

PENDING RESEARCH PROJECT ON FEDERALISM

The notion of federalism has been a much debated feature of the American political and constitutional system. Much of the debate on federalism, however, has focused on vertical federalism—e.g., the distinctive boundaries of authority between federal and state and local governments. Another aspect of federalism is horizontal federalism—e.g., the distinctive boundaries of authorities between each state as an independent governing entity. Under the American federalist tradition, each state is obviously intended to exercise independent authority regarding its proper and designated spheres of authority. But one way in which this authority might be eroded is through the development of the modern system of campaign practices. In particular, small states dealing with issues that could have national implications might find their political process overwhelmed by political contributions and influences from other outside states. The degree of this problem, and the potential for such influence and distortions, is being explored through a campaign finance study of South Dakota's voter initiative on abortion.