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### Still no decision on bombshell Supreme Court campaign finance case

December 8, 2009 | 10:37 am



It was thought to be coming today, a [Supreme Court](#) decision on [Citizens United vs. the Federal Election Commission](#), a case that could have a huge impact on how campaigns are financed.

During the 2008 presidential election, Citizens United, a conservative group, aired a feature-length TV movie critical of then-candidate [Hillary Rodham Clinton](#). [The FEC barred the pay-for-view movie from the airwaves because it was financed with corporate campaign funds](#). The court is weighing whether that was the right call, or whether corporations can now fund independent political messages. It even broadened the question to look at [whether the court should overrule prior cases that upheld restrictions on independent corporate or union expenditures](#).

This movie is so rabidly anti-Hillary that after the justices watched it, [Justice Stephen Breyer](#) commented, "It's not a musical comedy."

Citizens United and its backers -- like the Libertarian Cato Institute -- have cast the case as a free-speech issue, challenging the very assumption of campaign finance law that seeks to limit how much money corporations, labor unions or other groups can pump into the political process.

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For some reason, the buzz was the decision might come today, but apparently the justices had other ideas.

In any event, whenever the decision comes down, the implications for campaign finance could be dramatic. As MSNBC's First Read noted this morning, "Expectation is that the court will knock down the precedents banning direct corporate and union contributions to political campaigns. If that happens, it could transform the political landscape in a GIGANTIC way. It would also hammer home the point that while Democrats control most of Washington, they don't control the Supreme Court."

-- Johanna Neuman

Photo: Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton addresses former President Clinton's Global Initiative in September. Credit: Getty Images

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