

**Iranian Studies Group at MIT
Research Publication Series**



**The Role of Iranian-Americans in the 2004
Presidential Campaign**



Part I- Campaign Donation
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Introduction

While recent Census data shows that Iranians are one of the most successful ethnic minorities in the U.S., both in terms of education and wealth generation, they have a disproportionately underrepresented in the American political arena. This can be attributed to fragmentation in the Iranian community, as well as the precarious position of Iranian-Americans in emphasizing their Iranian heritage in face of U.S.-Iranian relationships in the last 25 years and the negative stereotypes associated with Iran. There is a growing recognition among Iranian-Americans about importance of getting involved in the civic life in the United States. Specifically, in the aftermath of September 11th tragedy, increasing restrictions and regulations are being set in the national level that in many cases violate the rights of Iranian-Americans. Such regulations are creating a lot of hardship for this community and underline the importance of involvement in political process, if Iranian-Americans want to preserve their basic rights for which they have chosen this country to live in. Increasingly, Iranian-Americans now realize that they deserve a bigger share of policy making in the community and society level. However, as a community, Iranian-Americans have little experience of participating in civic activities. Therefore there is a gap between the desired level of participation and the capacity to motivate and organize such involvement.

This study is an attempt to provide the Iranian-American community with a perspective of why such participation is important. The report is presented in two main sections and four appendices. In the first section, we discuss why it is both necessary and beneficial for Iranian Americans to get involved in the political process. Having a good answer for this question is important from different aspects. On the one hand, in order to convince potential donors to spend their money, or community members to spend their time, one needs to have a set of convincing arguments that can persuade people with different values and priorities. On the other hand, having a broad view of potential benefits helps community leaders and organizers to keep motivated, as one can better appreciate the importance of the task s/he is doing. Furthermore, we discuss some strategies and planning steps that need to be considered for increasing the chances of success in this campaign.

An important note should be made here. In developing this report, we have mainly focused on those reasons and avenues for involvement that are mainly independent of any particular candidate. This focus is motivated by the belief that getting involved in the national and local politics, independent of party-lines, is beneficial for the Iranian community as a whole. Moreover, this focus is pragmatic because it enables the community leaders to involve more individuals based on what is in common between Iranian -Americans, rather than specific political orientations.

The Iranian Studies Group at MIT
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Who We Are: An Short Overview of Iranian-Americans

Estimated Population in the U.S. (Source: 2000 Census, July 2003 update)

Persons claiming primary and secondary Iranian ancestry: 338,266 *

* The Iranian-American community believes there may be serious underestimation of the actual population due to adverse perceptions of Iranian-Americans on claiming Iranian ancestry. Higher bound of the uncertainty range is estimated at 540,000 people.

Educational Attainment (Source: 1990 Census, 2000 Census data not yet available)

High School Diploma and Higher	90.8%	(Second highest among 67 ancestry groups)
Bachelor's Degree or Higher	56.2%	(Second highest among 67 ancestry groups)
Master's Degree of Higher	26.2%	(Highest among 67 ancestry groups)

Income Levels (1990 Census data, 2000 data not available)

Median household income: \$36, 800 (20% more than National average)
Median family income: \$42,000 (20% more than National average)

Iranian-Americans and the U.S. Economy

Iranian-Americans have founded and served in senior leadership positions of many major U.S. companies, many of them in the Fortune 500. The ten most successful Iranian-Americans have been engaged in the senior leadership of companies worth over \$1000 Billion.

Iranian-Americans and the U.S. Academia

Hundreds of Iranian-American tenured and tenure-track academics are teaching and doing research at top-ranking universities in the U.S. According to a preliminary list compiled by the MIT Iranian Studies Group Research Team, there are over 500 Iranian-American academics teaching at Universities such as MIT, Harvard, Carnegie Melon, Yale, Princeton, University of California System (Los Angles, Berkeley, Irvine, San Diego), Stanford, USC, Georgia Tech, University of Wisconsin, University of Michigan, University of Illinois, California Institute of Technology, Boston University, University of Maryland, George Washington University, and hundreds of other universities and colleges throughout the United States.

