

FEDERAL ELECTION COMMISSION

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FEDERAL ELECTION COMMISSION ISSUES 20-YEAR REPORT

WASHINGTON -- The Federal Election Commission (FEC) is marking its 20th anniversary with publication today of a 40-page report portraying events, issues, trends, and statistics in campaign financing.

The independent FEC was established by Congress in April of 1975 in the wake of the Watergate scandal and the attendant irregularities and illegalities in campaign financing. The Commission's mandate is to administer and enforce the Federal Election Campaign Act of 1971 (FECA), as amended.

While the 20-year report commemorates the Commission's 20th anniversary, it does not chronicle the entire 20-year period. Instead, it offers a current snapshot of the agency, focusing on significant Commission actions of recent years.

Highlights of the 20th anniversary report include:

-- Chapter 1, Historical Context: Explanations of 1971 election laws, subsequent amendments, and constitutional issues decided by the Supreme Court in Buckley v. Valeo in 1976.

-- Chapter 2, Administering and Enforcing the FECA: Charts, graphs, and text detail the FEC's record in disclosure, enforcement, and public service. For example: the Commission's Reports Analysis Division reviewed almost 90,000 campaign reports in 1993-94; there were over 100 conciliation agreements in 1994 for a median civil penalty of approximately \$5,000; and there were more than 300,000 telephone inquiries on the Commission's 800-line over the past two election cycles.

-- Chapter 3, Key Issues Before the Commission: Soft money, express advocacy, personal use of campaign funds, contributions by foreign nationals, and other issues are profiled.

-- Chapter 4, Continuing Debate Over Campaign Finance Reform: The role of political parties and PACs, the growing costs of campaigns, a discussion of spending limits and other elements of reform are augmented by numerous graphs and charts.

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showing, for example, an increase of 291 percent in congressional campaign spending from 1978 to 1994.

FEC Chairman Danny L. McDonald said of the Commission's anniversary and the 20-year report: "This report is an excellent publication to commemorate the Federal Election Commission's 20th anniversary. It not only enhances understanding of the history surrounding the Commission's creation, but also provides insight into our mission and profiles the key issues the agency is facing. I am proud to have been associated with the FEC since 1981, and I think I speak for all our employees in saying we're proud to serve the American public as part of the democratic process."

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MEDIA ADVISORY: Copies of the "Twenty Year Report" are available from the FEC Press Office. Call 202-219-4155 or fax your request via 202-219-3768.

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