2 Propose U.S. Finance Campaigns

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Senate Republican Leader Hugh Scott of Pennsylvania and Sen. Edward M. Kennedy (D-Mass.,) yesterday proposed mandatory public financing of campaigns for the presidency and for Congress.

Scott announced that the bipartisan proposal would be offered as an amendment to a campaign reform bill which the Senate expects to begin debating today or Wednesday.

The bill spurred by the Watergate scandal would set limits on contributions by individuals and ceilings on campaign spending in presidential and congressional races. It would create a Federal Elections Commission to supervise the reforms with powers to go to court against violators.

Public financing of presidential campaigns has been written into law through the $1 checkoff provision on federal income tax forms. But the law gives a presidential candidate the option of using public financing or raising his own funds.

The Kennedy-Scott amendment would eliminate the option of private financing and provide public financing for Senate and House candidates through direct appropriations.

"The taxpayers themselves should be condemned if they aren't willing to put up a buck for honesty," Scott said.

Candidates for federal office could use private funds only if the check-off—in the case of presidential candidates—or direct appropriations—in the case of Senate and House candidates—fall short of the spending ceiling in the bill.

The bill provides a spending ceiling of 20 cents per eligible voter in all federal election contests.

The Kennedy-Scott amendment would not cover primaries and would not take effect until the 1976 elections.

Other public financing amendments are expected to be offered to the bill.

Sens. Walter F. Mondale (D-Minn.,) and Richard S. Schweiker (R-Pa.,) announced they will offer a bill providing "substantial financing for presidential campaigns" that has the backing of Common Cause, the public lobby.