

Viewpoint

The Battalion
Texas A&M University

Tuesday
May 3, 1977

Big bucks not needed to win big

WASHINGTON — It may be the greatest testimony to the honesty of the members of Congress ever provided. That's saying a lot, but it seems justified by the way those members of Congress answered the questions put to them in a survey conducted for the Federal Election Commission and released last week.

A word of explanation. Last November's election was the first conducted under the stiff disclosure requirements and contribution limits enacted by Congress in 1974. When the election was over, the FEC — the unit charged with administering the new law — had the bright idea of polling the real experts, the candidates who operated under the law, for their views on its effects.

For \$57,000, the commission persuaded Richard Wirthlin, a leading Republican pollster, and Peter D. Hart, an eminent Democratic survey-taker, to combine forces for this project.

Hart Research Associates and Decision Making Information, Wirthlin's firm, interviewed key people in 850 House and Senate campaigns — an accurate 40 per cent cross-section of the 2,150 who sought nomination and election last year. Most of the answers came directly from the candidates; the rest, from campaign managers.

The result is a fascinating catalogue of information about those campaigns, shattering a lot of popular myths.

The biggest victim of the survey is the very idea that gave birth to the 1974 campaign reform law — the notion that American politics is saturated and corrupted by runaway spending.

Quite the contrary. The median amount of money reported spent in a 1976 House or Senate campaign was \$24,000. Less than one in five campaigns had a six-figure budget; only 1 per cent spent a million dollars or more.

These were not the high-powered campaigns we think of, with slick operators and media-manipulators. They were, in Hart's phrase, "mom-and-pop" operations. Less than one-third of the congressional candidates even had professional campaign managers.

Low spending and scant professionalism are a surefire formula for political defeat. The study reminds us that seven out of ten of those who filed for Congress were defeated in either the primary or the general election.

The study also shows that the biggest factor in determining one's chances of success is incumbency: 93 per cent of the in-

cumbents won; 92 per cent of their challengers lost.

Overall, the survey tells us, the candidates were evenly split on the question whether the new campaign law, on balance, helped the political process more than it hurt. The chief benefit, they said, was increased disclosure of the sources of campaign funds; the chief burden, the voluminous reports that made such disclosure effective.

But on one key question — so much at the center of debate when the law was being passed — the candidates agreed by a 72 to 12 per cent margin that the act "increased the advantage an incumbent already has in running for re-election."

Even the people who wrote the 1974 law were honest enough to say that was the case. By a margin of 3-to-2, the 1976 incumbents conceded that they had passed a Watergate "reform" measure which made them even more immune

from effective challenge.

That fact ought to be at the center of attention when Congress takes up the question of amending the 1974 law and possibly adding public financing for congressional campaigns.

The evidence is that the regulatory aspects of the 1974 law are strong enough, and probably need simplification. Most candidates are over-regulated; they are no more corruptible than church-mice, and just as poor.

What they need are not more regulations but more campaign cash. The question is how to get it to them. One answer might be to relax the curbs on private contributions. But in this survey, challengers said by a 4-to-1 margin that if there were no limits on contributions, their incumbent opponents would have had an even greater advantage. And the incumbents agreed that was the case.