Source: MIT Iranian Studies Group Factsheet on the Iranian-American Community 2003



Why Donate: Rationale for Iranian-American Campaign Donations

One of the main tasks is to convince the Iranian-American community to make donations in the political campaign. Moreover, highlighting potential benefits of “collective” political involvement boosts the morale of individuals as well as the community at large, to take an active role in this campaign. Therefore in this section we overview some important reasons of why participation would benefit the Iranian-American community in general and donors themselves in particular.

Getting Recognition As a Community

Taking part in political campaigns is one of the major ways of getting recognition as a community in the U.S. The active participation of Iranian-Americans in the Presidential Campaign of 2004 can bring the needs of the community to the attention of the candidates. It is important to remember that the last presidential campaign was won by a difference of a couple of hundred votes. As a community, it is to the interest of Iranian-Americans in making their presence noticed, both by financial support of a candidate who pays attention to their concerns, as well as through the voting process. Moreover, recognition as a bona fide minority, can bring important business opportunities (e.g. through mandated contracts offered to minority-based firms) for this community. It should be noted however, that only a “collective” engagement can lead to a recognition of Iranian-American community not “individual” support or donation.

Have Tax Dollars Count

Every dollar and every vote counts. The Presidential election of 2000 was won by a few hundred votes difference. This makes the support of a community like ours crucial for presidential candidates. Even donations of the Iranian-American community on the national level could decide the fate of the elections. In fact, the return on investment of donating to political campaigns is very high for the Iranian-American community.

To put this into perspective, consider the following: an established Iranian professional or businessman with an average annual income of \$100,000 will pay approximately \$30,000 or **30%** in federal and state taxes without getting any political voice. A donation of \$500 would make that similar to a **30.5%** tax bracket would give that person a personal contact with major politicians that can be individually very beneficial for that person.

Moreover, at the community level, even if 5% of the Iranian community adopts such a strategy based on their taxes, over 10 million dollars of donations can be raised. Such contribution will transfer Iranian-Americans from an ignored minority to one of the most influential groups in the United States (note that the total cost of presidential campaign for a candidate is usually in the order of 50 million dollars, and the at the local level, contributions as low as \$500 count).



Shifting the Focus of Action from Iran to the U.S.

The Iranian-American community has to face the fact that they are not directly involved in determining the fate of Iran. Many have already realized that despite emotional ties to Iran, the U.S. will remain their home and that of their children probably even if there are major changes in Iran. However, this does not imply that they cannot help build a better future for Iran. Participation in political campaigns can give the Iranian-American community a voice on U.S. foreign policy regarding Iran. On the other hand the influence can be used to address the needs of the community within the U.S. itself in their relationship with Iran and Iranians (e.g. building business ties, visiting Iran, economic relationships etc.)

Emerging from the passive victim mentality

The Iranian-American community is in a difficult position. Because of the troubled nature of U.S.-Iranian relationship in the past two and a half decades, it is reluctant to identify itself strongly with its roots. This has led to a passive role of the community in the American political life. Iranian-Americans who have gone through the difficult times of the hostage-taking period and the post-9/11 world tend to keep a low profile for their community. Taking on stereotypes and playing an active role in community and national level politics can change this harmful tendency.

Lobbying for Better Treatment for Iranians Coming to the U.S

Many immigrant communities have used their contact with local and national politicians to help their loved ones with visa and immigration issues. In general, once the Iranian-American community is recognized as a serious participant in U.S. civic life, it can lobby for issues that affect its welfare, such as Visa issues, discrimination against Iranian students, etc. In general, Iranian-Americans deserve, and should strive for a significant positive shift in their position as a minority in the U.S. Such shift comes from active participation in the local and national politics, and the presidential campaign of 2004 is a unique chance to start this.

