

**Centennial Honors College  
Thomas E. Helm Undergraduate Research Day 2024**

**ABSTRACT**

Major: Political Science

Podium

Faculty Mentor(s): Jonathan Day

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**Money in Politics; A Necessary Evil? Or has it gone to a place of No Return**

**Drew Cisse**

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In American politics, money is a major and divisive factor that shapes the electoral landscape, impacts policy decisions, and undermines the democratic process. Various players, including as candidates, political parties, interest groups, and affluent donors, use financial resources to further their goals and acquire influence in the intricate ecosystem of political financing. Money in politics has a wide range of effects, including on political messaging, campaign tactics, and how receptive elected officials are to voters as opposed to funders.

Due to modifications to campaign finance rules, rulings from the courts, and the emergence of new political spending vehicles like super PACs and dark money groups, the role of money in American politics has changed dramatically over the years. These changes have sparked worries about the power of affluent people and specific interests, possibly compromising the values of representation and equality in politics.

Money continues to have a big impact on elections and governance even in the face of efforts to control campaign spending and boost transparency. The flood of money into politics has resulted in rising expenses, which has made fundraising a crucial part of contemporary campaigns and raised concerns about the accessibility of the political process to candidates without significant financial support.

Policymakers and activists struggle to strike a balance between the necessity of financing campaigns and the necessity of upholding the integrity of the democratic process and guaranteeing fair participation for all citizens in the complex link between money and politics. It is still imperative to address the issues raised by money in American politics.