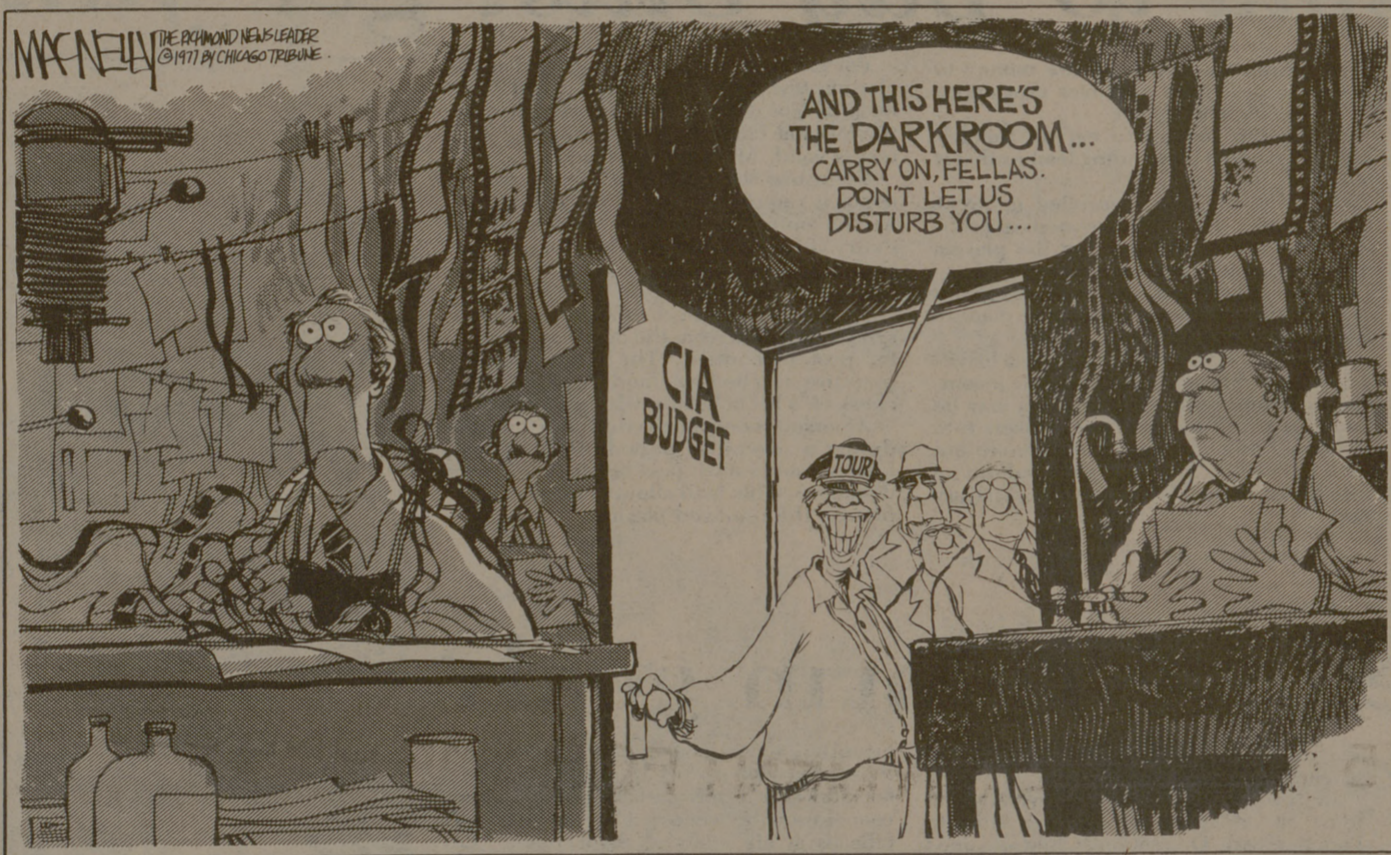
Unfortunately, there was no direct

question in the survey on the candidates' attitude toward public financing of House and Senate races. Theoretically, that is a hopeful avenue. But the levels of public subsidy being discussed are minimal, compared to the lavish taxpayer-financed advantages of staff, offices, mailings and travel incumbents already enjoy.

Adding equal amounts of campaign subsidies for incumbents and challengers and slapping a spending ceiling on, too, could just increase the safety incumbents already enjoy — as the 1974 "reform" did.

The great value of this survey is that it focuses attention on the right issue for the 1977 "election reform" debate. That issue is the effect any change in the law will have on the competitiveness of House and Senate races. Even the people who wrote the 1974 law now acknowledge that it had an incumbent "tilt" to it. Ending that "tilt" is the real test now facing Congress.

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Readers' Forum

Gays — a question of propriety

Editor: We appreciated very much the reports of The Battalion correspondents in their series of four articles about homosexuality. The issue of homosexuality is of great importance to Texas A&M University at this time because of the legal action taken against the university for its refusal to grant recognition to a homosexual student organization. As a contribution to the ongoing discussion of homosexuality we would like to make the following observations.

- 1. As noted in the fourth Battalion article, "doctors confirm that no evidence has been found to prove homosexuality a genetic occurrence."
- 2. Thus, as the article commented, homosexuality is a learned behavioral pattern such as smoking or drinking.
- 3. The crucial issue, then is whether the

homosexual lifestyle is a "proper" lifestyle. If "proper," then homosexuals could be regarded as, say, drinkers. If "improper," they could be regarded, as say, alcoholics.

4. It is perhaps easier, with these analogies, to determine what our attitudes should be toward homosexuals. If we assume that the homosexual lifestyle is "improper" then, as with alcoholics, we would not limit their right to a university education, housing, or other civil rights. Furthermore, those who were not homosexuals should be open and sympathetic to homosexuals and not ostracize them socially. However, heterosexuals would surely find it necessary to resist any attempt by homosexuals to convert anyone to their lifestyle.

