

Special Interests Said To Aid Mills' Drive

By Jules Witcover
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A Ralph Nader organization, the Public Citizen Tax Reform Research Group, yesterday reported that special interests "receiving favorable legislative treatment" from the House Ways and Means Committee financed more than half the cost of Chairman Wilbur D. Mills' 1972 presidential campaign.

The milk and oil industries and financial groups benefiting from his chairmanship of the House's tax-writing committee were the biggest givers, the report said. Milk interests gave \$60,100, or 26 per cent of all Mills campaign money, it said. The campaign cost \$274,836.13 and contributions and financial groups benefit totaled \$231,027.11, the Nader group reported.

"You don't have to look very far to see why those tax laws are stacked in favor of corporate interests and wealthy individuals at the expense of middle-income families," Robert Brandon, director of the research group said.

"During Mr. Mills' leadership, the tax burden of corporations has dropped from 30 per cent of the country's total tax revenues to 14 per cent

while the Social Security tax burden on all working people has tripled from 10 per cent to 30 per cent of federal revenues," he said.

Mills' office declined to comment.

The report was based on a review of financial statements filed by the Mills campaign with the General Accounting Office. Although the law on campaign financing disclosure requires such statements to be filed as well in states where money has been spent, the report said, "it appears the Mills campaign did not file in any of the 17 states, including his home state of Arkansas, in which there were expenditures."

Milk industry contributors included Agricultural and Dairy Educational Political Trust (ADEPT) of the Mid-American Dairymen, Springfield, Mo., \$16,000; Committee for Thorough Agricultural Political Education (TAPE) of the Associated Milk Producers, Inc., San Antonio, Tex., \$25,000; Special Political Agricultural Community Education (Space) of Dairymen, Inc., Louisville, Ky., \$12,500.

In January, 1973, the report noted, Mills cosponsored legislation raising the price sup-

port for milk from 75 per cent to 85 per cent of parity, which "would have resulted in an increase in the price of milk and dairy products." Two years earlier, on a similar price-support bill, Mills was not a sponsor, the Nader group said.

The report also said Mills had arranged a meeting among himself, House Speaker Carl Albert, Clark MacGregor, then an aide to President Nixon, and Harry Nelson, then general manager of AMPI, to discuss price-support increases six weeks before the White House ordered them on March 25, 1971.

Other industries and groups that made contributions to the Mills campaign, the report said, included shoe manufacturing, textiles, oil, beer, insurance, banking, construction, farming, food processing, banks and savings and loan associations, lawyers, electric power, chemicals, air transport, real estate, doctors and various general manufacturers.

While not all these industries benefited from legislation sponsored by Mills, the report said, in some cases the absence of tax legislation in their fields was just as beneficial.