Organizing Iranian-American Campaign Contributions

There are some crucial steps facing Iranian-American community leaders that have to be accomplished to successfully engage Iranian-Americans in the campaign donation process. While the current problem at hand focuses on the presidential election of 2004, these steps will also serve as a checklist for any other political campaign. Moreover, taking these steps will lay the foundations needed for future activities that can promote the cause of Iranian-American community.

Articulating a vision

It is imperative that a vision be articulated for the Iranian-American community's participation in the U.S. political arena. A sample vision statement could be as follows:

“To gain a voice in the political process, which is becoming the Iranian-American community as one of the most educated and innovative immigrant communities in the U.S.; to be heard, respected and engaged by U.S. policymakers in issues that affect our community and the country we came from; to fight stereotypes, to be a proud-, united-, and strong community; to make a difference for our children, making them proud of their culture and heritage.”

Having set a vision, it is beneficial to have a few smart and short slogans that can be used to communicate the main message of the vision, as well our strategies, succinctly. Examples include: "Participate, be heard, be proud", "You pay 30% tax to be ignored, contribute 0.5% and be counted", "Proud to be Iranian-American".

Setting Goals and Performance Metrics

Goals are necessary to assess the success of any initiative, and provide corrective feedback. Moreover, they are the core of planning process and facilitate focusing on important issues. We need to set goals for different steps of the process, usually with a timeline for achieving them. In the case of Iranian-American participation in the political process the following could be sample goals that could be set by the organizers for the 2004 presidential campaign:

- Raising a total of \$200,000 on the National Scale by March 2004
- Involving more than 50 young Iranian-Americans in the election fundraising campaign
- Releasing monthly press releases in major media outlets
- Establishing contact with all other Iranian-American organizations active in the political campaign financing process.

Convincing the donors

The critical step is convincing the donors of the benefits they can reap if they participate in the effort, so that they are persuaded to take part. Moreover, we need the participation of donors for bringing in their own friends and contacts. The first part of this report provided a set of reasons that could be articulated to donors in this regard. It is specially important to highlight how donating 0.3%-0.5% of their income can give them and the entire community a voice in the political process, and how this campaign is successful independent of the final outcome of election.

Defining Iranian-American community concerns

An essential step in the direction of affecting the political process is to clearly identify a set of concerns and needs of the Iranian-American community that most community members can agree on. This is important, since it will be the main unifying theme for the community of Iranian-Americans, and will be the message articulated to politicians during the campaign as the concerns of the community. Several of these possible concerns were mentioned in the first part of the report.

Organization and Leadership

Finally, the most important element of all: Organization and Leadership. There needs to be two plans for organizing the short-term campaign and organizing for the long-term involvement of Iranian-Americans. In the short term, there is a need to be persuasive, use the relationship networks, focus on high yield donors, and work through a local planning committee, which is effective and quick in making decisions. In long-term, the organizers must use their connections and networks to the best possible way in order to reach out to as many people as possible, even those who can only make smaller contributions. The final goal is to engage the community in every possible way. It is also imperative that a large number of younger people in the Iranian-American community be engaged in the process of bringing together potential donors, raising awareness in the community, help with public relations and media coverage and attend to the administrative needs of such an effort. Such a leadership would also need to devise a strategy for creating a sustainable process of involvement that would extend beyond the current presidential campaign and encompass future City, State and National elections.

Campaign Financing Strategies of other Ethnic Groups

Other Middle Eastern groups, including Israelis, Arabs, Turks and Armenians, have been far more active than Iranian-Americans in influencing the American politics for benefit of their community and their goals. On the lobbying front, the pro-Israel community is led by the American Israel Public Affairs Committee ([AIPAC](#)), which *Fortune* magazine ranks as one of the [top lobbying groups](#) in the country. AIPAC spent more than \$1.1 million [lobbying](#) in 2001, roughly the same amount it spent in 2000.

AIPAC is not registered as a political action committee with the Federal Election Commission and does not make campaign contributions as an organization. But its executive committee and board of directors have been reported to include some major campaign donors, and lawmakers considered by the organized Jewish community to be sympathetic to Israel can certainly expect to reap a harvest of pro-Israel campaign contributions.

