

modern politics where candidates raise money from interest groups and shamelessly merchandise themselves in 30 second advertisements to voters.

Special interests act as parasites sapping the vitality of democratic government. They deter any focus on the future with their incessant demands for favoritism in the present. For example, the oil industry has spent \$18 million on campaigns and lobbying in California since 1991, largely attempting to thwart any shift towards renewable resources or alternative forms of transportation. The tobacco industry spends more money in California than anywhere else, in a relentless campaign to prevent Californians from quitting smoking. The tax structure is riddled with more tax loopholes for interest groups than the budget for education.

It is no wonder that so many modern candidates and their slogans seem to clone and blur, so often preaching trickle-down economics combined with law-and-order. They favor more tax breaks to business, oppose any loophole closures, and all favor the "three strikes" law which will cost \$20 billion. Few seem to notice that tens of billions of dollars in tax breaks for the past 20 years have left our schools underfunded at 41st in the U.S., and that a quadrupling of our prison population from 28,000 to 140,000 has done little to reduce violent crime.

One fundamental reason for this cloning is the common dependency candidates have on campaign contributions from the interest groups of the status quo. Quite simply, candidates tend to think like the contributors from whom they raise money, and those contributors are more interested in borrowing from the future than investing in it.

But a state dominated by deceit and interest-group favoritism