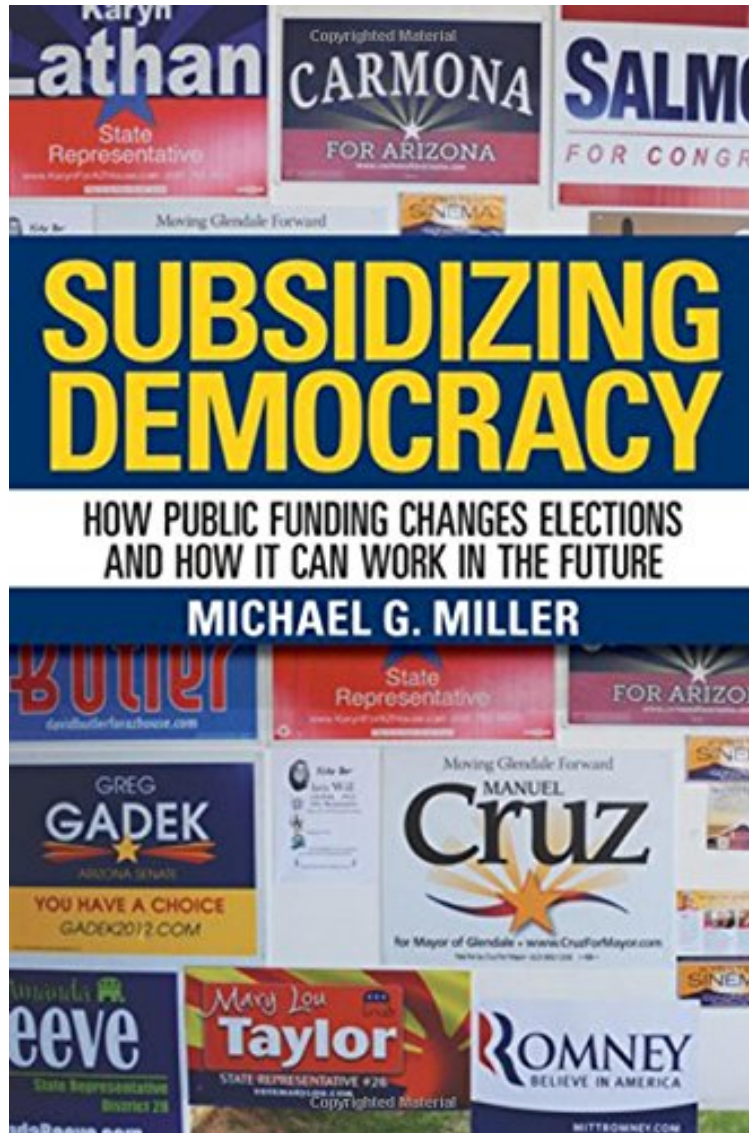


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# Subsidizing Democracy: How Public Funding Changes Elections and How It Can Work in the Future

Michael G. Miller

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## Subsidizing Democracy: How Public Funding Changes Elections and How It Can Work in the Future:

In the wake of *Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission* (2010), the case that allowed corporate and union spending in elections, many Americans despaired over the corrosive influence that private and often anonymous money can have on political platforms, campaigns, and outcomes at the federal and state level. In *McComish v. Bennett* (2011), the Supreme Court declared unconstitutional the matching funds feature of so-called Clean Elections public financing laws, but there has been no strong challenge to the constitutionality of public funding as such. In *Subsidizing Democracy*, Michael G. Miller considers the impact of state-level public election financing on political campaigns through the eyes of candidates. Miller's insights are drawn from survey data obtained from more than 1,000 candidates, elite interview testimony, and twenty years of election data. This book is therefore not only an effort to judge the effects of existing public election funding but also a study of elite behavior, campaign effects, and the structural factors that influence campaigns and voters. The presence of publicly funded candidates in elections, Miller reports, results in broad changes to the electoral system, including more interaction between candidates and the voting public and significantly higher voter participation. He presents evidence that by providing neophytes with resources that would have been unobtainable otherwise, subsidies effectively manufacture quality challengers. Miller describes how matching-funds provisions of Clean Elections laws were pervasively manipulated by candidates and parties and were ultimately struck down by the Supreme Court. A revealing book that will change the way we think about campaign funding, *Subsidizing Democracy* concludes with an evaluation of existing proposals for future election policy in light of Miller's findings.

"Michael Miller's research, based on surveys and interviews of state legislative candidates, is a welcome addition to the literature and nicely complements existing research by examining how public financing, and in particular the 'clean elections regimes in Arizona, Maine, and Connecticut, affect the behavior of candidates and voters." Brian E. Adams, *Political Science Quarterly* (Winter 2014-2015) "Subsidizing Democracy is a serious contribution to the literature on public funding of elections. Michael G. Miller effectively combines his quantitative analysis with qualitative information gleaned from interviews with candidates. The end result is a book full of original, comprehensive, important, and convincing findings." Peter L. Francia, East Carolina University, coauthor of *The Financiers of Congressional Elections: Investors, Ideologues, and Intimates* "In *Subsidizing Democracy*, Michael G. Miller explores how public financing programs in jurisdictions across the United States affect candidate behavior in elections. This excellent book is timely and useful. Miller leverages original data collected with interviews with candidates to present rare and persuasive empirical evidence. This impressive piece of scholarship advances knowledge about this important topic and contributes meaningfully to the literature." Costas Panagopoulos, Fordham University, coauthor of *All Roads Lead to Congress* "Campaign finance reformers are looking for anything that might improve U.S. campaigns in the *Citizens United* era. Michael G. Miller takes a fair and sober look at public funding to figure out whether and how public money can help improve the democratic process. Miller's results should be carefully studied by supporters and opponents of public funding." Richard L. Hasen, Chancellors Professor of Law and Political Science, UC Irvine, author of *The Voting Wars: From Florida 2000 to the Next Election Meltdown* About the Author Michael G. Miller is Assistant Professor in the Department of Political Science and the Institute for Legal, Legislative and Policy Studies at the University of Illinois, Springfield.