

MR. POGREBA, PARKER SCHOOL

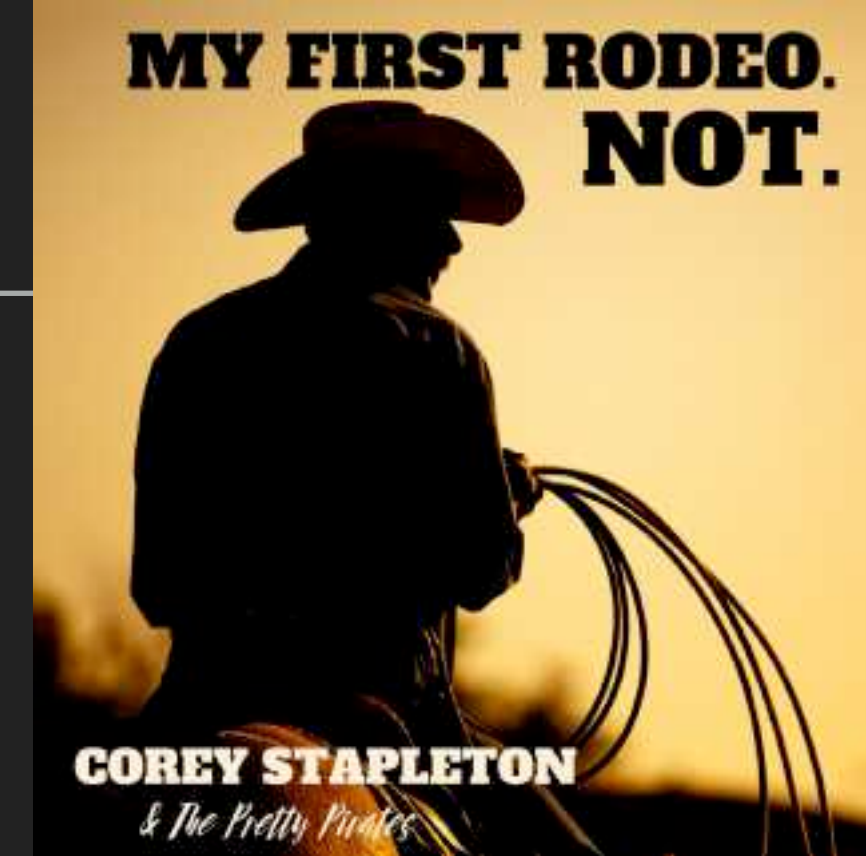
*Unit 8: Political Participation
Campaigns and Campaign Finance*



Campaign Overview

CAMPAIGN ORGANIZATION

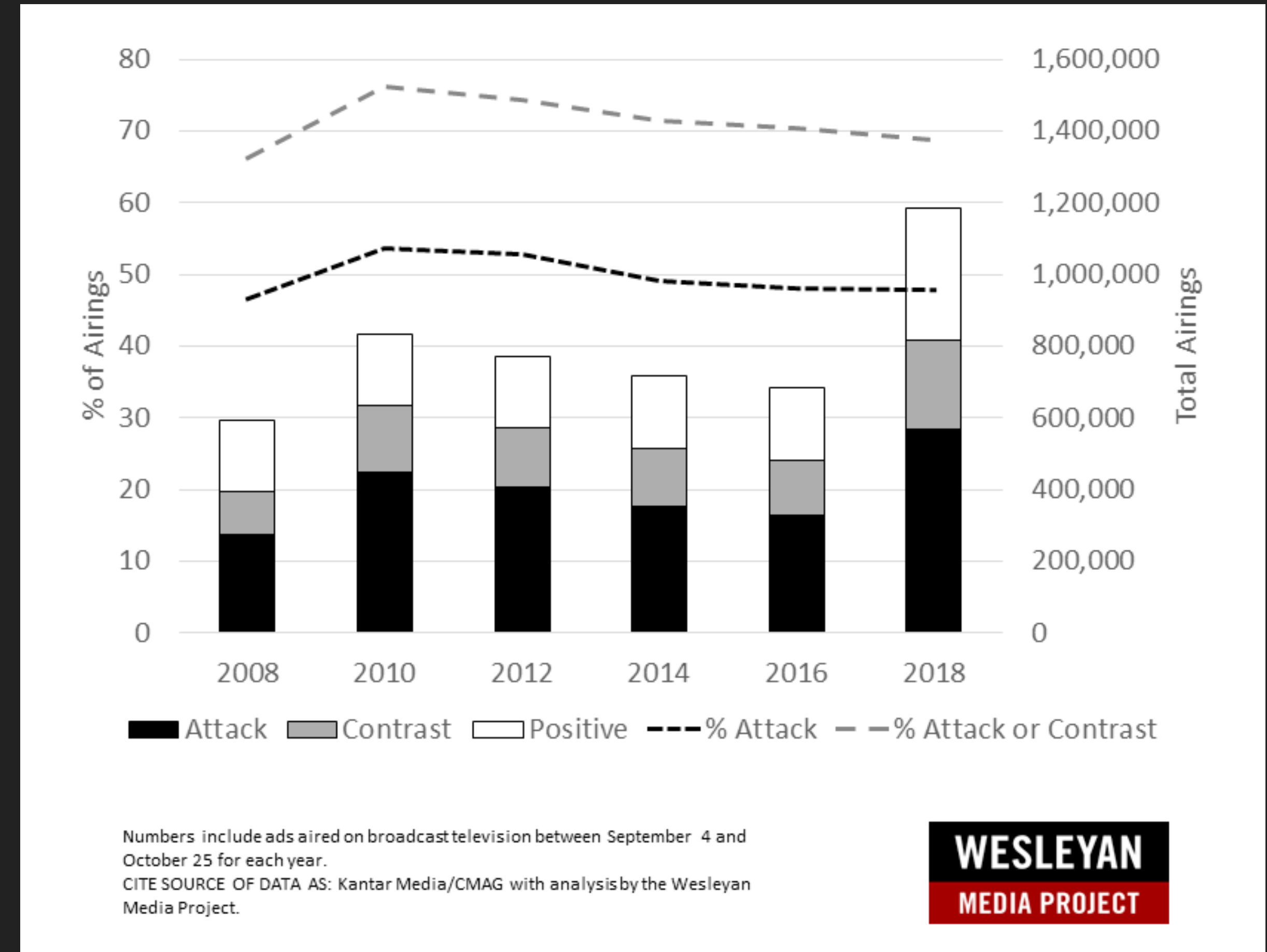
- ▶ Candidates form **committees** to investigate the likelihood of their successful campaign. **Exploratory committees** allow candidates to raise money to “**test the waters.**”
- ▶ Parties typically support **incumbents**, though can often give tacit support to favored candidates.
- ▶ **Interest groups** donate to candidates, run ads, and influence politics.
- ▶ **Fundraising** has become the central focus of many campaigns.
 - ▶ In 2020, over \$1.1 billion was spent on Senate races; \$1 billion on House races.
 - ▶ 97% of Democratic Senate contributions in WV were from out-of-state in 2020.



