



PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN FUNDRAISING HEATS UP

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The fundraising race is on for nine Democratic candidates who would like to replace President Bush in 2004.

When Retired General Wesley Clark jumped into the already crowded presidential race, the former NATO commander was behind in experience, coverage, and dollars. The eight other candidates for the Democratic nomination had been campaigning for months. But in the short time he's been officially running, Clark has already raised \$3.5 million.

The role of fundraising in politics

Fund raising is an important part of politics. It takes money to run a political campaign – and for the presidential race, it takes a lot. In the 2000 presidential election, President George Bush spent over \$185 million.

Candidates need to pay for television ads, newspaper ads, radio ads, posters and billboards, promotional material, and transportation. They need to pay their staff, and while they may have volunteers, those volunteers often cost money even if they're working for free – at the very least they need office supplies and a pizza party or two.

There are also rules that cover how politicians can raise money and how much they can accept. For example, candidates can only accept up to \$2,000 from any individual. They can also accept up to \$5,000 from political committees.

Howard Dean sets a record for Democrats

Despite the restrictions, the current candidates have already amassed quite a lot of cash for their campaigns. Ex-Gov. Howard Dean of Vermont, who started out with a small budget and little name recognition, has used grassroots campaigning and the Internet to raise \$25.4 million this year -- including a Democratic record-breaking \$14.8 million in the last three months.

Senator John Kerry of Massachusetts has raised more than \$20 million, and Senator John Edwards of North Carolina \$14.5 million. Minority Leader Dick Gephardt – the former top Democrat in the House of Representatives – has raised \$13.6 million. Senator Joseph Lieberman of Connecticut, who was former Vice President Al Gore's running mate in 2000, has raised \$11.8. Ohio Representative Dennis Kucinich has raised \$3.4 million.

Former senator and ambassador Carol Moseley Braun of Chicago, the only woman running, has raised \$343,000. Civil rights activist Al Sharpton has brought in \$306,000

The nomination process

All these candidates are running for the Democratic Party nomination. Starting In January 2004, there will be a series of nomination contests across the country – elections to pick the Democratic nominee.

Each state has its own laws for nominating presidential candidates, but there are two basic methods -- primaries and caucuses. A **primary** is much like the general election, in which qualified voters go to a poll to cast a ballot for a candidate within one party. A **caucus** requires voters to show up as a group at a polling location at a scheduled date and hour. The voters listen to speeches and debate the candidates before an informal vote or head count is taken. Both processes choose delegates to represent a candidate at the national convention this summer.

The first caucus is in January in Iowa and the first official primary is in New Hampshire. By late March, we should know who the Democratic candidate is. Once a winner is picked, that's when the general election race starts – against President George Bush.

President Bush's advantages

President Bush has raised \$83.9 million this year. He also has a big advantage in that he is an incumbent – he's already in office. Unlike his Democratic rivals, he doesn't have to worry about a tiring primary that will drain his funds – the Republican Party appears likely to automatically pick him as their nominee. Although he has several advantages, it does not mean his victory is certain. Many incumbent presidents have lost before – including Mr. Bush's own father in 1992.

After the primaries, Mr. Bush and whoever wins the Democratic nomination will face off for the oval office. The candidates will crisscross the country debating each other and making speeches, trying to convince voters that they have the most valuable experience for the job and their views and ideas best represent the interests of the country.

The election is November 2nd, 2004. Between then and now, expect a fair amount of handshakes, baby kissing, photo-ops and political commercials.

By Chris Nammour, Online NewsHour

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