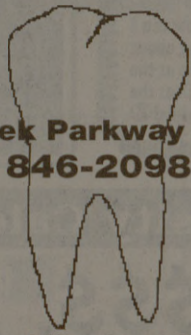


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Perot aims to ban PAC campaign funding

(AP) — The following are the responses of the major presidential candidates to the question: "What should be the main elements of campaign finance reform and how would you break the logjam that has thwarted it in the last three Congresses?"

Bill Clinton

"Our goal is to take the reins of our democracy away from big special interests, from big money, and to put them back into the hands of ordinary Americans where they belong. Our bottom-line test should be: Will our efforts make our government more representative, not less representative?"

Bob Dole

"If elected, I will work with

leaders of both parties in the Congress to form a bipartisan commission. ... By taking this issue out of day-to-day politics, the logjam that has stopped such reform in the past will be avoided. ...

First, we simply cannot allow the political influence of any American to be outweighed by foreign money. If you're not eligible to vote, you shouldn't be permitted to make a contribution. ...

Second, donations from corporations or labor unions to federal candidates or parties to influence federal elections should be prohibited; soft money must be eliminated. Third, no American should be compelled against his will to give up a portion of his weekly paycheck to finance an organization's political agenda. ... And fourth, the influence

of political action committees must be curtailed."

Ross Perot

"1. Banning PACs from contributing any money. 2. Requiring candidates for the House of Representatives to raise all their campaign funds from voters within the district they want to represent. 3. Requiring candidates for the Senate to raise all their campaign funds from voters within their state. 4. Shorten ... campaign seasons. 5. Requiring all candidates to return or donate unspent campaign funds. Today, surplus funds are sometimes used for personal expenses. ... 6. Giving the Federal Election Commission more power to enforce the law. ...

"This can only be accomplished if the American people vote for men and women who are

Control of the House depends on South

JACKSON, Miss. (AP) — At 32, Chip Pickering of Mississippi seems headed for Congress next year, a young, conservative Republican son of the South all but certain to take the place of a veteran Democrat who is retiring.

Democrats hope Pickering is the exception on Election Night.

Republicans hope he's the rule. Either way, the struggle between the parties for control of the House could easily hinge on seats such as the one Pickering is after.

There are 19 of them across the South, races where Democrats are departing Congress and where Republicans hope for gains they'll need to offset the losses their freshman class is likely to suffer elsewhere in the country.

Merle Black, professor at Emory University and student of Southern politics, says Democrats are doing better than expected in these races, in large measure because many of their candidates are conservatives.

"If the conservative candidates can still get the minority vote out and they can split that moderate to conservative white vote, then they are in good position to suffocate the Republicans," he said.

At present, said Black, "there are only a small number of seats where it seems clear the Republicans are going to pick up" ground from the Democrats.

Democrats need a gain of 18 seats to recapture control of the House. And with five days of campaigning remaining, officials in both parties agree there's an unusual number of close races.

The situation in Senate races is similar in one respect, with Democrats forced to defend Southern

seats without benefit of an incumbent in Alabama, Arkansas, Georgia and Louisiana.

Unlike the House, though, there is no obvious large group of endangered Republicans — such as the House freshmen — where Democrats can count on making gains of their own.

The political outlook in House races is influenced by local voter groups, the candidates and their financing and other issues.

In Virginia, for example, Democrats are favored to hold onto a seat with Virgil Goode, a conservative state senator and foe of gun control.

Democrats are relatively comfortable about their chances for holding two Florida districts, but they face a stiffly competitive struggle for the seat being vacated by veteran Rep. Sam Gibbons in the Tampa area.

Two Democratic retirements in Alabama have set up fierce races. Arkansas provides two more.

In North Carolina, Democrat Mike McIntyre, more conservative than his Republican rival, is running narrowly ahead in private polls.

Republicans seem certain to take away one Texas seat, probably one other and perhaps one or two more. They're favored to claim a seat in Oklahoma, as well.

Democratic competitiveness this year contrasts with the 1994 elections, when Republicans picked up more than 20 Democratic House seats en route to fashioning their first majority in 40 years.

Their new base was reflected in the leadership — Speaker

Newt Gingrich, Majority Leader Dick Armey and Whip Tom DeLay all represent Southern constituencies. And within a year of the 1994 election, five Southern Democratic House members switched parties, underscoring their belief that the GOP was the party of the future.

"People have come to realize that the days of the Southern conservative Democrats, and I say unfortunately, have come to an end, where they can rise to positions of leadership" in their own party, Pickering said in an interview.

A former aide to Senate Majority Leader Trent Lott, Pickering returned home to run for Congress when veteran Democratic Rep. G.V. "Sonny" Montgomery announced plans to retire after 15 terms and a career that often left him at odds with the Democratic caucus.

He's already got his eye on seats on the National Security, Commerce and Agriculture committees.

His opponent, John Arthur Eaves Jr., stresses his conservative credentials, as well. He's opposed to abortions "without exception" and gun control, favors prayer in school and supports a "strong military."

But there's little doubt about the likely winner in this race.

Pickering received only \$5,000 from the GOP congressional campaign committee, far less than most others GOP challengers, because the party figures he didn't need any more.

Eaves hasn't received any money from his party because they reckoned his prospects didn't warrant it.

Outside this district, though, the political picture becomes cloudier quickly.

"The fact is that we have real troubles in two seats only down there, maybe two or three," says Rob Engel, political director of the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee.

"The fact is that we have real troubles in two seats only down there, maybe two or three."

Rob Engel
Political director,
Democratic Congressional
Campaign Committee

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Hometown mayor endorses Gramm instead of Morales

DALLAS (AP) — The mayor of a Texas town Wednesday criticized his own endorsement of a former Crandall city man and endorsed his opponent, Republican U.S. Sen. Phil Gramm.

Victor Morales' hometown Wednesday criticized his own endorsement of a former Crandall city man and endorsed his opponent, Republican U.S. Sen. Phil Gramm.

While Morales was the wheel of the pick-up truck that has become a symbol of the upstart campaign, Gramm's office gathered Crandall Mayor Terry Hedrich with more than half-dozen North Texas mayors in a joint endorsement.

"Everybody in Texas has heard of Morales. I don't know if they turn out to be concerned. They are worried about the economy. It's not likely to be the best thing for what's good for 2,000 people in the city of Crandall, how many people ignore the needs of 18 million Texans."

The Democrat's spokesman said he wasn't concerned about the mayors' endorsement of Gramm.

"I was not shocked by the fact that there were a few Republicans out there," Steve Hall said. "I know, it's no different than Aggies for Morales. It's surprising to see those things that campaign strategy by dis-

ing. It is one of those things where some endorsements mean something, but a lot of endorsements are very public and don't really mean anything. They don't sway people."

Hedrich and some of the other mayors on an endorsement list gathered on the most Hotel's banquet floor.

"All of us are endorsing Phil Gramm because he's been at the forefront of the issues who've been hit with funded mandates," Green Mayor Sue Ann Harting said.

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