

NEWS FROM...

FEDERAL ELECTION COMMISSION



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FEC LETTER TO PARTY CHAIRMEN:
NO "CONTRIBUTIONS" PERMITTED SUPPORTING
CARTER AND FORD CANDIDACIES

WASHINGTON - SEPTEMBER 25 - Advertisements and brochures paid for by state or local political party committees which support the Carter or Ford candidacies are impermissible "contributions" to the Presidential candidates, with certain limited exceptions, the Federal Election Commission reminded party leaders this week.

In a letter to political party chairmen around the country, released publicly today, the FEC said, "Because this is the first year that general elections have been subject to the public financing provisions of the law, we are concerned that many political party committees, particularly at the local level, may be unaware of the strict requirements of the law, and may inadvertently make expenditures referring to the party's Presidential and Vice-Presidential nominees that would have to be treated as 'contributions' barred by the Federal statute."

The term "contributions", the FEC said, "encompasses in-kind contributions or services such as including the Presidential candidate in any advertising, mailing or distribution of materials."

The FEC outlined for party chairmen three circumstances under which references to the Republican or Democratic Party Presidential candidates could be made by state or local political party

(1) Slate Card Exemption. "Slate cards or sample ballots identifying at least three candidates for any public office" can be prepared including a listing of Carter and Ford. This exemption is specifically mentioned in the statute itself.

(2) National Party Committee Expenditure. The statute permits a national political party committee to spend up to 2¢ per eligible voter (approximately \$3.2 million in 1976) on behalf of its Presidential candidate, but the FEC told the party chairmen that under the statute, each of their "state, county, city, or local party committees are not included in this exemption. The 2 cents per voter expenditure permitted by all state and local committees combined on behalf of Senate and House candidates does not include any allowance for similar expenditures for their party's Presidential nominee."

The FEC said, however, "The National committee may designate any committee as its agent for expenditures within its \$3.2 million allotment, or may reimburse state and local party committees for Presidential expenditures out of its allotment, but the affirmative action of the National committee is required before a state or local expenditure on behalf of a Presidential candidate can be considered part of this National committee exception."

(3) Special \$1,000 Exception. The FEC told the chairmen that in its proposed regulations, it has approved the expenditure by either state, county, city, or congressional district party committees "of up to \$1,000 in an expenditure(s) to further the general election of its Presidential nominee."

The letter cautioned party committees, "Please note that \$1,000 is the total cost that can be incurred by such a committee in expenditure(s) referring to its Presidential candidate. The allowance of \$1,000 may not be considered as part of an allocation of costs in expenditure(s) totalling more than \$1,000. This \$1,000 expenditure is in addition to the other provisions of the law relating to contributions to, and on behalf of, the party's Senate and House candidates. The effective date of this policy is August 25, 1976, the day the Commission's proposed regulations governing this subject were published in the Federal Register," the FEC said.