

‘Go Fish!’

“We’ve lost jobs,” an actress said during a political ad aired in 2008. “John Snow’s solution for our economy? ‘Go fish!’”

This ad was funded by an independent political group called Real Jobs NC.¹⁴ The ad was a response to then-Senator John Snow’s plan to build a pier with an aquarium on North Carolina’s coast. He subsequently lost to his Republican opponent, Jim Davis, by a mere 200 votes and identified his opponent’s persistent attacks as a contributing factor. He said Davis seemed to have had an endless supply of money.

Private donations are the primary source of funding for political campaigns. Due to a Supreme Court ruling that struck down limits on spending in political campaigns, corporations and unions hope to gain a bigger role in politics, funding candidates that would best serve their needs. In a democracy in which the government is “of the people, by the people, [and] for the people,” it is increasingly difficult to determine whether corporations should have the same campaigning rights as individuals.

Proponents of corporate campaign financing argue that corporations have the right to support the candidate of their choice. These donations also prevent governments from taking on the burden of paying for all candidates’ political campaigns, especially during troubling economic times.

Critics argue against systems that publicly subsidize and fund political campaigns, professing that these systems would allow for even more corruption of the government.¹⁵ These people find it troubling that money has such a huge impact on politics. They cite the example of Germany, which has found alternative solutions to the problem of campaign financing, such as allowing private funding of the parties rather than individual candidates.¹⁶

Is allowing continued private funding viable? Do “big money holders” have public interest at heart, or are they playing a game that will only serve to widen the ever growing gap between the wealth and non-wealthy?

¹⁴ http://www.newyorker.com/reporting/2011/10/10/111010fa_fact_mayer?printable=true¤tPage=all

¹⁵ <http://reason.org/news/show/public-funding-of-campaigns-wo>

¹⁶ <http://www.loc.gov/law/help/campaign-finance/comparative-summary.php>

