



FEDERAL ELECTION COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20463

**STATEMENT OF VICE CHAIR ANN M. RAVEL ENCOURAGING PUBLIC  
COMMENTS TO INCREASE DISCLOSURE AND ADDRESS CORRUPTION IN THE  
POLITICAL PROCESS**

October 20, 2014

For the first time in more than a decade, the Commission is now accepting wide-ranging public comment on issues fundamental to campaign finance — including disclosure and corruption in the political process. Between now and January 15, 2015, citizens from across the political spectrum are invited to express their views, submit proposed policy solutions, and otherwise formally participate in the Commission’s policymaking process. Then, on February 11, 2015, the Commission will convene a public hearing where commenters will have an opportunity to speak directly to the Commission.

The Commission is asking what rules it should implement to address corruption and increase disclosure in the political process. For example, how should the Commission improve its rules on public disclosure, earmarking, joint fundraising committees, and committee affiliation? Are there any other regulatory changes the Commission should make to prevent the circumvention of contribution limits or the concealment of the sources of those contributions? There may be solutions to these problems that have not yet been considered, or the Commission might look to states like California and Maryland, which have been working on new approaches. We need to hear from the public on these and other issues of consequence to campaign finance and our democracy.

As a public agency, the Commission has an obligation to directly engage the public in a constructive dialogue concerning the impact of its policymaking on our democracy. But for far too long, the Commission has been closed off, mired in gridlock, and uninterested in meaningful public input. So this new comment period and the public hearing to follow are major steps toward openness and direct public engagement. And they are the direct result of the compromise rulemaking package the Commission approved on October 9.

To me, allowing an opportunity for the public to participate in the Commission’s policymaking was especially important — and long overdue — given the growing public concern about undisclosed spending flooding the American political process. An estimated \$4 billion will be spent during this year’s mid-term election, with \$700 million or more in anonymous spending. Outside spending by groups that hide their donors increased from just \$5 million in 2006 to more than \$300 million in 2012. Despite this dramatic increase, declining levels of public trust, and growing cynicism about the political process, the Commission has

ignored — until now — public views about, for example, how to strengthen its disclosure rules so that voters know who is behind the messages intended to influence their votes.

That is why every citizen who cares about the future of our democracy should make his or her voice heard during the current comment period. Submit comments and join us for the public hearing in February. We need to hear from you.

Here's how to submit written comments and testify at the public hearing:

Online: <http://sers.fec.gov/forces/addcomments.htm?pid=93617>

Paper: Federal Election Commission  
Attn.: Amy L. Rothstein, Assistant General Counsel  
999 E Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20463

Be Sure to Include: Each commenter's full name and postal address

Deadline for Comments: January 15, 2015

To Testify at the Hearing: File a written comment by January 15, 2015, that includes a request to testify at the public hearing.