



FEDERAL ELECTION COMMISSION
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20463

**WELCOME MESSAGE FROM
CHAIRMAN SEAN J. COOKSEY**

Good morning, and welcome to the Federal Election Commission's first open meeting for 2024. This promises to be an important year for the agency and for the country. Along with hundreds of primary and general elections for House and Senate seats in Congress, this is a presidential election year. In fact, the first caucuses of the Republican presidential primary take place in just four days. As citizens go to the polls to elect new leaders for the nation, the importance of the FEC's work only becomes more apparent.

Our mission is to administer and enforce the campaign-finance laws that Congress has passed—consistent with our obligations under the First Amendment—to ensure the integrity and transparency of political campaigns for federal offices. Here's what that looks like in practice. This year, millions of campaign contributions and expenditures will be made, totaling billions of dollars, and all of it will be publicly reported and available on the FEC's website. The Commission will field thousands of calls to its helpline, host hundreds of people at compliance seminars, close scores of enforcement matters, and likely issue dozens of advisory opinions. All this work will be done to ensure compliance with the law and to protect the integrity of the political process.

This election year presents many exciting opportunities for the Commission to break new ground. Under my colleagues' leadership, in the last three years we've completed a host of substantive rulemakings on issues ranging from candidate salaries to internet disclaimers to audit procedures. That hard work will continue this year, as my fellow commissioners and I strive for consensus and compromise on important topics in our jurisdiction. For example, I intend for us to resolve the outstanding rulemaking petition on artificial intelligence, to consider rulemakings on issues like candidate security and segregated party accounts, and to offer more detailed interpretations of our existing regulations through informal guidance documents. With these efforts and much more, the Commission will continue to serve the public interest and fulfill our statutory duties.

At the same time, this year brings challenges too. The single greatest danger to the FEC's success is a lapse or deep cut in appropriations. Without sufficient funding for the agency's operations, the Commission may be forced to reduce staff headcount, to delay or eliminate vital IT projects, and to restrict public access to agency services. I hope it doesn't come to that. But the Commission is committed to doing its best with the resources it has. Beyond appropriations, the Commission must continue to modernize its operations, to defend the agency in court, and to keep its enforcement docket moving.

Despite these challenges and serious work ahead of us, I remain optimistic. While these obstacles would be insurmountable for the commissioners alone, this agency will see things through because of our dedicated staff. The career staff at the FEC work their guts out. They are talented, experienced, and committed to public service. I am grateful for the work they've done and will do this year. And I look forward to working with them and with all my fellow commissioners to do our job for the American people.

January 11, 2024