ANYONE CAN FORM AN EXPLORATORY COMMITTEE

ADVERTISING

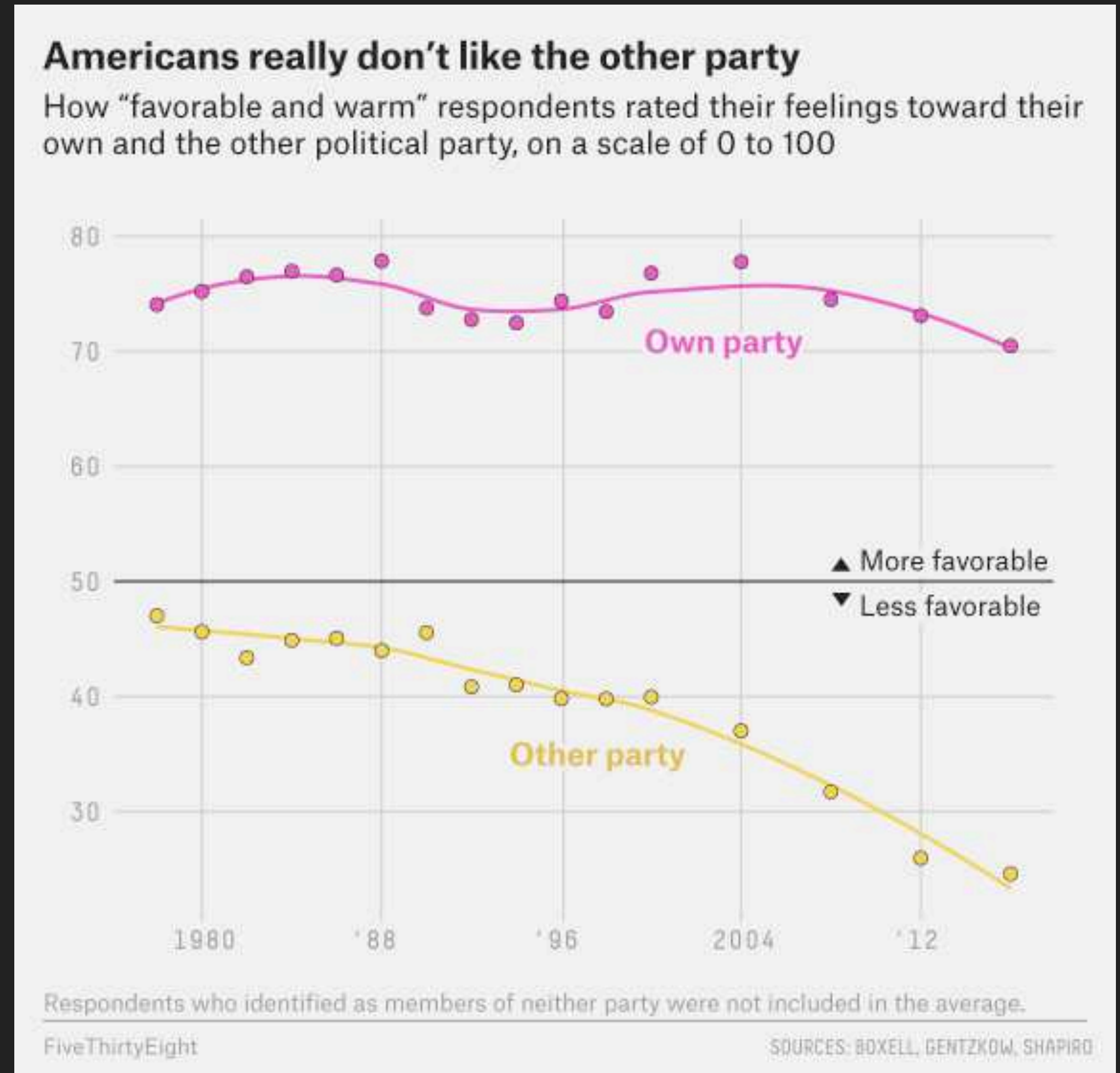
- ▶ Advertising and fundraising go hand-in-hand.
- ▶ There is a reason for this: **90%** of the candidates for House and Senate who raise more win.
- ▶ Social media drives **targeted ads**, but campaigns still spend millions on broad TV and cable ad campaigns.
- ▶ Campaigns and interest groups spent \$2.1 billion on Facebook and Google ads between 2020-22.
- ▶ Trump's campaign spent \$60 million on just Facebook in 2020 alone.



NEGATIVE ADS, 2008-2018

INCREASING NEGATIVITY

- ▶ Professor Erika Fowler said that “three-quarters of ads aired during the last presidential race appealed to anger” in the 2012 election.
- ▶ It has gotten worse in every subsequent race.
- ▶ Political scientists debate the efficacy of negative ads, but most studies confirm they do **suppress** the vote of undecided/leaners.
- ▶ Candidates are required to “approve” their own ads in their federal campaigns, but disclosure for third-party negative ads is opaque.



