Speakers clash on campaign spending 'reform'

Political campaign costs and war chests are skyrocketing. Although everybody has free speech, the rich can shout loud-

Although everybody nas tree speech, the rich can shout louder.

There was wide disagreement among 13 speakers about how to "reform" campaign linancing at the League of Women Veters of Oakland County day-long conference. The theme seemed to be: Reform guy — over there!

"Money misshapes the democratic process," said U.S. Rep, Sander Levin, D-Southfield, a former Democratic state chair.

"Money is participation and a right. Denation of money is no form of speech," countered Howard Simon, exceutive director of the American Civil Liberties Union in Michigan, citing a 1976 U.S. Supreme Court decision called Buckley v. Vale decision decision

ence was clearly liberal. Of 15 bumper stickers in the parking field. ... If the playing field in the playing field. ... If the playing field in the playing field

bumper stickers in the parking lot, all supported either Democrats, organized or feminist causes.

Q. Does the public want campaign finance reform?

"Campaign finance reform must be addressed before other issues," said moderator Mark Armitage.

"Thoro is less and less press coverage about who gives," said state Sen. Bill Bullard Jr., Remails of the season of the s

to retire after three terms in 1998.

To fellow Sen. Smith's charge there is "too much money," Bullard said, "I do not agree. How much should there be? How can you limit what others raise?"

Q. Should election campaigns be tax funded?

Yes, said AcLU's Simon.

Level the playing field... We need floors, not coilings. We should talk seriously about public funding, but I know of no bill in the Legislature or Congress. It would cost \$5 per person to fully fund congressional campaigns."

"My perception," said Sen. Bullard, "is that the public doesn't support public funding. They say, I don't want my tax dollars going to those politicians."

"Disclosure (of contributions) hasn't worked. We believe one

have free speech for those who can afford it," said ex-Rep. Jondahl. Money is power. A few people have a great deal of influence," he said, citing a New York newspaper that supports Mayor Rudolph Guillani editorially and with news coverage.

"Many things will become worse with term limits," and Holcomb-Merrill of Common Cause. "Costs will go through the roof as Michigan voters replace more than 60 state representatives who will be forced to retire after three terms in 1988.

To fellow Sen. Smith's charge there is "too much money," Bullard said, "I de not agree. How much should there be? How can you limit what others raise?" Q. Should non-resident contributors be restricted? Yes, said U.S. Rep. Joe Knollenberg, Relbomfield Township, there is "too much money," Bullard said, "I de not agree. How much should there be? How can you limit what others raise?" Q. Should non-resident contributors be restricted? Yes, said U.S. Rep. Joe Knollenberg, Relbomfield Township, the work of the playing field. . We hould talk seriously about public funding, but I know of no bill in the Legislature or Congress. It would cost \$5 per person to fully fund congressional campaigns."

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"One problem is out-of-state money," replied Democrat Levin. Sould be considered. But it's not the heart of the problem. It would coated the conditions and the representatives of the problem is out-of-state money, "replied Democrat Levin. Standard the read of the problem. It is the heart of the problem. It is the heart of the problem. It is the heart of the problem. It is not t

contributions, "but they are not the main problem."

U.S. Sen. Carl Levin, D-Mich, said Republicans also are tainted by foreign money. Its blistered House Republicans for selling "lunch with the committee chainman of your choice in the Vushington Hilton" and "photo opportunities with Newt Gingrich and Trent Lett. for \$250,000, adding:

"It's sale of public access. It's wrong, Both parties have done

wrong. Both parties have done

Q. Should enforcement of exist-ing campaign finance laws be toughened?

Yes, said state Democratic Party chair Mark Brower. We've had very partisan enforcement by this secretary of state (Republican Candico Miller). We filed a complaint (against the Michigan Chamber of Commerce) six months ago. It has not been dismissed, not investigated, not enforced.". "Six months is pretty good; "Miller's predecessor, Democratic Chair statin, for answers." A final warning from Democratic chair Brower: "Reform' is a propaganda word. You can'be deceived."

Speakers agrée on 'issue' ads. 'soft' money in campaigns

On one area, speakers agreed on campaign finance reform—the use of soft money and the lack of regulation of 'saue' ads.

Q. What is "soft' money?
These are direct contributions to a political party, rather than a campaign, by corporations, labor unions and Indian tribes. Since they arent direct contributions to a campaign, they are unregulated by law.

"We have to get rid of soft money. Soft money has taken over the process," said U.S. Rep. Sander Levin, D-Southfald.

"Levin is right on soft money and issue advence," said Bob LaBrant, vice-president of the Michigan Chamber of Commerce.

Q. What are "issue ads"?

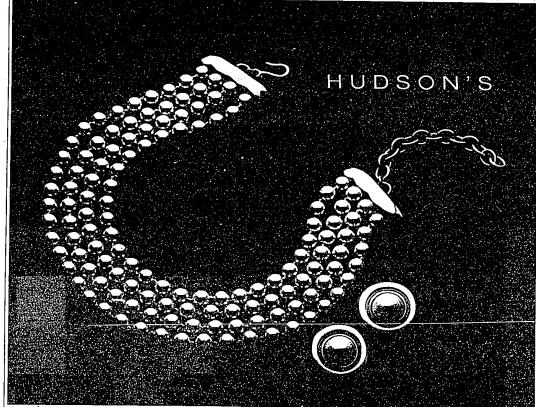
Michigan Chamber of Commerce.

Q. What are "issue ads"?
"In theory they are not candidate ads," said Sen. Carl Levin,
D-Mich. A TV commercial type.

Levin, and the state of t







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