



CENTER FOR INDIVIDUAL FREEDOM

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January 25, 2007

The Honorable John McCain
United States Senate
241 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator McCain:

On behalf of hundreds of thousands of concerned Americans, we are writing to ask you a simple question:

As a frontrunner for the 2008 Republican nomination for President, will you campaign within the presidential public financing system or is it your intention to abandon the limitations of that system in favor of more campaign dollars?

Senator McCain, you have made so-called “clean elections” a staple of your political career. Despite significant First Amendment concerns, you have consistently championed strict restrictions on political speech toward that stated end.

Moreover, as recently as the 2004 election cycle -- the most expensive presidential race in the nation’s history -- you maintained “absolutely” your conviction favoring public campaign financing. Indeed, in November 2003, you sponsored legislation to strengthen the presidential public financing system, stating at the time that it was your hope “that a bill can be enacted to take effect for the 2008 presidential election.”

Americans were therefore puzzled when you evaded a direct question regarding the very campaign finance limitations you advocate.

Appearing November 19, 2006 on ABC’s *This Week with George Stephanopoulos*, you eschewed the very campaign finance limitations you have advanced throughout your political career:

George Stephanopoulos: “As you look to a Presidential campaign, you’ve been a great advocate for campaign finance reform. If you choose to run, will you stay inside the public financing system or go around it?”

Senator John McCain: “I don’t think – it depends, one, on what other candidates might do...”

Senator McCain, you have consistently portrayed yourself as a man of principle. In a recent example, you stated that your principled belief in a troop surge in Iraq trumps your political ambitions. We applaud such principle, yet your evasion of a direct question regarding presidential public financing has left Americans across the country

wondering whether the “Straight-Talk Express” has taken a U-Turn in favor of your frontrunner status.

The question of whether you will abide by the limitations of the presidential public financing system is one to which the American people await your swift and direct answer, regardless of “what other [2008 presidential] candidates might do.”

Accordingly, we eagerly and respectfully await your prompt response.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jeffrey Mazzella". The signature is stylized with a large initial "J" and a cursive "Mazzella".

Jeffrey Mazzella
President
Center for Individual Freedom