

# PUBLIC TESTIMONY WORKSHEET

## THE FUTURE OF ELECTIONS AND DEMOCRACY A PUBLIC FORUM WITH FEDERAL ELECTION COMMISSION VICE CHAIR ANN RAVEL

*The Future of Elections and Democracy* is a public forum that gives you a rare opportunity to speak directly to the people in charge of elections and campaign finance. You will have two minutes to make a statement, and we encourage you to step up and be part of the conversation.

*Want to speak up but don't know where to begin? Answering the questions below will help you craft your statement:*

Why do you care about how our elections are run, and how money plays a role in the process? What motivated you to come speak at this forum?

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How do you feel about the state of our elections and democracy? Is our political system fair?

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Do you feel that your vote and your voice matter? Why or why not?

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Do you think money influences the behavior of your elected official? Where do you think their loyalties lie?

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How does money in politics affect your day to day life?

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Have special interests obstructed progress on a political issue you care about? How?

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What kind of changes would you like to see in how elections are run and how they are financed?

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# Fast Facts

**ELECTIONS ARE MORE EXPENSIVE THAN EVER.** Over \$7 billion was spent on federal elections in 2012. The average cost of a winning congressional campaign is more than \$1.5 million for the House and \$11.4 million for the Senate. That's a 284% and 196% increase, respectively, since 1990.<sup>1</sup>

**MEMBERS OF CONGRESS SPEND UP TO 70% PERCENT OF THEIR WORKDAY RAISING MONEY.** Members are advised to spend 30 hours a week raising funds for reelection.<sup>2</sup>

**SPECIAL INTERESTS SPEND BIG TO INFLUENCE LAWMAKERS—AND IT WORKS.** In 2014, special interests spent \$10.4 million *per day* on campaign donations and lobbying to influence Congress.<sup>3</sup>

**POLITICIANS GIVE DONORS SPECIAL TREATMENT.** Researchers at UC Berkeley and Yale found that members of Congress are four times more willing to meet with potential donors than non-donating voters.<sup>4</sup>

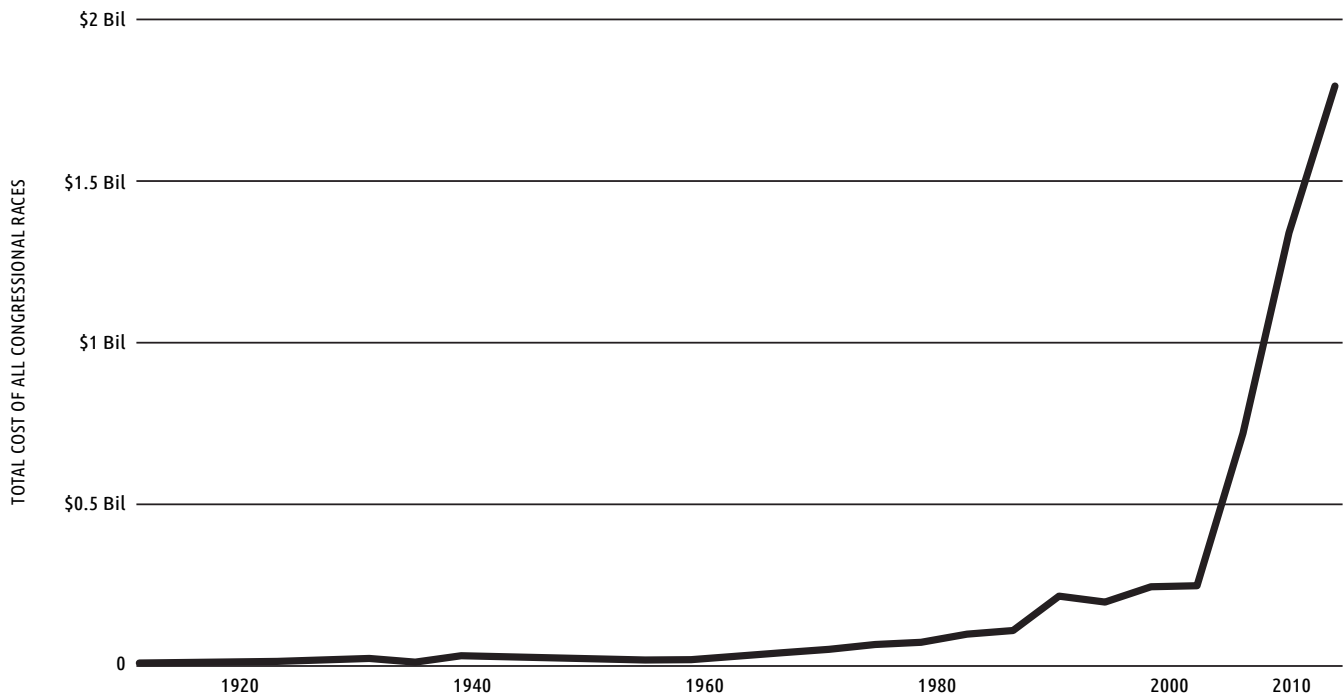
**MONEY SHAPES OUR LAWS.** Researchers at Princeton and Northwestern found that the preferences of economic elites and wealthy interest groups have a substantial impact on US government policy, while the opinions of average voters have “little or no independent influence.”<sup>5</sup>

## What is the FEC?

The Federal Election Commission (FEC) is an independent agency that was created in 1974 to enforce federal rules on money in politics.



## COST OF CONGRESSIONAL ELECTIONS SKYROCKETS



## SOURCES:

1. Center for Responsive Politics
2. American Public Media
3. Center for Responsive Politics
4. American Journal of Political Science
5. Perspectives on Politics



[www.represent.us](http://www.represent.us)