

Special Interests' Kitty--\$17 Million

Washington

The big spenders in American political campaigns — special interest groups — have almost twice as much money available this year for House and Senate races as they spent in 1972, Common Cause said yesterday.

Common Cause, which calls itself a public interest lobbying group, reported \$17.4 million in such funds available as of May 31 compared with \$9.7 million spent on House and Senate races during 1972.

Despite Watergate investigations of dairy farmer cooperatives, the total for dairy and agriculture groups are up 106 per cent, Common Cause reported.

However, the largest increase from 1972 — 223 per cent — was in the political action groups of the nation's health organizations. National health-care legislation is a major issue in the current Congress.

Labor funds were up 59 per cent and that of miscellaneous groups was down two per cent.

John Gardner, chairman of Common Cause, released the study, which was compiled from May 31 reports filed under the Federal Election Campaign Act.

"Unless Congress acts to provide for new clean

sources of campaign funds, our present campaign financing system, with all its corrupting consequences, is going to thrive and prosper," he said.

Gardner has been pressing for campaign spending reforms, but reform bills that have passed the Senate in recent years have repeatedly run into trouble in the House.

He accused the Democratic leadership in the House of "hiding under the desk" on the issue.

The top ten campaign chests for 1974 fall elections and amounts these groups have already spent this year are as follows:

American Medical Association and allied groups — \$1,826,589 cash on hand and \$333,749 already spent in 1974.

Committee for Thorough Agricultural Political Education of the American Milk Producers Inc. — \$1,551,682 with \$38,750 spent this year. Two other major milk groups have a total of \$632,101 on hand, with \$102,140 spent.

Marine Engineers Beneficial Association, a maritime union group — \$910,426 with \$50,150 already spent.

United Automobile Workers — \$733,519 with \$98,868 already spent.

American Dental Association and allied groups — \$687,198 with \$17,000 already spent.

National Education Association and allied groups — \$642,224 with \$70,730 already spent.

National Association of Realtors and allied groups — \$569,681 with \$76,900 already spent.

United Steelworkers of America — \$362,751 with \$74,450 already spent.

International Brotherhood of Teamsters — \$346,853 with \$64,639 already spent.

National Association of Manufacturers and similar businessmen's groups — \$341,521 with \$13,950 already spent.

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