

FEDERAL ELECTION COMMISSION



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

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CONTACT: FRED EILAND
SHARON SNYDER

WASHINGTON---One of the busiest research facilities in this city of research facilities, during the past three weeks, has been the Public Records Room of the Federal Election Commission.

Now engaged in only the second presidential election since it was created in 1975, the Commission this year is putting all of its resources into seeking to fulfill its mandate to fully disclose campaign finance reports required of all candidates and political committees involved in elections for Federal offices.

Success of its efforts is in the numbers of researchers and reporters who have been going through the records, and will continue their search through the November 4 election, and afterwards.

Just two weeks ago the Commission published a four-volume Reports on Financial Activities of 1980 Senate and House candidates and party and non-party political committees. This was accompanied by computer indices showing independent expenditures, communications costs and national party expenditures from January 1, 1979, through the second quarter 1980 reporting period which ended June 30.

During the coming week before the general election, updated summary information in those categories will be produced by the FEC, covering the period through the third quarter for which reports were due on October 15. In addition, summary information based on monthly reports will be included.

The Reports on Financial Activities and the computer indices are available for public and press review in the Commission's Public Records Room. All financial reports and records filed with the FEC are on microfilm. Documents also are available in paper copies, but microfilm is the Commission's official record. The FEC "store front" research facility contains a number of microfilm reader-printers, computer terminals, copying machines and work tables for use by anyone wishing to look at election-related facts and figures. The Commission makes documents available no later than 48 hours after receiving them, and frequently does this within 24 hours.

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In a further effort to make campaign financial information available to the public and press, the Federal Election Commission has extended the working hours of both its Public Records Room and Office of Public Communications. The latter responds to questions about the election law from candidates, political committee officials and the public.

Through November 4, the Public Records Room is open weekdays from 9 a.m. to 7 p.m., with Saturday hours of 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. and Sunday hours from noon to 4 p.m.

Information specialists in the Office of Public Communications are available weekdays from 8 a.m. until 8 p.m. At all other hours and on weekends, out-of-town callers using the Commission's toll-free telephone lines may leave a message on a recorder and have their calls returned the next business day.

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