



It is the rare individual who has the wherewithal and inclination to self-finance, yet shutting off or curtailing the ability of organizations such as PACS to raise money could result in limiting opportunities for public service to those who can write their own checks.

There is, moreover, no appetite in the Legislature to enact a system of publicly-funded campaigns, allocating potentially hundreds of millions of dollars in taxpayer money to support political candidates. It's an idea that's been discussed periodically, but has never gained any significant traction.

Others have suggested deregulating the system entirely, allowing unlimited contributions while requiring immediate public disclosure of donor, amount and recipient.

The reality is that the cost of campaigning is not going to decline. Indeed, it may increase in light of the introduction of new and expensive technology to aid candidates in everything from voter identification to media communications.

The current financing system could use revisions and fine-tuning, particularly prohibiting so-called "wheeling," which allows shifting significant sums of money from county to county.

But legislators and groups who insist on sweeping changes or stricter limits and bans would do well to spend as much time examining the forces driving the escalating costs of campaigns.