P.S.. to the NEWS

RELEASE: FEBRUARY 15

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WHO FINANCES CANDIDATES?

Why does the current Congress have a majority of liberals rather than conservatives? The answer to this question has just been supplied by a newsletter of limited circulation called "The Right **Report."**

Its staff has just completed an analysis of who spends what campaign money and for whom -- an investigation made possible by the strict federal laws requiring financial reports.

The reason is not that American citizens want liberal spending programs run by an elite corps of Big Brothers in Washington. The explanation is that liberal candidates rode into office in November 1976 with the benefit of money from both liberals and conservatives, while conservative candidates had to hobble along with a small percentage of conservative money only.

We like to think that no one can buy an election. The political reality, however, is that an adequate campaign fund can buy professional campaign managers and techniques, while a lack of money limits a candidate to a horse-and-buggy-type operation manned by volunteers.

Under the current federal law, business, professional, labor, and independent groups have the right to set up political action committees to raise and disburse contributions to political candidates.

The analysis shows that, whereas every major labor union has a political action committee, usually heavily funded, most of the corporate giants did not bother to exercise their political action rights at all. With a few exceptions, corporations defaulted and left the election process to the liberals.

The analysis shows that most of the funds raised and spent by business and professional political action committees were not spent wisely or effectively. These funds were largely spent to give redundant support to incumbents or to candidates who appeared very likely to win.

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The financial figures show a pattern of trying to buy good will from the "powers that be" rather than trying to elect legislators with a pro-private enterprise philosophy. The fund allocation appears to have been heavily influenced by lobbyists who understand the legislative process, rather than by experts who understand elections and campaigns.

The third conclusion of the analysis is that a shockingly high percentage of business and professional political action committees gave much of their money to the same liberals supported by big unions. In some cases, the staff persons doling out the money were activist liberals.

The analysis zeroed in on 117 races for Senate and House seats in November 1976 that could be clearly identified as a choice between a liberal and a conservative. Only 34 of those 117 conservative candidates won. Some of the blame must go to the fact that business and professional political actiof\ committees either did not contribute, or even contributed to their liberal opponents.

Some business and professional political action committees spent up to 90 percent of their funds in behalf of liberal candidates and many split their contributions 50-50 between liberals and conservatives. There were, of course, some corporations and professional groups that made generous contributions to conservatives, but they were in the minority.

In contrast to the do-nothing or self-defeating record of the corporate community, big labor's political contributions were based directly on ideology. The AFL-CIO COPE, for example, gave exactly nothing to the 117 conservative candidates, but gave $179,000 to their liberal opponents. The National Education Association gave $66,800 to those same liberal candidates.

Unless those who have reaped the fruits of private enterprise are willing to finance candidates who will support our immensely successful economic system, Congress will continue to pass the legislation demanded by the liberals who put their money where their mouth is.

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