On Wednesday, November 14, 2012, Andrea Mitchell of NBC News moderated a discussion, entitled “Politics, Media & Money: Campaigning in the New Media and Money Environment,” with Edward Rendell, the former Governor of Pennsylvania, and Alex Castellanos, a Republican strategist and media consultant. The event, sponsored by the Media Law Resource Center (MLRC), was part of the organization’s Annual Dinner and took place at the Grand Hyatt in New York.

The discussion focused on the recent presidential election, including the role of money, messaging and America’s evolving demographics. Ms. Mitchell began the discussion by asking panelists about the billion dollars plus spent in the campaign.

“Apparently it didn’t change much,” Mr. Castellanos said. “I think there is a problem in politics: We don’t spend enough,” he said, noting the billions Americans spend on Halloween. Money “just helps us communicate, the way we do here.”

Gov. Rendell disagreed. “There is a problem with money in the system,” he said. But in this election, there was so much spent by both parties that it canceled each other out, he said.
The discussion also examined the impact of new media coverage on the election and how candidates communicated their message, and the impact of Super PACs.

Andrea Mitchell is NBC’s chief foreign affairs correspondent, covering foreign policy, intelligence, and national security issues for NBC and MSNBC. She has covered every presidential campaign since 1972. She also hosts Andrea Mitchell Reports on MSNBC, a weekday program featuring political news and high-profile interviews.

Alex Castellanos has been a media consultant to seven U.S. presidential campaigns, including the 2008 presidential campaign of John McCain, Mitt Romney’s 2008 campaign for the Republican Party nomination, and President Bush’s successful 2004 and 2000 election campaigns. He is also a television commentator and political analyst, appearing regularly on CNN. He is a founding partner of Purple Strategies, a corporate communications firm.

Gov. Edward Rendell has spent over three decades in public service, including 24 years as an elected official in Pennsylvania. He served two terms as Governor of Pennsylvania (2003-2011), two terms as Mayor of Philadelphia (1992-2000) and two terms as the elected District Attorney of Philadelphia (1978-1985). He served as Chairman of the Democratic National Committee during the 2000 presidential election. In 2011, he became a political analyst for NBC News and MSNBC.

MLRC is a non-profit membership organization founded in 1980 by leading American media to provide a wide range of information and support on media law and policy issues, including news and analysis of legal developments, litigation resources and practice guides, and national and international media law meetings and conferences. MLRC also works with its membership on responding to legislative and policy proposals and in promoting First Amendment and free expression rights.