“Our political campaigns have become increasingly negative, focused more on tearing down our opponents than building up support for our own ideas. During the 1960 presidential campaign, only around 10 percent of political advertisements aired were negative; by 2012, only around 14 percent of campaign ads were positive.”

Zaid Jilani, 2019

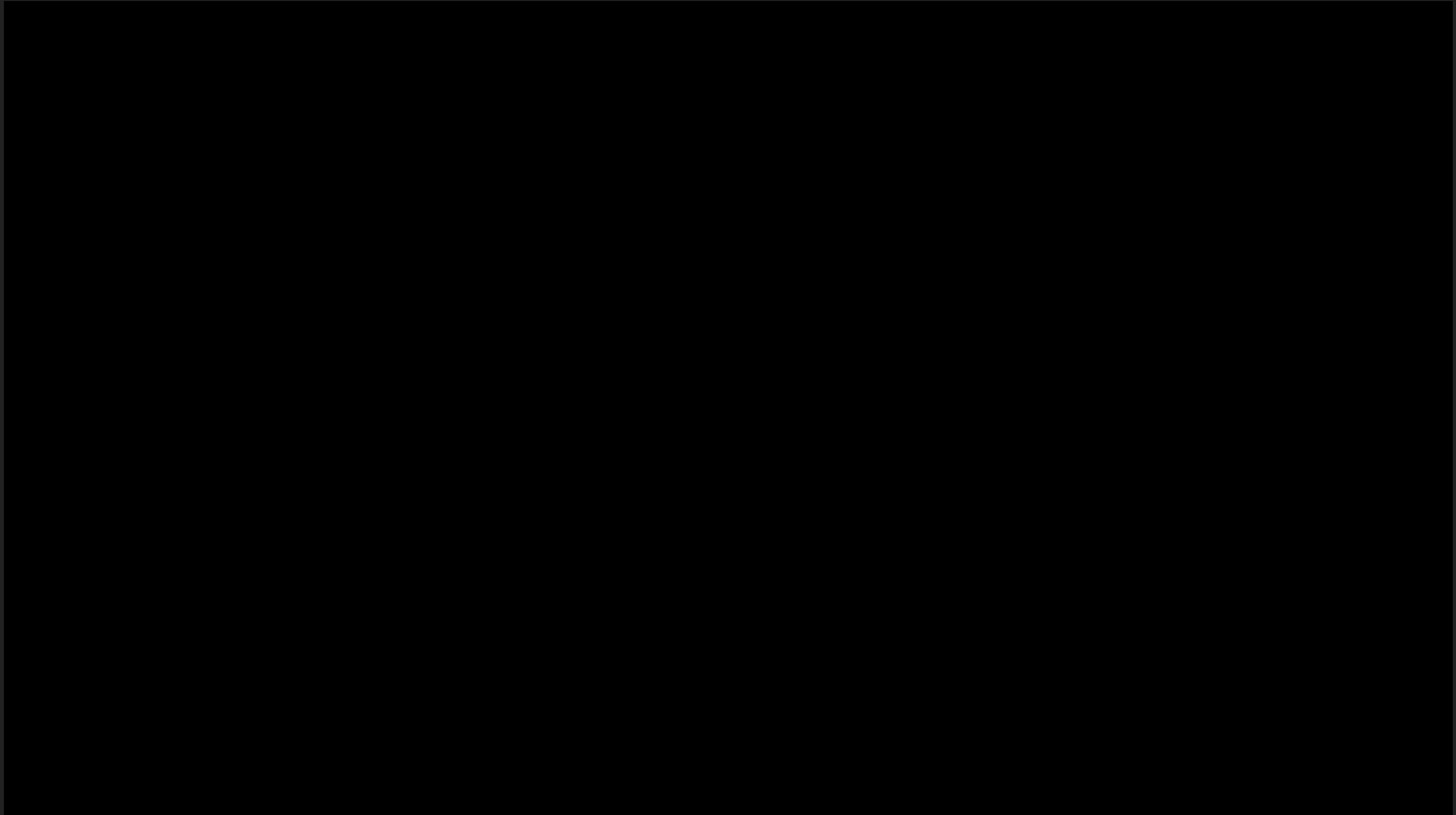
CAMPAIGN STRATEGIES

- ▶ There is an entire industry devoted to campaign operations. These **political consultants** travel from election to election, in and out of government.
- ▶ **Strategies:**
 - ▶ **Showcasing the candidate**
 - ▶ **Defining the opponent**
 - ▶ **Debates**
 - ▶ **TV**
 - ▶ **Social Media**
 - ▶ **Dark ads** (anonymous posts) and **disinformation** are huge concerns.

