CAMPAIGN FINANCE REGULATION AND MEASURES OF EFFECTIVE GOVERNMENT

BRADLEY A. SMITH
CAPITAL UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF LAW
VISITING FELLOW
JAMES MADISON PROGRAM, DEPARTMENT OF POLITICS
PRINCETON UNIVERSITY

AND

PATRICK T. BROWN
WOODROW WILSON SCHOOL OF PUBLIC AND INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS
PRINCETON UNIVERSITY
IS CAMPAIGN FINANCE REFORM A NECESSARY PREREQUISITE TO GOOD GOVERNMENT? SOME SAY SO...

• “WE [CANNOT] REFUSE TO ACKNOWLEDGE HOW THE GUN LOBBY GETS ITS WAY. THE STORY OF THE NRA’S INFLUENCE IS, IN LARGE PART, THE STORY OF HOW ECONOMIC POWER BUYS POLITICAL POWER IN MODERN AMERICA.” (VOX 2018)

• “PROTECTING THE ENVIRONMENT IS A LOW PRIORITY FOR LEGISLATORS WHO TAKE BIG CAMPAIGN CONTRIBUTIONS FROM OIL AND ENERGY COMPANIES.” (DM 2019)

• “AFFORDABLE HEALTH CARE POLICY HAS BEEN HELD HOSTAGE TO BIG CONTRIBUTORS WHO FIGHT REFORM.” (DM 2019)

• “WHETHER INITIATED ON THE LOCAL, STATE, OR EVEN NATIONAL LEVEL, LEVELING THE PLAYING FIELD FOR CAMPAIGN FUNDING TENDS TO RESULT IN ... BETTER POLICIES AS A RESULT.” (HALL 2019)

What does the data show?
States with less campaign finance regulation are better managed, per Pew Charitable Trust rankings.
There is a mild positive correlation between less regulation and better state procurement practices, as ranked by Governing Magazine.
States with less regulation have lower long-term liabilities per capita.
States with freer campaign finance systems do a better job funding their public pensions.
Less campaign finance regulation corresponds positively with lower unemployment rates.
States with higher political freedom scores get a better infrastructure ranking per U.S. News
There is a mild positive correlation between less regulation and higher 8^{th} grade Math scores on standardized tests.
High School graduation rates have a positive correlation with less campaign finance regulation.
Auto insurance is cheaper in states with less campaign finance regulation
Employer-based health insurance is cheaper in states with less campaign finance regulation.
There is no meaningful correlation between less campaign finance regulation and overall child Welfare, as ranked by the Anne E. Casey Foundation.
There is a mild negative correlation between child poverty rates and less campaign finance Regulation.
States with less campaign finance regulation have lower cost-adjusted incomes.
Income distribution is more equal in states with less campaign finance regulation.
There is no meaningful correlation between violent and property crime rates, and the extent of a state’s campaign finance regulation.
There is no meaningful correlation between less campaign finance regulation and overall Environmental quality ranking of U.S. News & World Report.
The “Camelot Index” was developed by State Policy Reports as a single measure of quality of life in the states. There is no correlation between the extent of campaign finance regulation and “Camelot Index” score.
No correlation or negative correlation between free speech index score and positive policy outcomes

**No Correlation**
- Voter Turnout Rates
- Annie E. Casey Foundation Child Welfare Rank
- State Violent and Property Crime Rates
- U.S. News State Environmental Rank
- “Camelot Index” Rank, per Federal Funds Information for States (FFIS) (National Governors Association and the National Conference of State Legislatures)

**Negative Correlation**
- Child Poverty Rates
- Cost-Adjusted Household Median Income
CORRELATION BETWEEN FREE SPEECH INDEX SCORE AND POSITIVE POLICY OUTCOMES

- Pew/Governing State Management Score
- Governing State Procurement Practices Ranking
- Funding of Long Term Liabilities Per Capita
- Funding of State Pension Obligations
- Low Unemployment Rate
- U.S. News State Infrastructure Ranking
- 8th Grade Math Scores
- High School Graduation Rates
- Low Average Auto Insurance Premiums
- Low Average Employer-Paid Health Premiums
- Lower Income Inequality (Gini Coefficient)
There is no correlation between campaign finance regulation and voter turnout.
THANK YOU