



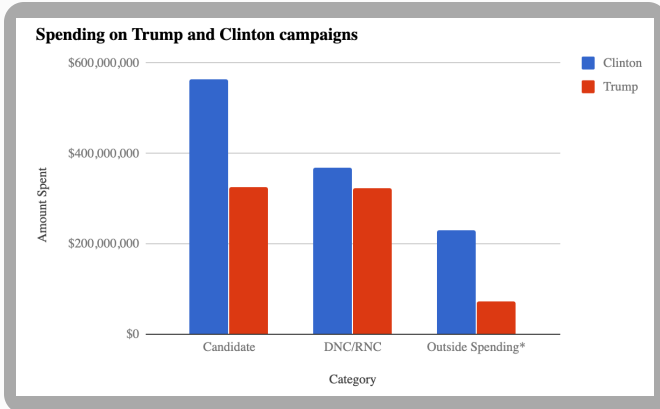
**Civics is all around us. There is a lot to know about the government and how “We the People” interact with the government and each other. Let’s help each other expand our civic literacy.**

In 1896, during the height of the presidential campaign, Ohio Senator Mark Hanna **declared** that **“There are two things important in politics. The first is money, and I can’t remember the second.”**

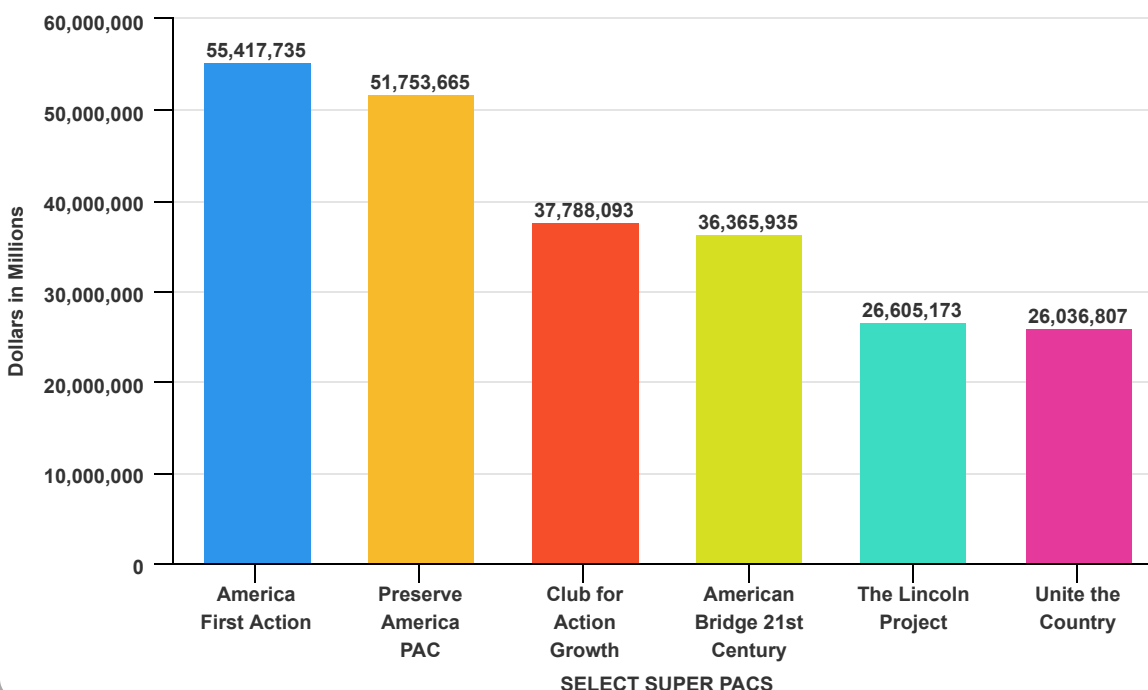
In the more than a century since he uttered those words, there has been nothing that is likely more true than the fact that money matters when it comes to getting someone elected. In the **2016 race** between Republican Donald Trump and Democrat Hillary Clinton, total spending on the presidential and congressional races was nearly 6.5 billion dollars. The **2020 race** is likely to be even more expensive.

There are **limits on campaign contributions** that are established by federal law. For example, individuals may only donate \$2,800 per candidate per election. There are also limits for groups. Candidate political action committees (PAC) are extremely important for individual candidates’ fundraising. Candidate PACs are independent political organizations that promote the cause of a particular interest group, usually through raising money and campaigning to elect candidates who support the group’s views. Typically, PACs may donate up to \$35,500 to a campaign.

While there are limits on how much PACs may donate to candidates, ‘super PACs’ have no limit on what they can spend in support of a candidate. These groups, often representing unions, corporations, or other organizations, are not directly connected to a candidate. Because of this, they may donate and spend an unlimited amount of money. The 2010 **Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission** Supreme Court decision ruled that political spending is a form of speech, which is protected by the First Amendment. Spending limits for ‘super PACs’ are therefore unconstitutional.



## Super PAC Spending As of 9/27/20



<https://www.opensecrets.org/outsidespending/summ.php?chrt=V&type=S>

In addition to the impact of Citizens United, presidential candidates **who do not accept** federal funding for their campaigns do not have any limits on how much money they can spend. The costs of outreach to voters, ad campaigns, get out the vote drives, and campaign travel add up to billions of dollars. This helps explain why we can expect the 2020 election to be the **most expensive ever**. And for another presidential campaign cycle, Mark Hanna could be right.

### To Think and To Do:

Evidence shows that it can cost billions of dollars to run for president of the United States. How might this fact impact the efforts of third-party candidates, who are neither Democrats or Republicans, to find success running for office?

### Learn MORE about campaign spending.

Free registration may be required.

- [Influencing the Government](#), from Civics360
- [Public Funding of Campaigns](#), from Federal Election Commission
- [Digital Spending by Campaigns](#), from Bully Pulpit Interactive



### Take Part in the 2020 Mock Election!

If you are in Florida, join us with [KidsVotingFlorida!](#)

Somewhere else?

Check out [DoubleClick Democracy](#)



Lou Frey Institute