

# FEDERAL ELECTION COMMISSION

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## HOUSE ADMINISTRATION SUBCOMMITTEE HEARS FEC 'FY 89 BUDGET REQUEST

WASHINGTON — "By all indications, the 1988 election will confront the Federal Election Commission with its greatest challenge ever," FEC Vice Chairman Danny Lee McDonald said today to the Subcommittee on Elections of the Committee On House Administration.

Commissioner McDonald, who is chairman of the Agency's Finance Committee, was testifying in support of the FEC's request for a fiscal year 1989 budget of \$15,433,000. He said the request "reflects an objective and reasonable, yet hard-nosed and stringent review by Office of Management and Budget". He pointed out that the election itself and most of the resultant compliance actions will actually occur in 'FY 1989.

Appearing with him were FEC Chairman Thomas J. Josefiak, FEC Commissioner Lee Ann Elliott, a member of the Finance Committee, Deputy Staff Director James Pehrkon and General Counsel Lawrence M. Noble.

"Because of the increased flow of funds in campaigns, the heated battles and heightened public awareness of the rules, we expect an extraordinary number of complaints and internally-generated compliance matters related to the Presidential campaigns in both fiscal years 1988 and 1989," he continued.

At the same time, he said, the Commission cannot allow the Presidential race to detract from its responsibilities concerning Congressional races. "Judging by year-end Senate and House campaign reports we are now reviewing, it appears that records will be set there also."

Commissioner McDonald told the Committee that the Agency's request contained two critical needs: an increase in the enforcement staff and a modern office automation system.

In support of additional enforcement staff resources, he said the FEC "has undertaken a number of procedural and managerial improvements in an effort to handle the growing workload....But," he added, "these improvements have been inadequate to keep up with the ever increasing number of cases." While the number of enforcement cases has been increasing, many involve issues of greater complexity than in the past. "This is a natural result of more experienced campaign finance practitioners having greater opportunities to delve into grey areas of the law," he said. "Delay in the enforcement process damages the interests of the parties and discredits the process."

In its continuing effort to increase overall productivity, the FEC is proposing to procure and install an up-to-date office automation system that would provide virtually all staff members with computer work stations capable of word processing, legal research, message handling and on-line access to the FEC's mainframe data base. The new system would replace 1970's vintage word processing equipment which, in many cases, is no longer being manufactured and for which replacement parts are no longer available. Funds requested for this purpose would be available only for this purpose, and any amount not needed would be lapsed to the Treasury and not applied to any other purpose, Commissioner McDonald said.

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