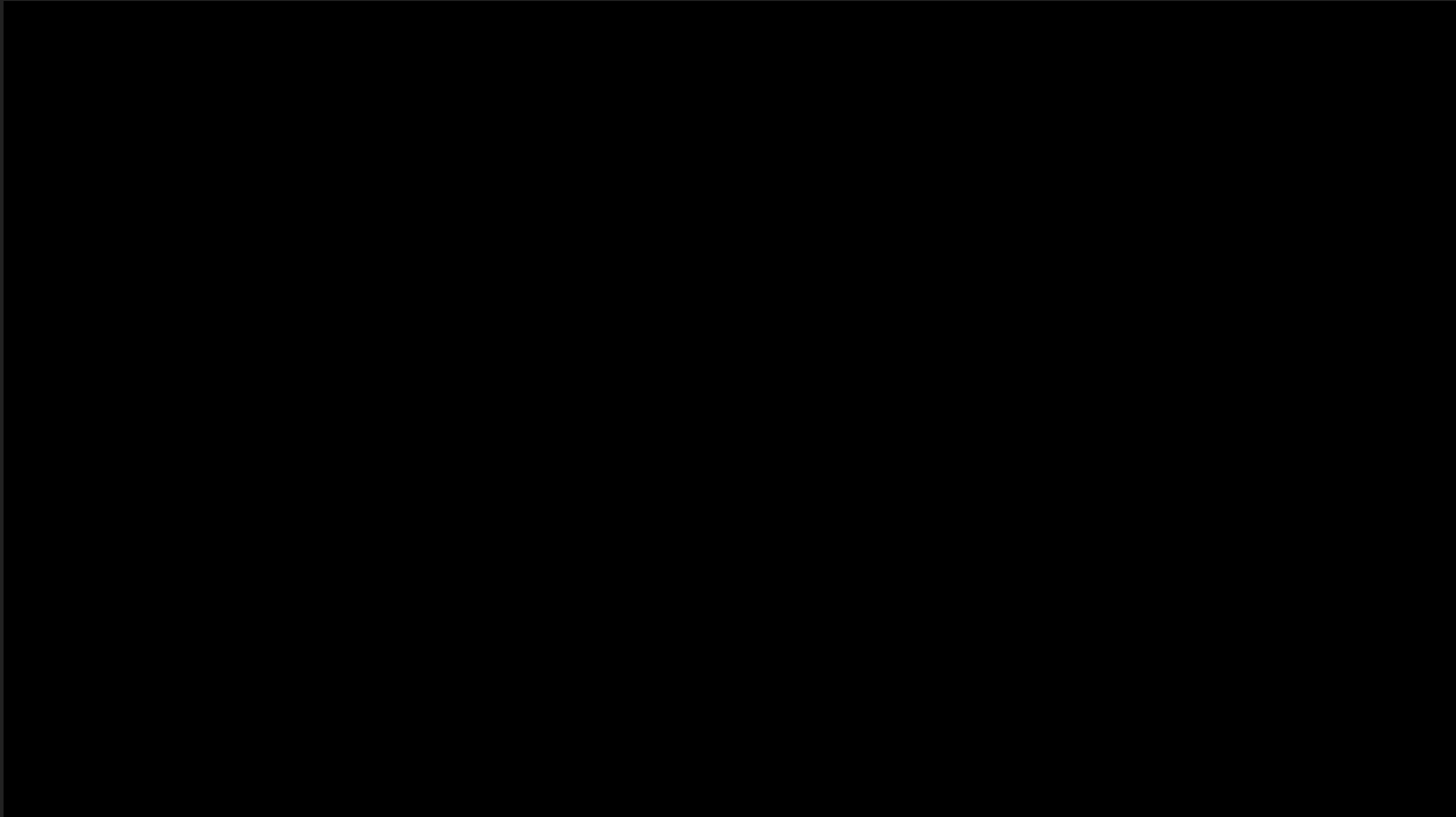


LEE ATWATER AND RONALD REAGAN

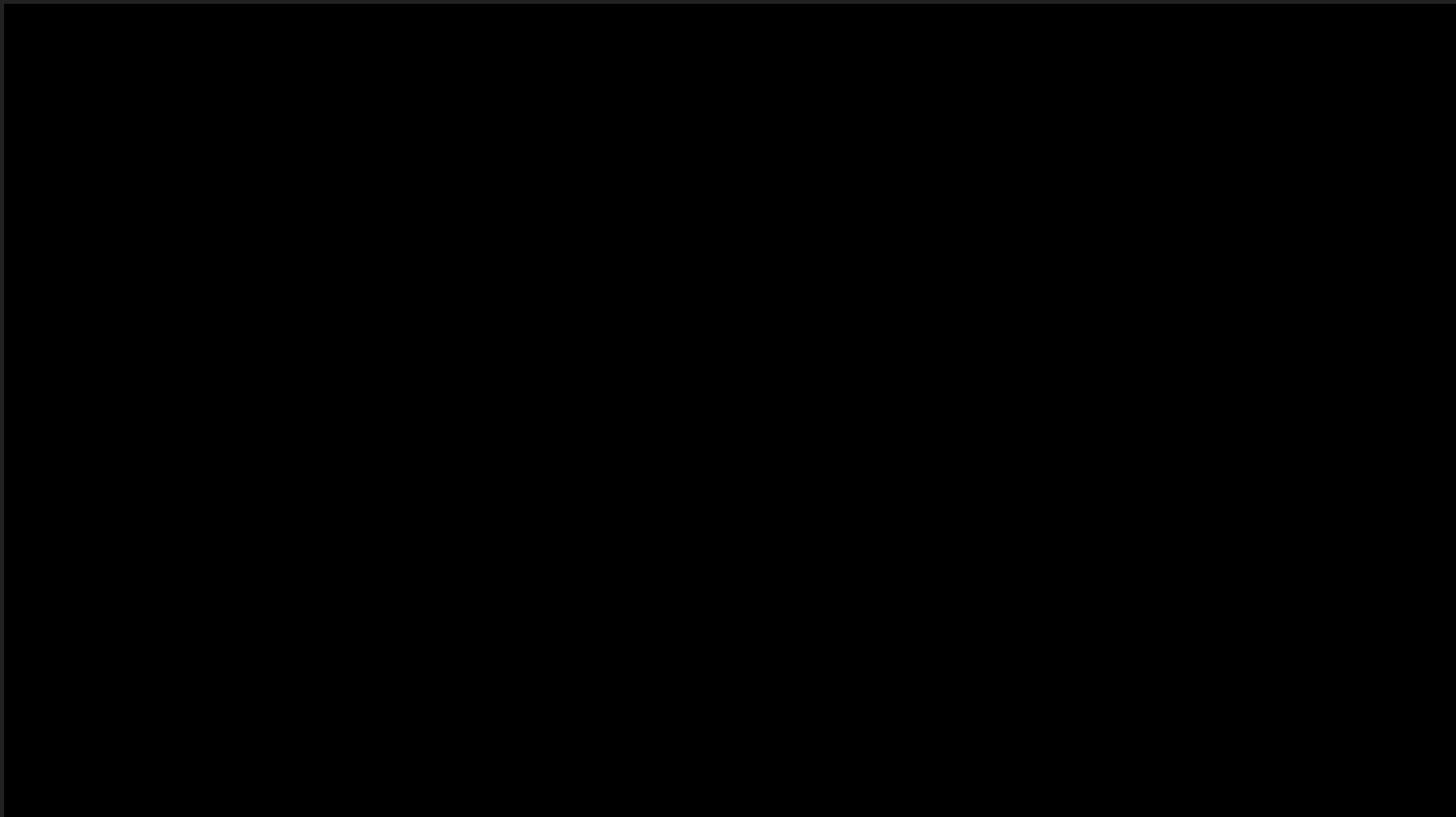
RON DESANTIS, FLORIDA GOVERNOR (2022)