Since the 1989-90 election cycle, [pro-Israel interests](#) have contributed \$41.3 million in individual, PAC, and soft money contributions to federal candidates and party committees. More than two-thirds of that total, or \$28.6 million, has gone to Democrats.*

The Arab community is a far less visible player on the political stage than the pro-Israel community, although campaign contributions from pro-Arab and pro-Muslim interests have risen steadily over the past decade. Virtually all of the [Arab and Muslim communities' political money](#) has come from a small group of PACs, which have contributed nearly \$297,000 to federal candidates and parties since the 1989-90 election cycle.*

This group is led by the Arab American Leadership PAC, the political arm of the [Arab American Institute](#). AAI is headed by Dr. James Zogby, who is perhaps the most high-profile figure in the Arab American community.

There are just two organizations with a record of lobbying for the Arab and Muslim community - the [National Association of Arab Americans](#) and the [American Muslim Council](#). Neither group spent more than \$14,000 on lobbying in a single year between 1997 and 2001. (A third group, the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee, registered to lobby in October 2001 but has not yet filed a lobbying expenditure report.)

What Money Can Buy in Politics

(Source: Center for Responsive Politics)

Ask lawmakers what special interests get for the money they invest in campaign contributions, and the often answer with a classic litany of one-two-three:

Money doesn't buy votes, but it does buy access, and access often leads to favorable action.

There was considerable agreement that interest-group lobbyists and PACs are indeed able to gain access to lawmakers through their campaign contributions. And this access can be crucial - especially when a member serves on the Senate or House committee that regulates the special interest. Most, but not all, members conceded that contributions played an important, and often decisive, role in determining which lobbyists they would make time to see and which ones would not get into the inner office to plead their case.

A few members maintained that contributions made no difference as to whether or not they gave access to a lobbyist. But in most instances, these same members agreed that many of their colleagues were probably not as high-minded and principled as they were.

What's more, many members conceded - occasionally only after some reluctance and rethinking - that a lobbyist's access often, but hardly always, leads to at least some favorable consideration and action. The lobbyist by no means is assured of everything he or she was seeking. But when members cannot go along with one vote, there's a good chance that they will try very hard to find some other vote down the line in which they can support the interest group that has, in turn, supported their reelection campaign.

Bottom line: Without the access there would have been no opportunity for friendly persuasion; without the persuasive arguments, there may not have been a favorable vote.

Here's how the system works, according to those who worked within it for years.

Rep. Romano Mazzoli (D-Kentucky)

People who contribute get the ear of the member and the ear of the staff. They have the access - and access is it. Access is power. Access is clout. That's how this thing works

I don't have to be coy or cutesy [with lobbyists, because I stopped accepting PAC contributions]. I don't have to find any soft landings I can say this is a good bill and I'm for it, or that's not something I can go with.

Rep. Peter Kostmayer (D-Pennsylvania)



You get invited to a dinner somewhere and someone gives you some money. And then you get a call a month later and he wants to see you. Are you going to say no? . . . You're not going to say no. So it does buy access. I think the answer is just to get rid of the money."

Senate Majority Leader George Mitchell (D-Maine)

I think it gives them the opportunity to gain access and present their views in a way that might otherwise not be the case.

House Minority Leader Robert Michel (R-Illinois)

I think there's a lot to access. You know, [as the lobbyist would say]: "How do I get my story across? I just don't have the resources to" - if you want to use a crass term - "buy everybody off or influence them financially."

What they would like is to at least have a rapport with a member who's articulate enough to use a phraseology or word here or there in getting the job done that I'd like to have done.

Well, that's true [that a lobbyist's access to a member is dependent on campaign contributions]. I expect some members say, "Well, I don't know that person from Adam's house cat." . . . [That's why lobbyists say] it would have been kind of nice to build up that rapport when they weren't in trouble.

Rep. Thomas Downey (D-New York)

Money doesn't buy . . . a position. But it will definitely buy you some access so you can make your case.

