

levels, together with the critical fact that Barack Obama had no primary challenger, were the two most critical factors leading .002 Tw 9.96 yp.9(C1n)9.0 6 .1(gby1(c)-3.9(r(i)-3 c)-3.9(a)--4(r)171(ye7.2(f9(a)-4(t)e4(o)10 ge4(o)10n 7

prior to *Citizens United* actually has very little to do with the campaign finance laws or the FEC. It mainly has to do with another alphabet-soup agency with a middle C instead of an E – the FCC. Under the federal communications laws, a broadcast advertisement must identify its true sponsor. So if Sheldon Adelson had wanted to buy a television advertisement expressly advocating for the candidacy of

importantly, the accelerating decline of the national parties relative to outside groups is changing in fundamental ways how campaigns are fought and won. While the national political parties didn't die during 2012, both the Republican National Committee (RNC) and Democratic National Committee (DNC) are shadows of their former selves. On their current trajectory, they could both be largely irrelevant by the 2016 election. Neither of them was particularly relevant even in 2012.

The explanation for this national party death spiral is straightforward: the McCain-Feingold law of 2002. McCain-Feingold has been quietly starving the national parties of resources for a decade, relative to outside groups such as 501(c)(4)s, 501(c)(6)s, and 501(c)(3)s.

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bulwark against the barbarians at the gate, so to speak. Sadly, a necessary reform of the tragically misguided McCain-Feingold reform law will not be made until it is clearly in the best interest of all incumbents to make that fix.