

FEDERAL ELECTION COMMISSION



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WASHINGTON — Funding that would permit the Federal Election Commission to carry out its responsibilities during the 1982 elections and to prepare for the 1984 presidential elections, and supplemental funds to avert a possible furlough of the entire FEC staff this fall, were requested today in a hearing before the House Committee on Appropriations' Subcommittee on Treasury, Postal Service and General Government.

FEC Chairman Frank P. Reiche, Vice Chairman Danny L. McDonald and Commissioner Joan D. Aikens told the Committee, "The Reagan Administration agreed that more resources were needed by the Commission and submitted a request for \$9,880,000 as part of the President's FY 1983 Budget." This is a \$666,000 reduction from the previous request.

In support of the FEC request for \$184,000 in supplemental FY 1982 funding, Commissioner McDonald said, "If a pay supplemental is not provided, the Commission will run out of money before the end of the fiscal year and will face the prospect of furloughing the entire staff at a time when we should be increasing our activity to deal with the 1982 Congressional primaries and general election."

In order to scrape by so far with funds under a continuing resolution, he described a hiring freeze which reduced the permanent staff to 231 from 258 in FY 1979. A recent reduction-in-force cut the FEC Audit Division by another 16 positions, half the division. Other spending cuts have been made in contracts administered by the National Clearinghouse on Election Administration, in travel, and in outreach programs to educate potential candidates as well as political committees.

With current dollars adjusted for inflation, he said this year's budget request, with which the Commission is able to "meaningfully enforce

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the laws and assure complete public disclosure of information," is about the same as the \$4.7 million devoted to administer the election laws in 1973 when there was little disclosure, no regulations or advisory opinions and enforcement was almost totally lacking.

"Cost to the Federal Government for administering public financing of presidential elections as well as for disclosing, monitoring and providing guidance with respect to all federal elections in 1979-80 was less than one percent of reported campaign finance activity," Commissioner McDonald said. This includes some \$100 million in public funds for financing presidential primary and general election campaigns and the major party conventions as well as more than \$800 million spent in 1979-80 campaigns according to reports filed with the Commission.

The breadth of Commission activity in the 1982 and 1984 elections will depend in large part on what happens this fiscal year, Commissioner McDonald testified. Since the 1982 general election falls in the first month of the 1983 fiscal year, Commission attention will focus on activities incidental to contests for nearly 500 House and Senate seats.

Later that fiscal year, increased activity will be directed toward the 1984 elections because presidential candidates will be eligible in 1983 to submit matching fund requests for certification to ensure receipt of public funds early in the election year.