

Jimmy Carter: US Elections are Corrupt

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By Pete Papaherakles Injecting billions of dollars into U.S. politics is a recipe for corruption, says former President Jimmy Carter. Placing the blame squarely on the Supreme Court for endorsing a corporate spending free-for-all in American politics, he said the justices gave unlimited freedom to special interest groups representing corporations and lobbyists to provide campaign funding through third parties that don't have to disclose their donors.

"We have one of the worst election processes in the world right here in the United States of America," he said, "and it's almost entirely because of the excessive influx of money.

"You know how much I raised to run against Gerald Ford?" asked Carter in his latest [Conversation at the Carter Center](#). "Zero. You know how much I raised to run against Ronald Reagan? Zero. You know how much will be raised this year by all presidential, Senate and House campaigns? Six billion dollars. That's 6,000 million."

Carter did get public funding from the Democratic National Committee but received no money from private donors—corporate or individuals.

In contrast, Romney and Obama are both on their way to possibly raising an astonishing billion dollars each in campaign funds this year. By August 31 Romney had raised \$669M while Obama had raised \$766M. In the month of August Romney raised \$112M and Obama brought in \$114M, and the stakes keep getting higher until Election Day. These funds are a combination of public and private funds, with public funds comprising only about a quarter of the total money raised.

The Supreme Court justified its 5-4 *Citizens United* ruling on the basis that the First Amendment prohibits government from restricting independent political donations by corporations and unions. As a result, special interest groups have taken control of the election process making it "shot through with financial corruption that threatens [America]," according to Carter. He expressed his hope that "the Supreme Court will reverse that stupid ruling."

The American Israel Public Affairs Committee ([AIPAC](#)) is, of course, the most powerful lobby in Washington. Along with other pro-Zionist lobbies, individuals and corporations, they dominate campaign funding, thus influencing the political platform, including foreign policy, for both candidates.

Carter prefers publicly financed elections, currently used by other countries.

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