

# FEDERAL ELECTION COMMISSION

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## FEC SELECTS ALABAMA FOR DATA ACCESS TEST

WASHINGTON — Alabama Secretary of State Don Siegelman has been advised that his office has been selected by the Federal Election Commission as one of six to participate in a national program to test the sharing of its automated disclosure data base with state elections offices. The Commission's efforts are to broaden public access to federal election finance information which is centralized in its Washington public disclosure facilities.

The FEC's State Access program is based, in part, on a 1982 study by Secretary of State Siegelman presented at that time to the Commission's Advisory Panel meeting in Washington. His study encouraged state access to the FEC through offices of Secretaries of State, and estimated that, if fully implemented, the plan could save the States up to \$5 million annually in reduced costs of Federal campaign finance disclosure.

Mr. Siegelman has designated his Capitol office as site of the test. Equipment installation and staff instruction are under way with the start-up date to be announced by his office.

Test states will follow basic disclosure procedures established by the FEC, but the Secretary of State's Office will set its own standards on public access to information.

Other states participating are California, Massachusetts, Colorado, Georgia, Washington and Illinois.

Only the Federal Election Commission provides public access to all reports filed by Congressional and presidential candidates, political party committees, political action committees, those making independent expenditures and the communication costs of corporation and labor unions. Much of this information is captured by the Commission on a computerized data base.

Among computer data available to the pilot test offices will be: 1) An index which provides a cross reference to all records including receipts and disbursements relating to individual candidates; 2) An index which includes the name of each political committee, its FEC identification number, a list of each document filed, total gross receipts and disbursements; 3) An index which includes for each political committee its connected organization, a notation if it is "qualified" as a multicandidate committee, and all Federal candidates supported, together with total aggregate contributions to or expenditures on behalf of or against each candidate.

Additional information through computer printouts will be made available to each of the test offices by the FEC.

Participating offices will assess the usefulness and success of the program and these results will permit the Federal Election Commission to measure the public and media demand for campaign finance data available through a network of disclosure offices throughout the country. The final study will be made available to Congress for use in its deliberations on expanded disclosure efforts by the FEC.

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