Political Science

What (Non-) Effects do Corporate and Union Spending and Contribution Bans have on State Elections

Abstract

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Since 2010 elections bans have become a prevalent issue because of the Supreme Court ruling on Citizens United v. Federal Elections Commission. This case allowed Corporations and Unions to give to candidates directly from their treasuries. This will allows Corporations and Unions to give however much money they want, to any candidate of their liking. This will have an effect mostly on the federal level, but do bans on contribution and spending during elections have an effect at the state level? I examined states that had bans against Corporate and Union contributions and spending toward candidates in elections to see if the competition in those elections were affected in anyway. My research was based on the Ranney Index on political parties in states and the Holbrook and Van Dunk index of dis-tract competition. I used the numbers from 1998 through 2001. I was able to use linear regression tables to compare the states that had bans on contribution and spending against the election index to see if the competition was effected at all by the bans in the states. In the equation, the independent variables were the two competition indexes and the dependent variables were Corporate contributions and spending, Union contribution and spending, and Income per Capita in each state for 2001. After conducting the two tests, the first test, with the Ranney Index showed no relationship at all. The bans have no effect on whether one political party dominates a states legislature. The second test was with the Holbrook and Van Dunk index, in this test there was a relationship between one of the variables. There was a relationship between Union Contributions and the HVD index. This relationship showed that if a state had a ban on Union Contributions then the competition in those states elections would go down by .39. Even though competition does not go down by much it is still significant in the fact that elections are affected by bans that states have on contributions and spending by entities such as Corporations and Unions. People are not always willing to give money to campaigns if they do not have an organization like a Union to give it through. This could be a pressing matter going forward if more states start to put a limit or bans on contributions and spending from Corporations and Unions.