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Leading Experts to Discuss Campaign Finance Reform June 2 at Cal Poly

SAN LUIS OBISPO — Cal Poly's College of Liberal Arts will host campaign finance reform experts in a discussion of "Money in Politics: What Could Go Wrong?," at 7 p.m. Monday, June 2, in the Spanos Theatre on campus.

Cal Poly political science Professor Michael Latner will lead the panel featuring Trevor Potter, former commissioner and chairman of the Federal Election Commission (FEC); Lawrence Lessig, Harvard Law School professor and renowned author; Hedrick Smith, Pulitzer Prize-winning reporter and Emmy award-winning producer and correspondent; and William Ostrander, Citizens Congress 2014 director.

Potter is one of the country's best-known and most experienced campaign and election lawyers, serving as commissioner on the FEC from 1991-95 and as chairman in 1994. He was general counsel to the John McCain 2008 presidential campaign and legal counsel to Stephen Colbert's SuperPac, "Americans for a Better Tomorrow, Tomorrow," which spotlighted the role of secret money in the 2012 election. Potter has taught campaign finance law at the University of Virginia School of Law and Oxford University and published several books and articles on the topic.

Potter is founding president and general counsel of the Campaign Legal Center, a nonprofit organization in Washington, D.C., focused on improving the U.S. campaign finance and election process. He also leads the Political Activity Law Practice at the law firm Caplin & Drysdale.

Lessig is the Roy L. Furman Professor of Law and Leadership at Harvard Law School, director of the Edmond J. Safra Center for Ethics at Harvard University, and founder of [Rootstrikers](#), a network of activists fighting government corruption. He has written numerous books, including "Republic, Lost: How Money Corrupts Our Congress — and a Plan to Stop It," "Code and Other Laws of Cyberspace," "Free Culture," and "Remix."

Lessig serves on the boards of Creative Commons, AXA Research Fund, and iCommons.org. He is on the advisory boards of the Sunlight Foundation, the Better Future Project, and Democracy Café. He has received numerous awards, including the Free Software Foundation's Freedom Award and Fastcase 50 Award, and he was named one of Scientific American's Top 50 Visionaries.

In 26 years with The New York Times, Smith covered Martin Luther King Jr. and the civil rights struggle, the Vietnam War, the Middle East conflict from Cairo, and the Cold War from both Moscow and Washington, D.C. He also covered six American presidents and their administrations. In 1971, as chief diplomatic correspondent, he was a member of the Pulitzer Prize-winning team that produced the "Pentagon Papers" series. In 1974, he won the Pulitzer Prize for International Reporting from Russia and Eastern Europe.

Since 1989, Smith has created 26 prime-time specials and miniseries for PBS. Smith's

documentary work has won many of television's major awards. Two of his Frontline programs, "The Wall Street Fix" and "Can You Afford to Retire?" won Emmy awards.

Smith is also a bestselling author whose works include "The Russians," "The Power Game: How Washington Works," and "Who Stole the American Dream?"

As the director of Citizens Congress 2014, Ostrander leads a group dedicated to developing a national strategy for campaign finance reform. Ostrander has worked as a self-funded volunteer in Namibia, Africa, where he established several major community projects. He has also starred in film and television productions, has led a general contracting firm, and farms in the Los Osos Valley.

After the panel discussion, Smith and Lessig will sign their books on the Spanos Patio.

The free, public event is co-sponsored Citizens Congress 2014.

Links

- College of Liberal Arts: <http://cla.calpoly.edu/>

- Citizens Congress: <http://www.citizenscongress2014.org/about.html>

About Cal Poly's College of Liberal Arts

The College of Liberal Arts comprises 15 departments and two interdisciplinary programs, offering highly selective programs in the arts, humanities, communications and social sciences. Providing nearly one-third of the university's instruction, the college serves as an essential component of liberal arts education for all students at Cal Poly. The college fosters excellence within its cutting-edge disciplinary and interdisciplinary courses while diversifying, extending and enriching the broader polytechnic environment.

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