

**Tom Kline**

Vice President, Pfizer Inc., world's largest pharmaceutical corporation

## **CORPORATIONS AND GOVERNMENT > Public-Private Partnerships**

Why is a private company like Pfizer, actually publicly held but not a governmental agency. Why is a company like Pfizer doing all this in the community? And shouldn't the government be responsible for security at the subways and for providing housing and quality education?

Well of course the answer to that question is, somewhat, "Yes, that's true." But if we really want to improve the conditions of American cities, we, business people, we, community residents, have to take responsibility. We can't leave it all to government, we can't abdicate.

So the whole premise of this partnership between Pfizer, the community, the police organizations, the housing people, education, is that together we can make a difference. It's the old idea that more heads together, more views other than one, really make for better ideas. So we're bringing business ideas to collaborate and to support the City to help make this a better place to live and work.

**Hank McKinnell**

CEO, Pfizer Inc., world's largest pharmaceutical corporation

## **CORPORATIONS AND GOVERNMENT > Influencing Political Campaigns**

Political contributions are very modest, actually. These are not large amounts of money, and frankly, it's part of the way in which people participate in national policy debates. Much of these funds actually come from executives' own pockets. If you see somebody that you - know somebody that you think would make a good elected official, you support them with your time and with your money. Some of the funds are from corporate sources but a very small proportion of them, actually.

**Mark**

But Pfizer does make political contributions?

**Hank**

Pfizer does make political contributions.

**Mark**

What do you hope to get?

**Hank**

We hope to elect people who have supported policies which are good for the nation.

**Mark**

But most corporations seem to give to both parties.

**Hank**

Well, corporations give to individuals, not so much to parties. We want to elect people who understand the needs of the nation and who are going to strive to benefit us all.

**Mark**

What would you say to critics who claim that Pfizer's political contributions give you an unequal - because you have such economic power - give you an unequal voice in the democratic process?

**Hank**

We don't get anything for political contributions other than supporting people who support the right kinds of policies. Helping them get elected. It doesn't give us anything special in return.

**Mark**

But you can - you as a corporation can give more money than me as an individual. So you can have a greater influence on the impact on the outcome of an election, in theory, anyway, by being able to give more money to a given candidate.

**Hank**

Political contributions in the United States come mostly from private individuals, not from corporations.

**Mark**

But of the contributions that do come from corporations, their ability to give. I don't know - you look at the statistics of how - you know, who gave money to George Bush versus Gore, and there's just this 15 to 1 from oil companies and 4 to 1 from pharmaceutical companies. There was a lot - relative to your overall profits, and everything - but proportionately to those campaigns they're significant amounts of money that do get something.

**Hank**

Corporations historically in the United States have tended to give disproportionately to Republican candidates. The unions, on the other hand, have tended to contribute disproportionately to Democratic candidates.

**Mark**

Would you say those two forces are equal?

**Hank**

Oh, absolutely. That's how the political system works. You support the candidate of your choice --

**Mark**

Have equal economic power? The sort of corporate world and the world of unions?

**Hank**

Political contributions come from many, many sources. Much of the funds used for political campaigns come from a one dollar per individual contribution on the federal tax return. Individuals can also make contributions but that is usually limited to about \$1000 per candidate and, of course, organizations, whether they're corporations or unions or other organizations, are able to provide slightly more funding but that's not a major source of funding in the United States political system.

**Mark**

The whole area of what they call soft money...

**Hank**

Well, soft money refers to the ability of organizations - unions, corporations, universities - to support the candidates of their choice. But that is not a major part of the political fund raising process in the United States.

**Mark**

But still worthwhile to participate in because it'll help your man or woman get elected. You're sort of diminishing the importance of it but yet - but I think it is important to corporations to make those contributions and to see, as you say, that people are elected. So I'm trying to figure out, does it make a difference or not?

**Hank**

It's important to the nation to elect people who can participate in the political process wisely.

**Mark**

And some critics feel that corporations are these legal fictions and that they shouldn't even be able to participate in that. That democracy is for individuals like you and me, not for these huge economic entities. And that it distorts the democratic process to allow those entities to participate in that way at all.

***Hank***

It's not - some people feel that contributions should only come from individuals, but that's not how the system currently operates in the United States. If we change the system we would have to eliminate funding from corporations, from unions, from universities, from all organized contributions. Some would think that's the correct way to do it. Others don't.

***Mark***

And yourself?

***Hank***

I think both would work.