5. Also, if the homosexual lifestyle were "improper" it would appear to be unrea-

sonable for the university to recognize an organization whose purpose was to promote homosexuality (or alcoholism). We would be surprised, however, if the university would refuse to recognize a group such as Alcoholics Anonymous. And, if the homosexual community wished to organize a group which was devoted to helping homosexuals "kick the habit," the university might well recognize the group.

6. Returning to the crucial issue of the propriety of homosexuality, the third Battalion article states: "the religious philosophies which underlie the sexual mores of our society were brought together and elaborated by men who believed that a life of celibacy, abstinence, and asceticism was morally superior to one containing any sexual expression." This statement is simply untrue. The Christian

attitude toward homosexuality goes back to the second chapter of the Bible which was written in a society where large families were honored. In this biblical passage, the woman was made by God because man was incomplete without her and the pair were to "be fruitful and multiply." This Christian view of the proper relationship between men and women is the basis for our (and, until recently, our society's) opposition to homosexuality.

- Walter Bradley, Dept. of Mechanical Engineering
- Helmet Esau, Dept. of English
- John A. McIntyre, Dept. of Physics
- James G. Miller, Dept. of Mathematics
- Robin I. Welch, Texas Experiment Station

Letters to the Editor

Academy cadets blast story

Editor: I am writing this letter to let Aggies everywhere know that reporter Jim Crawley's attempted expose concerning life at Texas Maritime Academy is a sham and a farce. Many of the students at Moody College, especially those in the Corps, found this article extremely disturbing. It creates a distorted picture of the relationship that exists between the cadets. This is an insult to the men and women who have served as cadets aboard the Texas Clipper.

The journalistic techniques used by Mr. Crawley to support his preconceived notions undermines the credibility of The Battalion on this campus. He interviewed people and selected only the statements that would create a "sensational" type of story, whether they actually applied to the situation at hand or not.

In an attempt to create a sensational and shocking article, Mr. Crawley completely ignored the actual status of the relationships that exist at Moody College, using past times to substantiate today's life. The article is factual in that he accredited those who made the statements; however, they were taken entirely out of context and used by him in such a way as to create his sensational expose. Many of the situations which Mr. Crawley describes should not be placed under the label of hazing or sexual discrimination. The only label applicable is "Good Aggie Bull."

Not only is the article unfair and misleading, but is a violation of the "Spirit of Aggieland" because it can serve no purpose but to divide and weaken rather than unify and strengthen. The Battalion owes

the students of Moody College an apology for the unfair and misleading article; more importantly, it owes the students of Texas A&M an accurate and complete perspective of what Moody College has to offer in the way of educational facilities, training and last but not least, social activities.

—Lynn Bell, TMA

IM ignored

Editor: I would like to call your attention to the article of April 28 concerning the Texas Maritime Academy. This is the first time that I have seen any article in The Battalion concerning TMA and I am quite shocked that the newspaper would focus on an attitude with which the author of the story has not spent any substantial time. Quotes from the girls were taken out of context and the school was made to sound as a haven for weirdos. For someone who is not personally familiar with TMA, the article presents a pretty bleak picture. We at TMA feel let down by such an attitude as this.

In the fall, the Corps intramural football team which was the champion out of a total of eight teams here in Galveston traveled to A&M and played F-1 in an intramural regulation game set up by the Intramurals Department at A&M. We beat F-1 (which was the Intramural All-University champion) and the results of the game were subsequently not publicized at all, nor would the Intramurals

Department recognize it. Each summer, our training ship carries the name of Texas A&M University for foreign and domestic ports. It is hard to appreciate such a disrespectful attitude by fellow Aggies.

—Doug McCormick '78
Corps Commander, TMA

Reality lost

Editor: Mr. Crawley's article of April 28 has misrepresented this school and its students to such an extent that all touch with reality is lost.

The article pretended to describe life for female cadets at TMA. In doing so, Mr. Crawley chose to quote only four female cadets and three male cadets, hardly a representative figure of the 17 female and 147 male cadets. Furthermore, the quotes chosen were taken out of context, and this along with the use of trivial examples, past experiences no longer applicable and practical jokes distorts our way of life beyond comprehension.