Certainly, at a time when a big tax bill would be pending, you would have a variety of interests, people who would want to see you. It is difficult to see members of Congress. Not because they hide themselves from you, but because they are very busy, between committee work and traveling back and forth from their districts, maintaining their office appointments and seeing their constituents.

[Now that he's become a lobbyist, Downey said, he often finds it advantageous to pay \$1,000 or more to attend a fund-raising cocktail or dinner party with a member of Congress.]

One thing you know that you'll have when you see somebody at a fund-raising event is that you're going to be there under fairly ideal circumstances. You're there because you contributed money to this person, so they're in a position to thank you It's rare that you accomplish much in the way of business that would make much difference to anybody. But what you do there, what people would do to me [when I was in Congress], and what I have done to them [since, as a lobbyist], is say, "Look, I'd appreciate if I could make an appointment to come and talk to you about this or that." That has happened to me When somebody is helping you win a campaign, you're going to at least certainly grant the request for a meeting



Very rarely, unless there was some overriding personal interest or constituent interest, would somebody come up to me who was a contributor or a lobbyist and say, "Look, can you introduce this amendment for us?" or "Would you be willing to vote for it?" It was much more the latter, as opposed to "Would you initiate a piece of legislation?" . . .

There are times when friends of mine who are lobbyists would bring things to my attention that I might not have been aware of, that I found interesting and compelling. But to me, there had to be some kind of public policy rationale for me to be interested in it. Just that somebody raised me money and wanted it was not enough.

I think there are members who might be more swayed by the friends who raised them some money. But you can't get away from the reality that . . . in today's climate, almost everything that you do is watched. So it's going to be very difficult for you to have a voting record that takes you down one path that has nothing to do with your constituency But sure, if you are wondering about the benefit of the doubt, clearly the benefit of the doubt is going to go to somebody who you know has been helpful to you

The biggest amount of money I ever saw spent, except for the health care fight, was on the 1986 Tax [Reform] Act. People [corporate contributors] were really upset with the 1986 tax act. They didn't want to see a lot of it happen. And it happened anyway.

Ways and Means Committee members make tremendous amounts of money. The best example of this is Pete Stark [D-California]. Pete accepts quite a lot of money from the health industry and goes about his merry way doing precisely what he wants to do. So . . . raising money means that, yes, you have a place at the table, you can make your point. But in most cases - certainly many - all it does is allow you that chance to make your case and nothing more.

Rep. Guy Vander Jagt (R-Michigan)

You always receive far more requests for appointments than you can handle So people are shuffled off to staff. But I'm sure many an AA [administrative assistant] has said to a congressman who said he didn't have time to see someone, "Well, he did give \$1,000 to your campaign."

And the congressman then says, "Oh, well, I better see him then." I'm sure that takes place; I have not witnessed it, but I'm sure.

Well, to be very frank and very candid, . . . when [George] Bush was vice president, I raised some money to endow a chair at Hope College [in Holland, Michigan] . . . I think for \$250,000. And when my AA would say, "Will you see so and so?" I'd say, "Oh, jeez, I'm so busy, can't you see him?" And he'd say, "Well, he was very generous on your chair." That happened a couple of times. But never on a campaign contribution. But I think my practice was not usual.

Access, of course, is very important [to a lobbyist]. You need to make your case. One thing that an experienced lobbyist knows is that no matter how angry he can be at a member for how he

voted, tomorrow there's going to be another game, and the next month another one. So I have never really seen retaliation, because they don't want to burn their bridges for the next round. Your enemy today will be your friend tomorrow.

Sen. Dennis DeConcini (D-Arizona)

Those who contribute are sometimes doing it purely for the purpose of access, and others are doing it for the purpose of good government. And somewhere down the line, they want access - so they get it. Many of them would get it without contributions, but some probably wouldn't. How you draw that line is very difficult

Now once you see somebody and talk to them about whatever is on their mind as it relates to government, you make a judgment whether or not you want to assist them, support them, and how active you want to be in doing that

The maritime industry has contributed to me. And [in Arizona] we don't have any, just don't have any. And they've contributed to me because they want me to listen to them about using American ships for exporting American goods. Well now, what do you do? You are in contact with them because they have made a contribution.

