Many Violate Campaign Fund Laws

By Jack Anderson

Even as Congress debates new campaign reform laws, more than 200 senators, challengers and political committees have violated the campaign disclosure laws already in force.

The list of senators and fund-raising committees who failed to file on March 10, under penalties of a year in jail and a $1,000 fine, reads like a Capitol Hill ethics society. Among them are:

The Senate's conservative conscience, Barry Goldwater (R-Ariz.); its "Mr. Consumer," Warren Magnuson (D-Wash.); the (John) Tunney Committee; two committees for Tom McIntyre (D-N.H.); (Strom) Thurmond Finance Committee; and Re-Elect Senator (Claiborne) Pell Committee.

In all, the Center for Public Financing of Elections found 34 senators, challengers and their personal committees who failed to file by the March 10 deadline. The tally was taken March 25.

The challengers who failed to file included such well-known former legislators as Rep. Nick Galifianakis and Sen. Wayne Morse (D-Ore.). A number of less famous aspirants took their first steps toward new senate careers by violating federal filing laws.

The center also totted up 132 special interest committees which violated the filing deadline. They range from savings and loan groups, to clothing workers, bankers, doctors, conservationists, firearms zealots and realtors.

Along with such serious violations by candidates and committees as failing to register at all, filers were often late or did not list full names and occupations, as the 1972 federal election campaign act requires.

While some of the committees are "left over" committees from 1972 or "look ahead" committees for 1976, many are actively collecting funds now. Prosecutions, despite the high-sounding laws, are unlikely. Even when the Senate secretary and House clerk refer cases to the Justice Department, they tend to get pigeon-holed.

The unpublished center study also shows which industries are bank-rolling senatorial campaigns. Not surprisingly, Big Oil leads the list with more than $40,000 spread out in $1,000-size chunks. Lesser contributions are not counted, nor is there any way of knowing how many under-the-table dollars flowed from the oil industry.

Commodity brokers in Chicago showed their loyalty to their former Board of Trade colleague Henry Hall Wilson, a candidate in North Carolina, by ponying up $37,000. Chemical and machinery interests also were big donors.

The money men for several senators also have used a Nixon administration tax loophole for their fat cat contributors by setting up numerous small committees. Thus a donor can give $3,000 to each of several committees rather than a larger single gift that would require payment of campaign gift taxes. The champion gift-splitters were Sens. Howard Metzenbaum (D-Ohio), Alan Cranston (D-Calif.) and Jacob Javits (R-N.Y.). When other senators' campaigns are included, the total amount which skirted tax collectors by this dubious means was $181,000.

Among the oddities turned up by the center was a tardy admission by Ronald Rumsfeld, a versatile Nixon administration official, that he still had $3,000 left over from a congressional campaign six years ago. Rumsfeld belatedly donated it to the U.S. Treasury.

The study also shows a host of administration bigwigs contributing to various senate campaigns. These include $1,000 from Army Secretary Bo Calloway, $1,000 from Deputy Defense Secretary William Clements, and $1,000 each from diplomats John Humes, John Hurd and John Irwin.

Footnote: In fairness to the senators, their busy staffs sometimes simply forgot to file. Magnuson, as a typical example, has scrupulously filed in his home state and his committees have filed here. When we queried him about the one filing still outstanding, he had it on the way to the Secretary of the Senate within hours.

Political Benefits: When it comes to taking credit for increases in Social Security, President Nixon reaps even where he has not sown. For the fourth time in his administration, a note to accompany April checks will tell the nation's 28 million recipients that Mr. Nixon signed the new bill.

What the President failed to tell them was that he has consistently opposed the increases, mainly on grounds they are inflationary. Actually, the practice isn't new. President Eisenhower started it all back in 1954.

But just because it's a tradition doesn't mean it has the respect of Sen. Frank Church (D-Idaho), chairman of the Special Aging Committee. He is trying to write a ban on the political enclosures into a new Social Security law.