



Facts About the Presidential Public Funding System

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- 58 percent: Share of total campaign spending by 1976 presidential candidates that came from public funds. That figure fell to 7 percent in 2008.¹
- \$1.324 billion: Total spending by 2008 presidential candidates.² In 1976, presidential candidates spent \$439 million in inflation-adjusted, 2008 dollars.³
- 90 percent: Increase in spending from the 2004 to 2008 elections.⁴
- \$50 million: Estimated spending ceiling in the 2012 primaries for candidates who accept public funds.⁵ Only one candidate—Buddy Roemer of Louisiana—accepted public funds in the primary.
- \$25 million: Estimated maximum public funds each candidate who participates in the presidential public funding system will be eligible to receive for the 2012 primaries.⁶
- 49 percent: Share of campaign funds raised by George W. Bush in the 2004 election from individuals who gave \$2,000, the maximum contribution.⁷ No candidate raised that much from individuals giving over \$2,000 in the 2008 election.
- 35 percent: Share of all candidates' spending in the 1976 primaries provided by public funds.⁸ In 2008, that percentage was 2.1 percent.⁹

¹ Calculated from payouts from Presidential Election Campaign Fund as reported in, "Spending in the 2008 Election," *Financing the 2008 Election*, ed. David Magelby and Anthony Corrado (Brookings Institution Press, Washington, D.C., 2010)

² Id.

³ Herb Alexander, *Financing the 1976 Election*, (Congressional Quarterly Press, Los Angeles, Calif., 1979), p. 166.

⁴ "Spending in the 2008 Election," *Financing the 2008 Election*, ed. David Magelby and Anthony Corrado (2010)

⁵ "Public Funding of Presidential Elections," Federal Election Commission Web site (July 2012)

⁶ Id.

⁷ "2004 Donor Demographics," Center for Responsive Politics (Available at www.opensecrets.org). (Includes contributions of over \$2,000, as some people gave to the legal/accounting fund.)

⁸ Herb Alexander, *Financing the 1976 Election*, (Congressional Quarterly Press, Los Angeles, Calif., 1979), p. 173. "Principal" campaigns refers to candidates who met the eligibility threshold for public financing, regardless of whether the candidate accepted public financing.

⁹ Calculated from primary spending as reported in "Spending in the 2008 Election," *Financing the 2008 Election*, ed. David Magelby and Anthony Corrado (Brookings Institution Press, Washington, D.C., 2010)



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- \$16.8 million: Official spending ceiling for the 2008 major party nominating conventions (all of which was to be provided by public funds).¹⁰ The actual 2008 Democratic convention expenditures, including those financed with soft money, were \$75.2 million and the actual 2008 Republican convention expenditures were \$74.1 million.¹¹ (This was a marked decrease from the 2004 Republican National convention when the party spent \$101 million.)¹²
- \$91.2 million: Estimated spending ceiling and public funds that will be allocated to 2012 major party nominees who participate in the public funding system.¹³
- Three: Number of major party nominees who opted out of the presidential public funding system for the general election since the system began in 1976. This includes both candidates for the 2012 general election.
- 2000: The first presidential election since the public funding system began in which a candidate won a major party nomination without accepting public funds in the primaries.

¹⁰ "Public Funding of Presidential Elections," Federal Election Commission Web site (July 2012)

¹¹ "Presidential Campaign Receipts," Federal Election Commission Web site (2008)

¹² "Presidential Campaign Receipts," Federal Election Commission Web site (2004)

¹³ "Public Funding of Presidential Elections," Federal Election Commission Web site (July 2012)