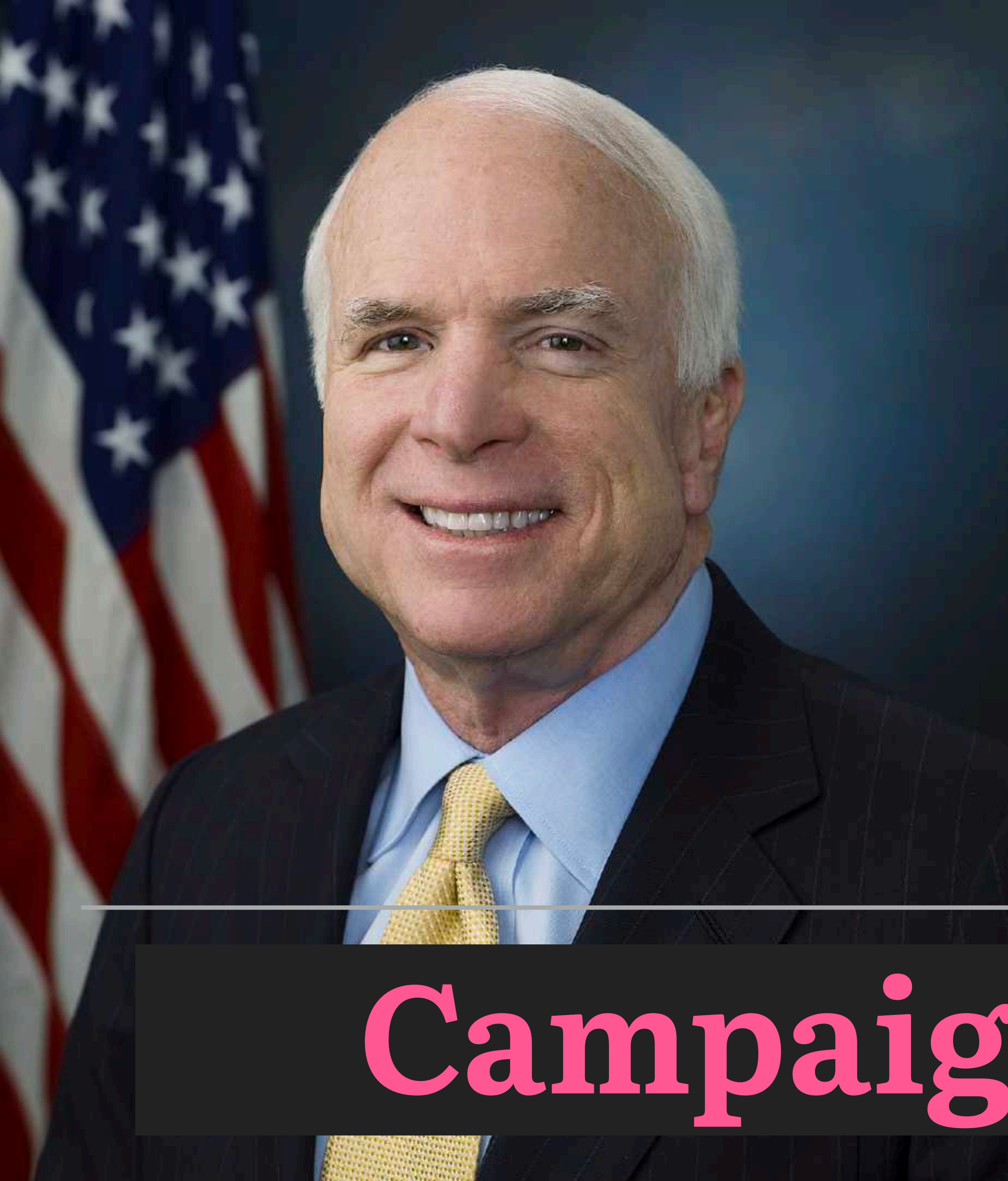


JOSH MANDEL, OHIO (2022)



MATT ROSENDALE, MONTANA (2014)





Campaign Finance

1970S

- ▶ In 1971, Congress passed the **Federal Elections Campaign Act**, which increased disclosure/reporting requirements and attempted to restrict spending.
- ▶ In 1974, the law restricted donations to \$1,000 for individuals and \$5,000 for PACS. Congress also created the **Federal Election Commission**, entrusted with overseeing election spending.
 - ▶ For more than a decade, the bipartisan structure of the FEC Commission has made it totally ineffective, with almost 40% of votes ending in a 3-3 deadlock.
- ▶ **Buckley v. Valeo** (1976) upheld most of the FEC.



