

First Amendment

Interest Groups

Incumbent

Public Financing

Soft Money

Hard Money

527 Groups

Political Action Committees

Federal Election Campaign Act (FECA 1971)

Federal Election Commission (FEC)

Buckley v. Valero

Bipartisan Campaign Reform Act (McCain-Feingold 2002)

Federal Election Commission v. Wisconsin Right to Life, Inc. (2007)

Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission (2010)

an independent regulatory agency established in 1975 to administer and enforce the Federal Election Campaign Act (FECA)

This 1971 law covers the financing of federal elections. Amended three times in the 1970's, the act says that candidates and political action committees must disclose how they spend their campaign dollars and where it comes from.

Freedom of speech, religion, press, assembly and petition.

defined generally as a party, committee or association that is organized and operated primarily for the purpose of influencing the selection, nomination or appointment of any individual to any federal, state or local public office, or office in a political organization.

A popular term for a political committee organized for the purpose of raising and spending money to elect and defeat candidates. Most represent business, labor or ideological interests.

any association of individuals or organizations, usually formally organized, that, on the basis of one or more shared concerns, attempts to influence public policy in its favor.

The current holder of an elected office

means that qualified Presidential candidates receive federal government funds to pay for the valid expenses of their political campaigns in both the primary and general elections. National political parties also receive federal money for their national nominating conventions.

money that goes to "party building activities," such as "get-out-the-vote" efforts and generic advertising, such as "issue" ads.

Direct contributions to a candidate's campaign or to a political party.

The landmark Supreme Court case on campaign finance, which upheld federal limits to campaign contributions, but struck down limits on campaign expenditures. The Court also ruled in this case that donating money to political candidates is constitutionally protected free speech.

the Supreme Court of the United States held that issue ads may not be banned from the months preceding a primary or general election.

a landmark decision by the United States Supreme Court holding that corporate funding of independent political broadcasts in candidate elections cannot be limited under the First Amendment

The legislation regulated the financing of political campaigns by banning "soft money" political donations and raising the cap on individual "hard money" contributions.