FEDERAL ELECTION COMMISSION

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
THURSDAY, MARCH 15, 1990

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FEC PRESENTS FY '91 BUDGET NEEDS TO HOUSE APPROPRIATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE

WASHINGTON -- A Federal Election Commission Fiscal Year 1991 budget request that "provides for sufficient staff...to enable the Commission to meet its mission" was presented today to the U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Appropriations' Subcommittee on Treasury, Postal Service and General Government.

In testimony, FEC Vice Chairman and Chairman of the Finance Committee John Warren McGarry said, "It is our belief that a strong well-funded Federal Election Commission is a critical part of the United States' political process, which is increasingly becoming a model for new democracies".

Commissioner McGarry said the Commission and the Office of Management and Budget were in agreement on the $17,500,000 that is included in the President's budget.

Also, participating in today's presentation were FEC Chairman Lee Ann Elliott and Commissioner Joan D. Aikens who is a member of the Finance Committee.

Total spending for the 1990 federal elections is projected to be $1.45 billion, a 32% increase over the 1986 election cycle, Commissioner McGarry said. He also predicted that total spending for the 1992 election would go over the $2 billion dollar mark. He explained that these increases in overall campaign spending have a direct and overwhelming dollar impact on every aspect of the FEC's operations and noted that the request would provide sufficient staff in enforcement and audit, as well as support for that staff to carry out its duties.

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The request also includes some funding for a public education program informing taxpayers of the tax check-off system by which Presidential campaigns are funded. On three previous occasions over the past few months, the FEC has advised the Congress, the President and the Secretary of the Treasury of a potential shortfall in the fund because of a continuing decrease in taxpayer participation in the check-off program. Unless that trend is reversed, the shortfall could adversly affect public funding for the 1996 Presidential election, and possibly even the 1992 election.

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