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Spending Lid On Elections Asked in Bill

Sen. Charles McC. Mathias (R-Md.) proposed a campaign reform bill yesterday that would impose limits on private contributions and provide for partially subsidizing federal elections with money from the U.S. Treasury.

Referring to the Watergate affair in discussing his bill, Mathias said, "the presence of big money was obviously one of the corrosive elements in this situation. The only way you're going to eliminate that as a practical matter is to eliminate the private contributor."

According to the plan set forth in the proposal, presidential candidates would be barred from spending more

than \$21 million in a primary campaign and another \$21 million in a general election. Major party candidates would be eligible for a \$7 million federal subsidy—or one-third the spending limit—for the general election campaign.

According to a set of formulas, similar limits would be imposed on spending for House and Senate races with federal subsidies of one-third the spending limit given to major party candidates.

Mathias, who introduced the bill with Sen. Adlai E. Stevenson (D-Ill.), said he believes that it would cost roughly one dollar a person a year to support the campaign subsidy program.

"I believe it is worth a dollar a year to insure the integrity of our electoral system," he said.