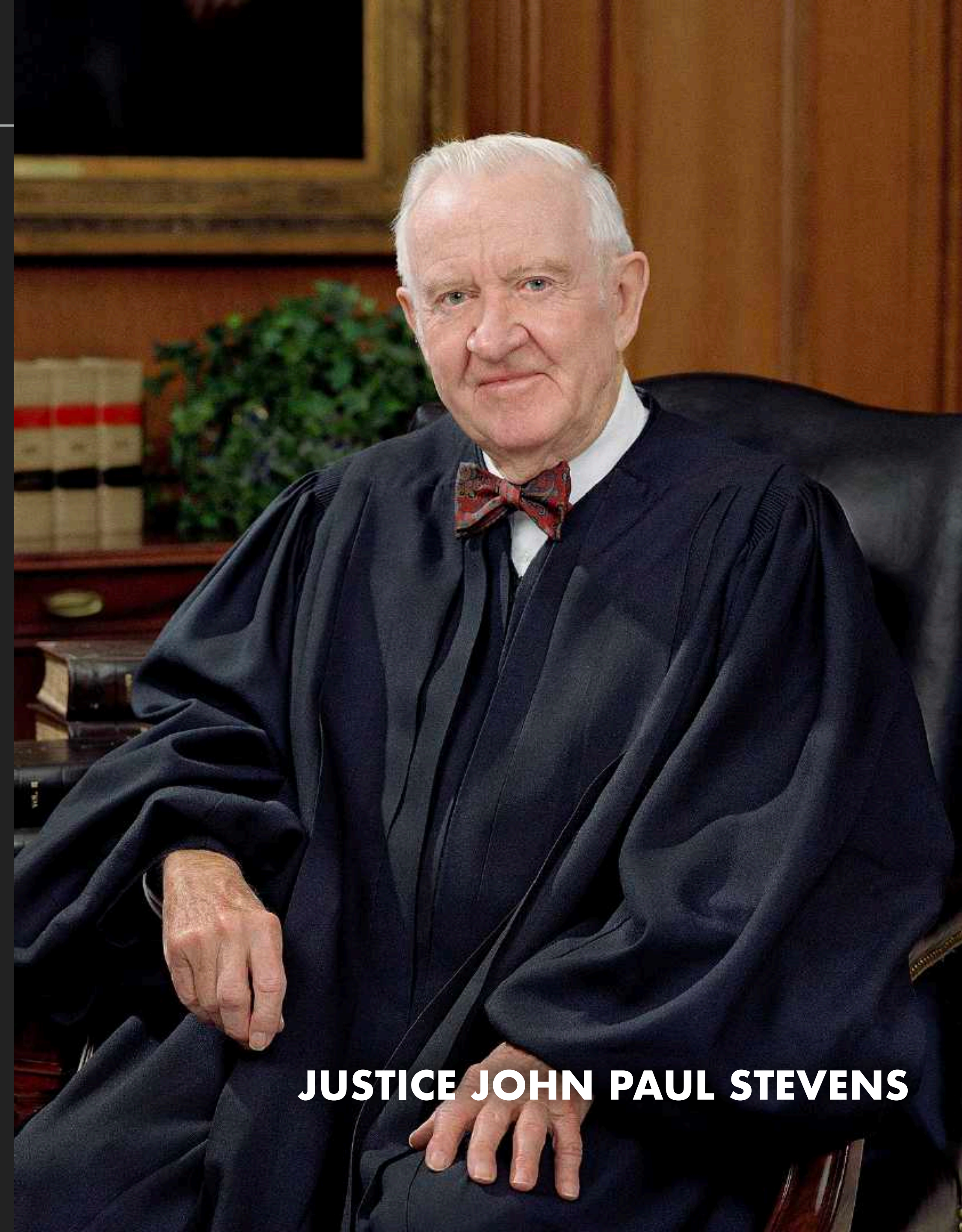
HARD AND SOFT MONEY

- ▶ Loopholes undermined the intent of FECA.
 - ▶ While the law could restrict **hard money**—direct donations to candidates—it could do little against **soft money**—donations to parties and interest groups.
- ▶ The **McCain-Feingold Act** (2002) was a bipartisan effort to control spending. It increased the individual donation limit, but reduced PAC spending and increased disclosure requirements.
- ▶ The **Citizens United v. Federal Elections Commission** decision (2010) gutted McCain-Feingold.



CITIZENS UNITED

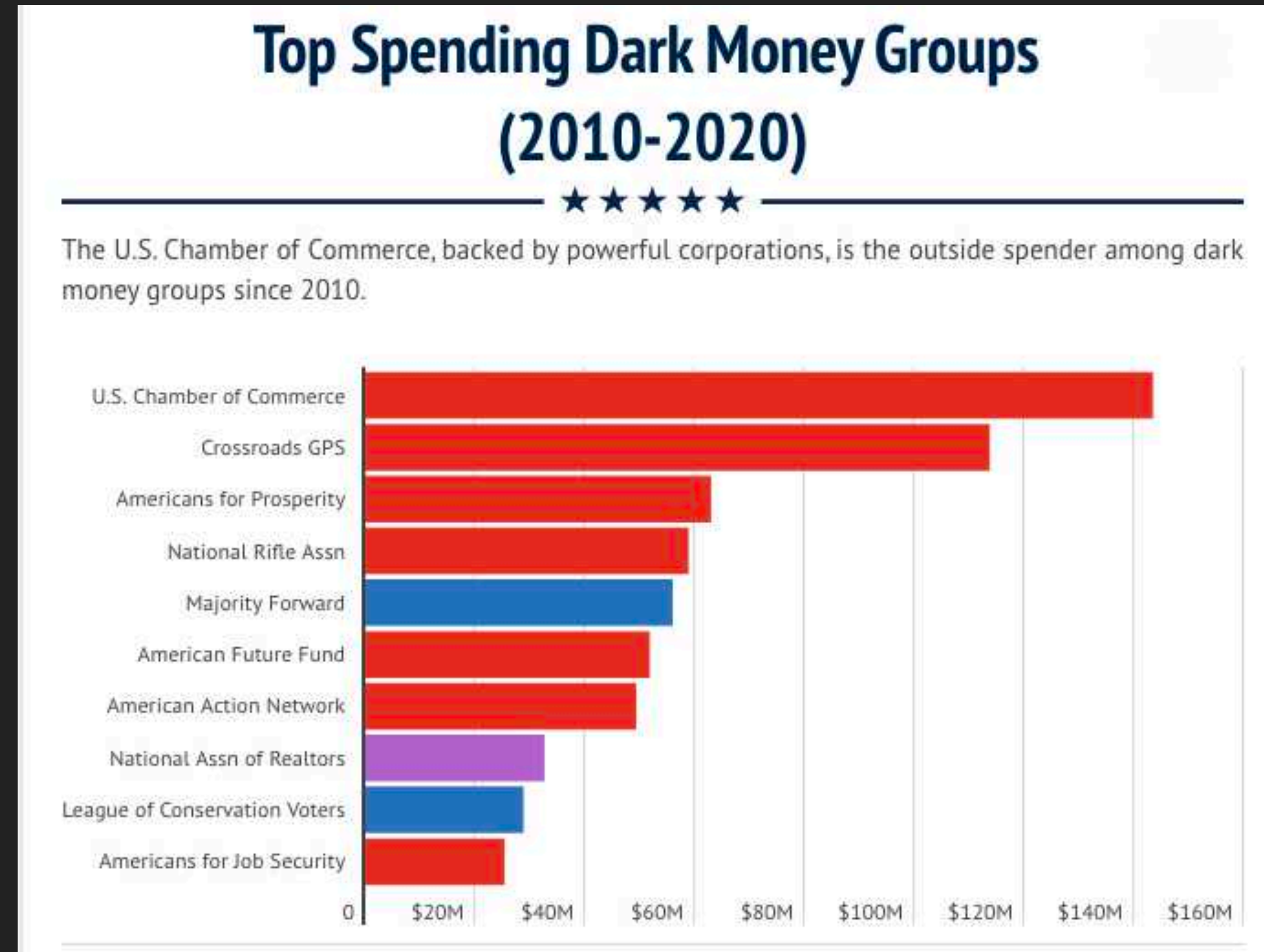
- ▶ In a 5-4 decision, the Court ruled that:
 - ▶ The First Amendment **prohibits restrictions on political speech.**
 - ▶ In effect, corporations and unions, among others, **are regarded as holders of individual rights.**
 - ▶ According to Senate Leader Mitch McConnell, the decision was “an important step in the direction of restoring the First Amendment rights.”
 - ▶ According to Justice John Paul Stevens, it was “a rejection of the common sense of the American people, who have recognized a need to prevent corporations from undermining self government.”



