

# The Ms. Reporter

## Women Candidates

# The Money Rolls In

PEGGY SIMPSON

WASHINGTON, D.C. Women candidates are raising more money than ever before in the 1988 elections. For the first time, some women Congressional challengers have amassed more money than their male counterparts, and sometimes more than male incumbents. At least three women seeking House seats had raised \$200,000 by the April 15 filing deadline for the Federal Election Commission—well on their way to the half million or a million dollars their races could cost by November.

Groups fund-raising for Republican and Democratic women alike report that donations are up. "It's a blockbuster year for raising money," says Jane Danowitz, executive director of the bipartisan Women's Campaign Fund (WCF), whose donor base has doubled to 10,000 since 1983. The WCF had raised \$193,000 by late March and expects to pass its previous record of \$500,000 assistance for federal and state candidates.

EMILY's List, which organizes donors for Democratic women Congressional candidates, is also breaking records. "We got more money this year in seven days than we did in seven weeks two years ago," says Ellen Malcolm, the IBM heir and phil-



Staff and consultants for EMILY's List. Sitting (left to right): Sharon Hooper, Betsy Crone, Lisa Pelofsky, and Celinda Lake; standing (left to right): Joanne Howes, Marie Bass, and Ellen Malcolm.

anthropist who founded the organization in 1984. Its donors are expected to channel \$500,000 to candidates in tough House races this year; by mid-April, it had recommended eight nonincumbent contenders.

The three women challengers for House seats who have raised the most money so far are Lana Pollack, a Democratic state senator from Michigan who wants to oust veteran GOP Representative Carl Pursell; Anna Eshoo of the San Mateo County Board of Supervisors in California who is trying to upset first-term Representative Ernest Connyu, a Republican; and Nita Lowey, who faces a tough three-way primary on her way

to confront Representative Joseph DioGuardi of New York, a Republican in his second term who deflected Bella Abzug's challenge in 1986.

Pollack raised substantial funds in each of her two successful runs for the state senate but knew underwriting a contest with a veteran Congressman would be "far more daunting." She got a useful lesson when she called Malcolm in early October to discuss good news from her polling and game plans for raising \$700,000. Pollack was about to hang up when Malcolm asked, "Aren't you forgetting something?"

"I knew what I was supposed to say," recalls Pollack, but she couldn't get the

words out. Malcolm prodded her again: "I'm a wealthy woman and I'm interested in politics—aren't you missing something here?"

Pollack finally managed to ask for a \$1,000 check, and Malcolm came through after Pollack further proved her credibility by raising \$4,000 elsewhere. "I don't like calling up and asking for large sums of money, but I do it," says Pollack. "I also push others to ask on my behalf. Early money means credibility." (The name EMILY's List stands for "Early Money Is Like Yeast.") By this spring, Pollack had \$225,000—not only from her original Ann Arbor supporters, but from EMILY's List donors, and labor: the conservative building trades and the more liberal public employees, with a prospect of United Auto

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# Money

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Workers funding down the road.

The WCF and EMILY's List are more efficient money raisers at the national level this year than membership organizations like the National Organization for Women and the National Women's Political Caucus. NOW showed end-of-year receipts of \$79,819 in its FEC report. Between January and April it had raised another \$69,000 from direct-mail fund-raising for its two PACs. The caucus showed receipts of \$88,929 for this election season. NWPC President Irene Nati-

vidad said many of the 44 state caucuses also have PACs, and NOW counts some 75 state and local political action committees. In addition to direct contributions, caucus-sponsored fund-raisers help candidates. The New York caucus, for example, has scheduled a joint event for two Democratic Congressional challengers, Rosemary Pooler and Nita Lowey.

Larger war chests are being amassed by groups that back both men and women who support feminist issues. Voters for Choice expects to raise \$500,000 this election cycle. The National Abortion Rights Action League had raised more than \$223,823 for the 1988 elections by mid-March. And a phenomenal

newcomer to the women's political financing world is the Hollywood Women's Political Committee, with superstars and behind-the-scenes film women who raised almost \$3 million in the 1986 elections and another \$96,836 by the end of 1987. At a March event, which brought in \$150,000, the committee awarded the first annual Barbara Jordan Award for political courage and commitment to Jordan herself.

Feminist groups differed this year, as in the past, on who deserves endorsement. The WCF gave an early and controversial endorsement to Republican Susan Engeleiter of Wisconsin, considered the only viable female contender

for a U.S. Senate seat this year. The Wisconsin chapters of the NWPC and NOW have so far decided to sit out the primaries rather than back Engeleiter or one of three liberal Democrats vying for the open seat.

Engeleiter's critics said she has an inconsistent position on abortion and had opposed pay equity initiatives as a state senator. But Engeleiter supporter Wilma Goldstein said the caucus and NOW "don't have a particularly good record on supporting Republicans." Goldstein, a Republican campaign consultant and member of the WCF board, added, "The NOW endorsement is perceived as a so-what move because they don't back it up with bucks."

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