

## **Six in 10 Favor Limiting 'Soft Money' Donations**

Americans by an overwhelming margin support limits on "soft money" donations to the political parties, even if most give it low priority on their political wish lists.

Sixty-three percent in an ABC News poll say the government should limit the amount of money people can contribute to political parties. That's nearly twice as many as favor current law, which allows unlimited donations to the parties.

Critics say soft money allows contributors to evade limits on the amount they can give directly to political candidates. Supporters counter that making political donations is an exercise of free speech. The Senate scheduled test votes on the issue today.

Support for limiting donations to the parties runs highest among Democrats and independents, attracting about two-thirds of each group – but it's also supported by a 57 percent majority of Republicans.

Political-party	contributions should be:	
	Limited	Unlimited
All	63%	33
Independents	67	28
Democrats	66	33
Republicans	57	40

While support for limiting soft money is broad, the issue hasn't fired many people up. Campaign finance reform ranked sixth of seven issues in a priority list for congressional action in an ABC News/Washington Post poll last month, with just 41 percent calling it important. It ranked even lower as a voting issue in the 2000 presidential election, last of 15 issues tested.

Moreover, there was no political edge in the issue, with the public dividing evenly on whether they trusted the Democrats or the Republicans more to handle it. Indeed it had the greatest lack of partisan differentiation of any issue tested: Twenty-three percent said campaign finance reform was an issue on which they trusted neither party (13 percent), both equally (four percent), or had no opinion on which to trust (six percent).

METHODOLOGY - This ABC News.com survey was conducted by telephone Oct. 13-17, 1999, among a random national sample of 1,020 adults. The results have a three-point error margin. Fieldwork by ICR-International Communications Research of Media, Pa.

Analysis by Gary Langer.

ABC News polls can be found at ABCNEWS.com on the Internet at:

<http://www.abcnews.com/sections/us/PollVault/PollVault.html>

16. As you may know, federal law limits the amount of money people can contribute to any presidential candidate's campaign, but people can give as much money as they want to any political party. Do you think the amount of money people can contribute to political parties should be limited, or unlimited?

	Limited	Unlimited	No opinion
10/17/99	63	33	4