

FEDERAL ELECTION COMMISSION



Press Office
1325 K Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20463
Phone: Toll Free 800 424 9530, Local 523 4065

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
OCTOBER 12, 1979

CONTACT: FRED EILAND
SHARON SNYDER

FEC ANNOUNCES HEARINGS ON FEDERAL CANDIDATE DEBATE REGULATIONS

WASHINGTON -- In a notice of proposed rulemaking, published in the Federal Register today, the Federal Election Commission has announced that it will hold public hearings on Tuesday and Wednesday, October 23 and 24, on the subject of Federal candidate debates.

The FEC submitted regulations to Congress in June of this year which would have created a narrow exemption to the general ban on the use of corporate and union funds in federal elections. The proposed regulations would have allowed such funds to be donated to certain tax-exempt organizations to pay the costs of staging candidate debates. The U.S. Senate subsequently disapproved these regulations in September.

It is on these regulations that the Commission has requested comment. In addition, the FEC has posed several questions relating to the sponsorship of candidate debates. The questions include such areas as whether sponsorship of candidate debates should be limited only to certain tax-exempt organizations; whether the Commission has the authority to specify the structure of debates; whether such regulations should distinguish between presidential and congressional debates; and whether broadcasting stations, newspapers, magazines, or other periodical publications staging debates should be subject to FEC regulations.

Interested parties are invited to submit written comments to the Office of General Counsel, Federal Election Commission, 1325 K Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20463, within 30 days.

The public hearing will be held in the Commission's 5th Floor meeting room and will begin at 10 a.m. The hearing schedule of those individuals submitting oral or written testimony will be available from the FEC Press Office prior to Tuesday's hearing.