

Cartoons for the Classroom

Presented by NIEonline.com and the Association of American Editorial Cartoonists (AAEC)



Money & Politics: A history lesson

As Uncle Sam turns his head in shame, the Devil auctions off American icons, including the flag and the eagle, to an assortment of politicians in G. Frederick Keller's indictment of the corrupting influence of money in politics in 1880. (The woman being sold into slavery is Columbia, a figure much more familiar to Keller's audience than to any 21st-century student as a symbol for America.)

More than 125 years later, Common Cause summed up same problem with money and politics on their website in 2007:

The dominating influence of wealthy special interests in the funding of campaigns has eroded public trust in our political system and discouraged political participation. In a system that gives undue access to lawmakers and influence on legislation to those who contribute large amounts to campaigns, most citizens believe their voice is not being heard. On a whole range of issues - environment, healthcare, taxes - we see corporations and wealthy individuals benefiting at the expense of all Americans.

Talking points

1. Why is fund-raising so important in American politics? Where does the money come from? Where does it go?
2. If candidates were not allowed to accept donations, what would happen?
3. How would campaigns be affected if money were removed from the equation by limiting the amount each candidate was allowed to spend?

Get out your newspaper

Gather a collection of political cartoons dealing with the presidential race from your newspaper over the next two weeks. Using the Cartoon Evaluation Worksheet (available online at the NIE Website) dissect and explain the toons.



Sold to the highest bidder. G. Frederick Keller, Nov. 6 1880, San Francisco Wasp

Additional resources

Association of American Editorial Cartoonists (AAEC)
<http://editorialcartoonists.com/>

The San Francisco Wasp: An Illustrated History
<http://www.oldmagazines.com/private/press.htm>