



Capital Eye Opener: Wednesday, August 19

Published by Lindsay Renick Mayer on August 19, 2009 10:20 AM | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(1\)](#)

Your morning dose of news and tidbits from the world of money in politics:

STICKS AND STONES: House Minority Leader [John Boehner](#) (R-Ohio) had a [few choice words](#) this week for the [Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America](#) (PhRMA) and its president, Billy Tauzin. In a letter to the [former GOP congressman](#), Boehner blasts the organization for agreeing to take an \$80 billion hit for the Obama administration's health care plan. How did the [lobbying powerhouse](#) respond? "Emotions are riding high on both sides and we are not going to fan the flames," Ken Johnson, senior vice president of the Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America (PhRMA), told [The Hill](#). Pharmaceutical and health product companies [have contributed \\$641,480](#) to Boehner's candidate committee and leadership PAC since 1989.

INFLUENCE FROM AFAR(A): Lobbying the U.S. government appears to be an international past time. The [Sunlight Foundation](#) and [ProPublica](#) teamed up to take a look at the \$87 million that lobbyists for foreign agents reported being paid in 2008 and at the end of 2007, according to data filed under the Foreign Agents Registration Act, or FARA. Putting together this [extensive report](#) couldn't have been easy for these watchdogs. "Records detailing what foreign entities are lobbying, who they're contacting and why are filed on paper forms, sometimes in handwriting that's little more than a scrawl." Check out the foreign countries spending the most to lobby the U.S. federal government (United Arab Emirates tops that list) and the lawmakers contacted the most often by lobbyists for foreign entities (Rep. [Robert Wexler](#) was contacted 173 times). Or use the [influence tracker](#) to search for something more specific.

CAMERA ROLLING: As we've been gearing up for the Sept. 9 Supreme Court case [Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission](#), we've come across some interesting (and sometimes quirky) YouTube footage that helps explain at least one side of the story. At issue in the case is whether the existing ban on direct "[soft money](#)" contributions from the treasuries of corporations, unions and other groups should be overturned. While we had an easy time finding clips that were either neutral or in opposition to the ban, we had a more difficult time pulling out clips, rather than text, that support it (so if you've seen any, please [send them our way](#) and we'll be sure to add them!). Here's what we've got so far:

A trailer for "Hillary: The Movie," the anti-Hillary Clinton movie produced by [Citizens United](#) that was originally the focal point of this case. A three-judge panel of the Federal District Court already determined that the movie and its advertisements were "electioneering communications." This means they should have included certain disclosures and were rightfully prohibited in the 30 days before the presidential primaries because they were not paid for by the group's political action committee.



An ad for "Hillary: The Movie."

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[Democratic Party Committees Maintain Slight Fundraising Edge](#) was the previous entry in this blog.

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MSNBC Hardball Host Chris Matthews Interviews the producer of "Hillary: The Movie," David Bossie, in March. "Should the government be able to ban political speech? The First Amendment is free speech and it's the First Amendment because the founding fathers found it to be most important," Bossie tells Matthews.



In July, **Sen. Russ Feingold (D-Wis.)** asks then-Supreme Court nominee **Sonia Sotomayor** about her understanding of the current state of laws for corporate participation in elections.



The Cato Institute's take on the issue. "The problem is not too much money in politics, the problem is too much power in government."



A quirky demonstration of the Center for Competitive Politics' view on the effect of the ban by George Mason professor Allison Hayward.



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August 19, 2009 1:13 PM | [Joseph](#) said:

Love this Capital Eye Opener and love the videos today. Keep up the good work on behalf of the people, Open Secrets!

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