What they got out of me for that contribution is access to come in . . . and to tell me why this is good for their workers and why it's good - quote - "for America." And you know, there's nothing wrong with that, in my opinion. But when it is written up [in the newspapers] that the reason that the maritime guy is there is because they contributed, and that's why I know who they are, and also it's good for America, which one is going to be believable? The fact that they gave money.

If the peanut industry association - we don't grow any peanuts [in Arizona] - wanted to come see me, and they called up here and said, "Can I come up and see Sen. DeConcini?," chances are it would be no. So what do they do? They find a lobbyist here who knows me. And the lobbyist calls up and says, "I'm Lobbyist X." And they don't say this - that they've raised money for Senator DeConcini, but in fact they have, or that he's a friend of mine. I've got some lobbyists here who are genuine close friends of mine. And he says, "Can I bring in Mr. Peanut?" And Mr. Peanut comes in. So I talk to him.

Sen. Wyche Fowler (D-Georgia)

What happens is - at least what happened to me is - [I would] usually get a list of 30 lobbyists, [and start] calling them, asking them to be on my committee and raise me \$5,000 or \$10,000 by a specified date.

And then when they call and say, "Wyche, I'd like to talk to you about the agricultural bill or banking bill coming up next week," you say to yourself, "Well, absolutely." How can you not? You've asked them, and now they want to come and see you. Then you listen to them.

But because there's so much money - out of the \$6 million that I raised, my lord, I wouldn't know more than 50 people who'd even been active in helping raise that kind of money. There's no way



you can even call all these people to mind. So what you do is you listen. You ask questions. You try to make up your mind on the merits - and assume, or maybe hope [you can support them] If not, you say: "John, I've examined it, but I can't go with you. Maybe I'll be with you on the next one."

Rep. Dennis Eckart (D-Ohio)

Making contributions to buy access may have been true 15 to 20 years ago. But it has declined significantly today because of two factors. One is the electronic media, which reports literally live what Congress is doing. And second, by far and away the most effective lobbyist is not the lawyer in some glass and marble building in downtown Washington, it's the person who can get 100 cards or letters to come in against him or her in the next fall election

I don't want to mislead you: It has not eliminated it. I think it's vastly overstated that people believe they need to make contributions to get into see an elected officeholder I can tell you that people who make campaign contributions certainly do get appointments Contributions are a factor in getting access, but not the determining factor.

Rep. Vin Weber (R-Minnesota)

Members of Congress are stretched 16 different ways in terms of time So you get to the question of, "Okay, so who's going to get in to see me?" Who contributed to you is among the considerations, but not the only one. The first priority for me and, I think, for everyone in Congress, was a constituent interest. The second priority would be people like you - journalists - because you can't escape them and you have to deal with them After that you'd probably put people who've given money.

Rep. Mel Levine (D-California)

In the 10 years I was in the House, I'm not sure I can identify specific instances where somebody came to me and said, "I gave you money and you should vote for a bill." . . . It just didn't happen to me, even indirectly. I didn't even hear from a PAC just before a committee vote or something like that.

Sen. Howard Metzenbaum (D-Ohio)

Some senators approach the matter differently than others. I always took the position of, "Don't assume that I'm going to be with you just because you contribute to my campaign." In fact, I remember going to fund-raisers and saying that in unequivocal terms: "I may very well be opposed to your position, notwithstanding your contribution. And it's only fair that I tell you that up front."

On the other hand, it's fair to say that those who contribute may have more ready access and may at least be able to present their arguments with you whether you agree with them or not.



