

SEP 13 1983 Money Is the Issue

POLITICAL observers, candidates and their supporters have been discussing at length probable issues for the 1984 elections.

Having digested these reports, The Oklahoman tells you in plain language what will determine the outcome of most races, from the Legislature to the White House. In a word, it's money!

A Gallup Poll last month asked respondents what they considered to be the most important problem facing the country. Forty-eight percent named unemployment and recession, 14 percent inflation and living costs, 7 percent the economy and 5 percent each said excessive government spending and President Reagan's budget cuts. That adds up to 79 percent for money.

In Labor Day rallies, AFL-CIO spokesmen asked union members "Are you better off today than you were in 1980?" repeating a phrase used to help Reagan win in 1980. Money is labor's issue.

The same thing is true for the poor, the rich, farmers, business men, the arts, higher education and public schools, and for various minority groups demanding preferential treatment.

Who gets what from whom is the central issue. This is echoed by a Republican pollster who says "haves" and "have-nots" are more sensitive to the 1984 election "than to any since 1960."

Money also occupies the time and effort of candidates in raising campaign funds, with incumbents holding an advantage. The

size of these funds and how they are spent may concern voters, but control is beyond them.

In fact, it is almost impossible to keep track of what is collected and spent, despite laws requiring public reports. Expenditures made to win elections often seem to be out of proportion with the remuneration offered, even for local offices.

Records of the Federal Election Commission show that congressmen accepted more than \$12 million from political action committees for the 1982 elections.

PACs may be formed by any interest group to pool contributions to help candidates who see things their way. But as Rep. Timothy E. Wirth, D-Colo., said recently, "I can't think of any instance where PAC money has changed anything in the committee."

Nevertheless, an estimated 3,000 PACs are handing out money to do just that. The home builders' PAC, for example, has given the maximum \$5,000 each to Democratic presidential contenders John Glenn, Alan Cranston and Ernest F. Hollings, the only ones accepting PAC contributions.

Because of the huge amounts spent to elect a president, a plan for the government to pick up part of the tab was adopted. This was supposed to reduce the need for campaign contributions, but taxpayer funds have just been added to other monies. Probably more will be spent in the 1984 presidential election than ever before.

Party platforms will be debated, adopted and discussed, but the real issue will be money.