JUSTICE JOHN PAUL STEVENS

IMPACT OF CITIZENS UNITED

- ▶ Lack of transparency: elections have been flooded by **dark money**: unlimited, anonymous donations to soft money groups.
- ▶ The Brennan Center claims that Citizens United threatens the **impartiality of state judges**, permits **foreign spending in American elections**, and gives **disproportionate voice to the rich**.
 - ▶ They found that more than 60% of the \$1 billion spent on dark money came from 195 people/couples.
 - ▶ The **Koch Brothers** were the most famous. Another family, the **Mercers**, spent \$20 million in just 2021.



POLITICAL ACTION COMMITTEES

- ▶ Political action committees (PACs) come in four varieties:
 - ▶ **Connected PACs** are PACs connected to organizations like businesses and unions. They are **separate funds**, not from the budgets of the orgs. [Strict donation limits]
 - ▶ **Nonconnected PACs** are often single-issue PACs that can collect money from the general public and must disclose their donors. [Strict donation limits]
 - ▶ **Leadership PACs** are created by current and former elected officials. They can't fund that candidate, but can cover other candidate expenses. [Strict donation limits]
 - ▶ **Super PACs** are the dominant player post-Citizens United. They can raise and spend unlimited funds, but cannot **coordinate** with candidates. [No donation limits]