The 2004 Presidential Campaign: Candidates

THE REPUBLICANS:

President George W. Bush (R-Texas) *



THE DEMOCRATS:



Carol Moseley Braun *
Former U.S. Senator
(D-Illinois)



Wesley Clark *
Retired Army General
(D-Arkansas)



Howard Dean *
Former Governor
(D-Vermont)



John Edwards *
U.S. Senator
(D-North Carolina)



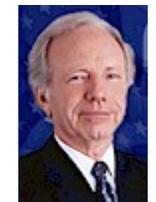
Dick Gephardt *
Congressman
(D-Missouri)



John Kerry *
U.S. Senator
(D-Massachusetts)



Dennis Kucinich *
Congressman
(D-Ohio)



Joe Lieberman *
U.S. Senator
(D-Connecticut)



Al Sharpton *
Civil Rights Activist
(D-New York)

The 2004 Presidential Campaign: Campaign Finance Laws

	To any candidate or candidate committee (per election*)	To any national party committee (per year)	To any PAC, state/local party, or other political committee (per year)	Aggregate total
Individual can give**:	Old law: \$1,000	\$20,000	\$5,000	\$25,000 per year
	New law: \$2,000, subject to the aggregate limit***	\$25,000 per party committee, subject to the aggregate limit	°\$10,000 to each state or local party committee °\$5,000 to each PAC or other political committee, subject to the aggregate limit	\$95,000 per two-year election cycle as follows: °\$37,500 per cycle to candidates; and °\$57,500 per cycle to all national party committees and PACs (\$20,000 to \$57,500 per cycle to all national party committees, and a maximum \$37,500 per cycle to PACs)
Multicandidate committee can give****:	Old law: \$5,000	\$15,000	\$5,000	No limit
	New law: Same	Same	Same	Same
Other political committee can give:	Old law: \$1,000	\$20,000	\$5,000	No limit
	New law: Same	Same	Same	

2004 Presidential Campaign: Useful Sites

[Project Vote Smart: Presidential Election 2004](#) - This site provided a great directory of the P2000 candidates -- with basic bio information, issue survey responses, calendar and links -- and is now doing the same for P2004.

[C-SPAN: Bush Administration](#) - Information, links and some streaming video events from one of the nation's leading sources of raw political television coverage on the current administration. Also be sure to check out the **[Road to the White House](#)** section, covering the various Presidential candidates. Constantly updated.

[Ballot Access News](#) - This respected publication -- founded in 1985 by Libertarian activist Richard Winger -- tracks the attempts of third party and independent candidates for various offices to secure ballot access in the 50 states. The site also tracks changes in the law, court challenges and other interesting tidbits of third party news you usually won't find elsewhere. Use this page to stay current on which third party and independent candidates will and won't appear on your state's general election ballot in November 2004.

[Democracy in Action: P2004](#) - A great site has lots of detailed information on all of the leading 2004 Presidential candidates -- plus a large section devoted to the Bush Administration. Very useful -- although be patient as the pages take a while to load (but it's worth the wait).

[WatchBlog](#) - This news blog site covering the 2004 Presidential race is divided into three parallel blog sections: Democrats, Republicans and Third Parties. The site has multiple editors, with Dems editing the Dem section, Republicans editing the GOP blog, etc. Fairly new site, but shows some good potential.

[Center for Public Integrity: Buying of the President 2004](#) - Lots of personal and campaign financial information on the various candidates and their respective campaign committees.

[NHPrimary.com](#) - A cooperative site from the folks at NH.com and the Nashua Telegraph. Think of this as a one-stop site for keeping up with all the latest developments in the important New Hampshire primary race.

[SelectSmart.com](#) - Here's a way to pick a candidate based entirely upon the issues. Although some of the questions seem rather hard to answer within the rather simplistic response options (because a more complex answer may be more accurate -- but also more confusing for many), this site is still a lot of fun. It's also rather informative/ Answer the list of nearly 20 questions, click the button and ... *voila* ... up pops the stats on which P2004 candidates you agree with the most. Documented with the votes and statements that earned the candidates their scores.

[Presidential Campaign Rhetoric 2004](#) - Park University Professor and former journalist Andrew Cline performs detailed analysis of the rhetoric used in the speeches by President Bush and the various Presidential candidates. Cline performed a similar task during the 2000 race. Despite what you might fear (i.e., that it would be a rather dry read), this can be rather interesting and useful.

