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INCREASED GROUND EFFORT BY PARTIES, GROUPS, UNPRECEDENTED PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGNING KEYS TO REPUBLICAN MIDTERM VICTORIES SAYS GROUNDBREAKING REPORT

*Dramatic Shift in Resources Altered Playing Field in 2002,
Ominous Implications for 2004 Democrats*

Soft Money Double 1998, GOP Raises Twice as Much Hard Money as Dems

WASHINGTON – Republicans dominated Democrats in the battle for hard money contributions during the 2002 midterm elections, nearly doubling their rival party's efforts and providing an ominous warning for Democrats in the 2004 election cycle, according to a major report released today at the National Press Club. Republicans raised just over \$400 million in hard money, compared to \$220 million for the Democrats. The hard money earning potential of the parties carries added significance heading into the 2004 presidential election as soft money expenditures are now illegal under the newly enacted Bipartisan Campaign Reform Act (BCRA).

The report, *The Last Hurrah? Soft Money and Issue Advocacy in the 2002 Congressional Elections*, was released by the Center for the Study of Elections and Democracy (CSED) at Brigham Young University. The new findings are a result of an intensive study of 25 competitive House and Senate races across the nation, with respected local academic field researchers in each race collecting direct mail, logging phone calls, and tracking radio and television advertisements. The researchers also interviewed hundreds of national and local party officials, interest group leaders, and campaign operatives to ensure the most comprehensive analysis of national midterm electioneering.

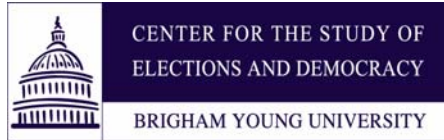
SOFT MONEY

Soft money records were shattered during the 2002 elections, with the parties combining to spend almost \$500 million – nearly equaling levels attained during the 2000 presidential contest and more than doubling the amount spent in 1998, the last comparable midterm election. The four congressional campaign committees raised \$68 million more in soft money in 2002 than in 2000, setting a new record.

“In light of the new campaign finance laws, both parties effectively marketed 2002 as the last chance to contribute soft money,” said David B. Magleby, Brigham Young University Dean and the director of the Center for Study of Elections and Democracy at the university. “This challenge hindered the ability of some interest groups to bring in contributions as much as in the past.”

INTEREST GROUPS

Interest group spending continued with a vengeance in 2002, but many progressive groups raised and spent less this cycle than in previous years. Evidence suggests that the impending restrictions on soft money increased the competition for large, unregulated contributions. This combined with the slumping economy hurt several more liberal groups such as the Sierra Club, Planned Parenthood, and the NAACP Voter Fund. Democrats, however,



were the beneficiaries of spending on their behalf by groups like the NEA and the AFL-CIO. Overall the study identified 251 unique groups active in 2002.

Several new interest groups were active during this election, including the United Seniors Association, a group largely funded by the pharmaceutical industry that spent between \$9 and \$13 million on broadcast advertisements. Another new group, the Council for Better Government, spent about \$1.5 million and aired at least 27 unique radio ads, making them the most active group on that medium.

GROUND WAR

Voters were subject to the most intense ground war ever conducted by both parties, including mail, phone calls, and door-to-door contacts. There is compelling evidence to suggest that the 2002 get-out-the-vote (GOTV) and ground war activities were more intense than in 2000, a presidential year.

Researchers found that voters in competitive Senate contests received more pieces of unique mail in this year than in 2000. In the 2002 South Dakota Senate race researchers identified an astounding 73 unique Republican Party mail pieces and 43 unique Democratic Party mail pieces. In Missouri, where the same group of researchers tracked the Senate race in 2000 and 2002, there were 37 unique Democratic Party mail pieces in 2002, compared to 15 in 2000. Republican Party mailers in Missouri increased from 11 to 16 over the same period. Recorded phone calls by celebrities like Art Linkletter, calling for the United Seniors Association, were also widespread.

“The piles of political mail reaching potential voters in some of these races were probably heavy enough to send a few postal workers to their chiropractors,” said Quin Monson, CSED Assistant Director.

The Republican Party and key allied groups, including the NRA, devoted more time and money to GOTV and other direct voter-contact activities than ever before. Their 72-Hour Task Force, which was funded in part by hard money, was one of the key differences in many close races across the country.

While it is difficult to quantify the effect of President Bush on the election, evidence suggests that his visits energized the Republican base in the last days of the election. The president made 34 visits to the six competitive Senate races in the study, lending his popularity to the local candidates and raising millions of dollars.

The level of soft money and "issue advocacy" campaigning exceeded all past years. It started early, more than a year before the election in the South Dakota Senate race and just after the first of the year in Arkansas. Television advertising was intense. Respondents to a survey conducted for the project in the Missouri Senate and Colorado Seventh Congressional District races reported seeing nearly 13 television ads per day during the last week of the campaigns.

A FOCUS ON COMPETITIVE RACES

The Last Hurrah? couples a national review of relevant trends during the midterm election with in-depth looks at 25 of the most compelling contests of the cycle – 19 House contests and 6 Senate races.

For example in the Minnesota Senate race, a race tinged with tragedy and controversy, researchers kept close tabs on candidate fundraising and expenditures – \$25 million alone. The state was barraged with television ads, 25,000 in just the Twin Cities market, and a blanket of direct mail, the Republican Party of Minnesota sent out 1 million pieces.

In the South Dakota Senate race, Senator Tim Johnson’s campaign manager Steve Hildebrand admitted to project researchers that his candidate should have lost given the political climate of the times and South



Dakota's party leanings. Johnson's narrow defeat of Rep. John Thune highlights the tremendous impact of extensive campaign organization. This was a race, according to researchers, that cost the candidates, political parties, and interest groups over \$70 per voter. It featured over a hundred distinct television spots produced by the campaigns, and 174 unique direct mail pieces, with some voters reporting that they received between six and 10 mailers per day.

The intensity of soft money and interest group spending was magnified because there were only 44 competitive House races, less than one third as many as in the last redistricting year. This had the effect of concentrating the record-setting levels of outside money in only a few races, the report notes.

Republicans in 2002 effectively neutralized the Democrat's ground war advantages in 1998 and 2000. Soft money helped Democrats hold their own in tight races in 2002, a resource not allowed under the new campaign regulations. "How the Democrats adapt to the new world without soft money will be important to the outcome of the 2004 elections," Dr. Magleby noted.

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