SUPER PAC SPENDING

2010 _____ **\$63 MILLION**

2012 _____ **\$610 MILLION**

2014 _____ **\$345 MILLION**

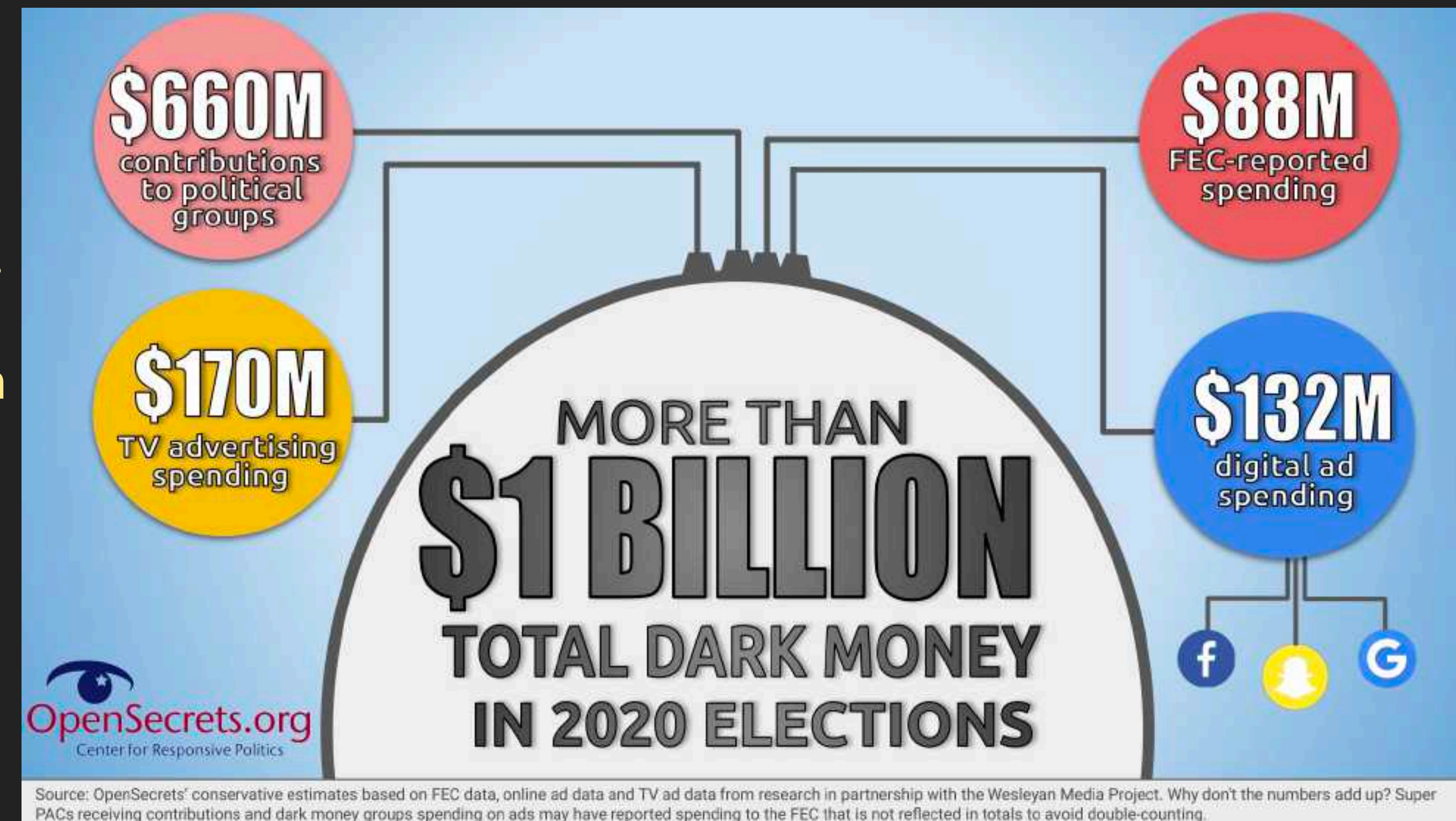
2016 _____ **\$1.1 BILLION**

2018 _____ **\$822 MILLION**

TOTAL _____ **\$2.9 BILLION**

OTHER ORGANIZATIONS

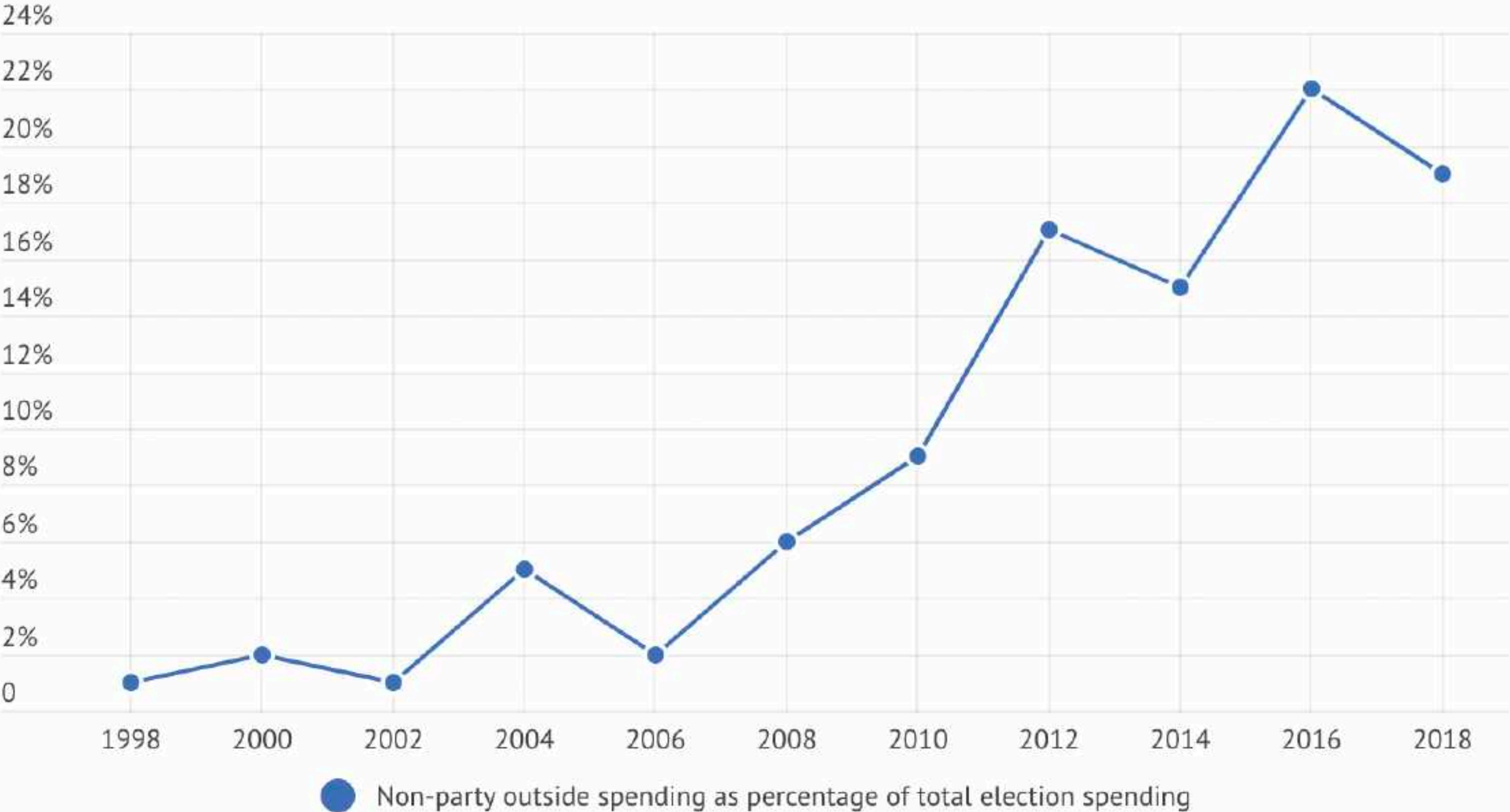
- ▶ **527 organizations** are parties, candidates, committees or associations organized for the purpose of influencing.
 - ▶ They can raise and spend unlimited funds as long as they don't coordinate with candidates.
- ▶ **501(c)4 or social welfare groups** range from local organizations to raise money for volunteer fire departments to massive organizations like the **NRA** and **Sierra Club**.
 - ▶ These groups may **not spend more than 50% of their revenue on politics**, but their donors are **anonymous**, leading critics to assail them as **dark money**.



Proportion of Non-Party Outside Spending (1998-2018)



Following the Citizens United decision in January 2010, outside spending exploded, becoming a larger proportion of total election-related spending with each midterm and presidential election.





Outside Spending by Group (2004-2018 Cycles)

