

“The 30-Second Candidate”

wisconsin**vote**.org

The Bipartisan Campaign Act of 2002

Fact: The Bipartisan Campaign Reform Act (BCRA) of 2002 was signed into law on March 27, 2002. It includes provisions banning soft money spending by political parties, increasing hard money contribution limits, and limiting issue ads in the days before an election.

Fact: Soft money isn't directly contributed to a candidate but is instead spent by the political party or other organizations for advertising that doesn't specifically endorse a candidate's election or defeat. The BCRA prohibits soft money ads by political parties.

Fact: The “Stand by your Ad” Provision of the BCRA requires every candidate to state his/her name and approval of any communication the campaign has produced or sponsored. This provision was included to make each candidate feel responsible for all ads, whether negative or positive (The Campaign Finance Institute).

“... and I approve this message”

Compare the candidate endorsements in television ads that are candidate-sponsored. Be sure to view a mix of positive and negative ads, and make a chart to help document the differences in the endorsements. Are the candidate endorsements at the beginning or end of the ad? Is the candidate shown, or do you just hear his/her voice? Are there differences between the positive and negative ads? Why do you think this is?

What's Your Limit?

Find a candidate's website and locate the link to donate money to his/her campaign. Is this donation link easy or hard to find? Why is that?

Click on the link to donate. What information and questions are on the next page? What information does the site require from donors (just name?))? How much can one person donate, and what are other regulations of campaign donation? What disclaimers are listed on the site, and what do you learn about campaign finance from the site?

The 30-Second Candidate is a project of Wisconsin Public Television and the Educational Communications Board.