FEDERAL ELECTION COMMISSION
Washington, DC 20463

October 31, 2016

To help promote compliance with federal election laws, we offer some suggestions to anyone who is considering supporting a federal candidate. The First Amendment protects political speech and spending, but there are still rules; here are a few key ones to keep in mind:

- **Foreign Nationals Can't Spend in U.S. Elections.** Political spending by foreign nationals in U.S. elections — at any level of government — is against the law. Only U.S. citizens, U.S. nationals, and green card holders may make contributions or spend money in connection with federal, state, or local elections.

- **Don't Give in the Name of Another.** If you make a contribution to a candidate or political committee, do it in your own name and with your own money. Don't give money or reimbursement to other people for their contributions, and don't accept money or reimbursement from other people (like your employer) for your contributions. For example, you may contribute up to the legal limit to Candidate Smith in your own name, but you may not give money to your cousin Glenda to contribute in Glenda's name, or reimburse Glenda for a contribution she made in her own name.

- **Contributing — It's Your Decision.** You have a right to give — or not to give — to the candidates and political causes of your choice, inspired by your own convictions. Corporate and labor union PACs cannot use money obtained through actual or threatened physical force, financial reprisal, or job discrimination. Corporations and labor unions also can't use coercion — such as threatening your job or cutting your pay — to force you to make a contribution to a candidate or political committee.

- **Know Who You're Giving To.** Some committees asking for your contributions may not be what they appear to be. Before making a contribution, you can do research to make sure any money you give will actually go to the cause or candidate you intend to support. Our website, www.fec.gov, can help.

- **Stay Within Dollar Limits.** The most you may contribute to a federal candidate's general election campaign is $2,700, even if the candidate is your spouse, parent, child, or kin of any other kind.

- **But Limits Do Not Apply to Your Independent Paid Political Communications.** On the other hand, you may spend an unlimited amount on paid political communications (like newspaper ads and billboards) that support or oppose federal candidates as long as you do not coordinate with the candidates or campaigns that will

benefit. The fine print: Certain communications must include information about who paid for them and may have to be reported to the FEC.

You can find more information about these rules on our website, www.fec.gov. You can also find information there about candidates' committees and other committees that you may want to support, including how the committees raise and spend funds, and other helpful tips, such as how to file a complaint against anyone you believe has violated federal election laws. Please contact us if you have any questions at info@fec.gov or 1-800-424-9530.

Matthew S. Petersen serves as Chairman of the Federal Election Commission. Steven T. Walther serves as Vice Chairman of the Commission. Lee E. Goodman, Caroline C. Hunter, Ann M. Ravel, and Ellen L. Weintraub serve as Commissioners.