Any writer, and therefore any publisher, that professes to describe a minority or anyone's way of life must back up generalities by specific, accurate examples. The women's reasons for being here are as many and as varied as the men's. The anonymous for student opinions is the Great White Sea Gull; he is not a "campus farce." The "Bilge Monster" is not, nor has he ever been part of any initiation rite. He

existed for one day last semester. Our initiation rite consists of a "quadding," a fine Aggie tradition here. I don't know anyone who has ever covered themselves with oil, seaweed or garbage. No one, since I have been here, to my knowledge, has ever been discriminated against, in any form. While the above are figments of Mr. Crawley's imagination, the rest of the article consists of maligned half-truths.

I feel that Mr. Crawley and The Battalion owe this school, the administration and the students — especially those "quoted" — an apology, and an article that fairly represents Moody College.

—M. Margaret Card, TMA

Top of the News Texas

Emergency power limited to state

The Texas Interconnected System, a grid between generating plants designed to provide power in emergencies, has been limited to the state by the Texas Public Utility Commission. The commission yesterday ordered two Texas utility companies to sever their Oklahoma affiliates from the system of tie-ins saying only Texas utilities can participate in the statewide system designed to prevent blackouts in periods of fuel shortages or high energy consumption. The unanimous decision by the commission forces West Texas Utilities Co. and Central Power & Light of Corpus Christi to cut electrical ties with Southwest Electric Power Co. and Public Service Co. of Oklahoma. Leon Jaworski, attorney for the Oklahoma holding company, says the commission to postpone action until Congress acts on President Carter's energy proposals. Jaworski said Carter's plan would strip Texas commission's jurisdiction. Garrett Morris, commission chairman, rejected Jaworski's request.

Hussein asks Houston for help

King Hussein, one in a series of Middle Eastern officials courting money and power from Houston, visited the South's largest city and asked for help. Help financially and help to solve the endless quest for peace. At a \$30-a-head luncheon sponsored by the Institute of International Education, the Chamber of Commerce, and other organizations, Mayor Fred Hofheinz told Hussein, "This nation is interested in world peace. We believe it is possible to settle conflict without force of arms." Hussein admitted his country had been limited in realizing its full growth potential by diverting funds to its armed forces.



HUSSEIN

Economist criticizes energy plan

Theodore R. Eck, chief economist for the Standard Oil Company of Indiana, said yesterday in Dallas that President Carter's energy program actually will do more to reduce the supply of petroleum than expand it, and at least one logical result of that reduction will be higher food prices. Without incentives to drill, he said, the annual reduction of oil wells would be about 10 per cent. And without more oil, he said, food and fiber industries would have to find other sources of fuel machinery.

Offshore blowout investigated

With its runaway well finally capped in the choppy water off the North Sea, the Phillips Petroleum Co. now is examining what caused the offshore blowout and what may be done to stop future accidents. Phillips vice president William A. Roberts said yesterday the blowout occurred during maintenance on the platform and there had been every reason to believe the well was dead when gas and oil suddenly came from the ocean floor, through the tubing and out the top of the rig.

Beame hopes for onshore oil base

It was a new role for New York City Mayor Abraham Beame — going hat-in-hand trying to convince an industry to do more business in his town. Faced with a steady exodus of corporations and resulting unemployment Beame and his associates came to the world's largest oil industry meeting in Houston with hopes of making the most of impending East Coast development. The mayor brought along two dozen business, labor, banking, civic and local government leaders to ask delegates to the annual Offshore Technology Conference to consider New York City as an onshore base for prospective drillers in the Baltimore Canyon and Georges Bank sites.



BEAME

Nation

Soviet trawler captain fined \$10,000

In the first action of its kind, the captain of a Soviet trawler has been fined \$10,000 and given a nine-month suspended prison sentence by a federal judge for stealing fish inside the U.S. 200-mile limit.

World

U.S. and Vietnam open talks today

The United States and Vietnam open talks today in Paris on establishing diplomatic relations and while no advance conditions have been set, the United States has one end in view while Vietnam has two. The chief interest for the United States is getting Vietnam's cooperation in tracing the 800 Americans still listed as missing in the Vietnam war, all of whom are believed dead. Vietnam's two goals are admission to the United Nations, which the U.S. veto has blocked so far, and U.S. aid in war damage reconstruction.

Protestants order strike in Belfast

A general strike ordered by militant Protestants began today with fires in Downtown Belfast and an explosion that damaged a major commuter railway line. One strike leader warned of a "bloodbath."

The Battalion

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