert \$900 million into the GOP Presidential Primary. They even identified five potential candidates – Walker, Bush, Cruz, Paul, and Rubio. However, as of November 2015, none of these candidates seemed sufficiently focused on their issues, so they pulled back from supporting anyone, evidently surprised by their lack of influence. As of April 2016, Charles Koch even indicated it was possible Clinton *could* be a better president than the remaining GOP candidates. She, of course, rejected his support. Sheldon Adelson was ready to buy the presidency. Several auditioned for him, but having been burnt by Gingrich in 2012, he was looking for a winner this time and just did not find one – that is until last week when he suddenly decided to help the last man standing by endorsing Trump. So both of these giants in big money giving were essentially missing in action for the primary. Let's see what happens for the general.

As for the candidates –

On the Republican side, about \$155 million was raised for Jeb Bush. Of this, 78% came from super PACs and other independent groups. Of his campaign committee money, 93% of the individual contributions came from large donors. This bought Bush 4 delegates. Then we have Trump. He has raised about \$51 million, of which only 5% comes from super PACs or other independent sources. Of his campaign committee money, only 6% of the individual contributions come from large donors; 75% comes from his own pockets. As you know, he claims to be self-funding so that he will be beholden to no one. The question I have is, as he has put so many business deals together to finance his endeavors, doesn't his own money have strings to big money entities? Then there is all the free news coverage he has received for all his outrageous behavior. Nevertheless, fiction or not, his supporters believe he is a self-funder. Now he is the presumptive Republican Presidential nominee. Neither of these models represent the norm of previous Presidential Primary cycles regarding the role of big money.

The Democratic Primary has its own anomalies, as well. Bernie Sanders raised \$182 million. While there is some supporting money from outside groups, it only counts for about 3% of the combined funds. More significantly, of the individual contributions to his campaign committee, only 35% of those are from large donors. According to FEC data, since 1980 successful primary candidates in both parties have raised an average 74% of their campaign money from large donors; and no primary candidate has won their party nomination with less than half their money coming from large donors. Yet Sanders has come close, managing to win nearly 40% of the already allocated delegates. Hillary Clinton is the one candidate of these four who is more or less on track in relation to big money donations with statistics from past elections. Of the \$180 million in her campaign committee, 74% of her individual contributors are large money donors. She does also have super PACs and other outside independent groups raising money which is equivalent to 30% of the combined funds supporting her.

Previously, stemming the influence of big money in presidential elections, particularly with Citizens United, has seemed like an impossible uphill battle. Given what has happened in this election cycle, though, I am more hopeful. It is true a candidate who is following the winning formula from previous elections is most likely to be our next president. Still Bush proved that formula is not as reliable as it has been. As for Trump and Sanders, much of their successful appeal is their lack of support from big

money. I think that, if nothing else, citizens are waking up to the evils of big money in politics and are beginning to offer real resistance with their votes. And it is gratifying to know, that should Clinton become president, her litmus tests for any Supreme Court appointees would be a commitment to overturn Citizens United and to support the Voting Rights Act.

Special Note: Breaking with previous traditions, because this is an election year we will be holding a general meeting in June to vote on both candidate endorsements and approvals. Our annual picnic will be in July. More information will follow.

OTHER UPCOMING DEMOCRATIC MEETINGS AND EVENTS: (*GM designates a general membership meeting)

Kitsap Co. Dem. Central Com: GM* May 16th (Monday); 6:30 pm Desserts; 7 pm meeting; Eagles Nest

23rd Leg. District Democrats: GM* June 21st (Tuesday); 6:30 pm social time; 7 pm meeting; Poulsbo Library

26th Leg. District Democrats: GM* June 2nd (Thursday); 7-9 pm; Kitsap Rm, Givens Ctr 1026 Sidney Rd, Pt Orchard

35th Leg. District Democrats: GM* May 14th (Saturday); Noon - 2 pm; Olympic College Shelton, 937 Alpine Way

"Politics is a damn expensive business. I had one hell of a time trying to raise money as a candidate. I had to put a second mortgage on our house to get that campaign started, and I ended up spending over \$300,000 to get elected. I believe that public financing of federal election campaigns is the only thing that will insure good candidates and save the two-party system. It is the most degrading thing in the world to go out with your hat in your hand and beg for money, but that's what you have to do if you haven't got your own resources."—Joe Biden (1974)

DON'T FORGET, THAT IT IS NEVER TOO EARLY TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE BAKELESS BAKE SALE!!!

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