

FEDERAL ELECTION COMMISSION



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FEC ESTABLISHING PILOT PROGRAM FOR ELECTRONIC FILING

WASHINGTON -- The Federal Election Commission (FEC) is inviting a number of political action committees (PACs), political party committees, and candidate committees to participate in a pilot program on voluntary electronic filing of campaign disclosure reports.

In letters dispatched recently to the Democratic National Committee, the Republican National Committee, 24 members of the House and Senate, and selected political committees, FEC Chairman Danny L. McDonald wrote:

"With the support and urging of our Congressional Committees of jurisdiction, the Federal Election Commission is accelerating its exploration of having campaign finance reports filed electronically. While certain statutory and regulatory changes will be required to make electronic filing a reality, we want to get a headstart on acquiring the procedural and technical knowledge needed to implement the system.

"To augment our work with technical experts and our state and local counterparts, we want to acquire some practical, real world knowledge of what this means to the political committees who file with us. We are, therefore, asking a small group of political party committees, PACs, and candidate committees to advise us about their current report preparation and records maintenance practices," the Chairman said.

McDonald emphasized the voluntary aspect of the pilot program, saying that political committees still must file regular paper reports with the Secretary of the Senate or Clerk of the House and the FEC.

"Participating (in the pilot program) now, however, does afford you and your committee staff the opportunity to help shape the structure of whatever automated process may ultimately flow from this project," McDonald said in his letter.

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To develop a uniform electronic filing system for campaign disclosure reports, the FEC needs input and advice from active participants in the campaign finance community. To that end, the initial phase of the pilot program will solicit information concerning filers' current report preparation and records maintenance practices.

Chairman McDonald commented about the program, "This isn't a matter of committees merely submitting a computer disk to us and expecting us to decipher it. There are many different technical realities here that must be made compatible so an electronic filing system is friendly to filers, efficient for the Commission, and cost-effective for the taxpayers."

Recipients of the invitation to participate in the pilot program, including seven Washington-based PACs, were chosen to provide a representative sampling of data, and for their proximity to the FEC.

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