
THE FEDERAL ELECTION COMMISSION

*The
First 10
Years*

1975-1985

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Message from the Chairman

April 1985 marked the Federal Election Commission's 10th year of operations. This report provides the historical context in which the Commission was formed and describes the agency's role in administering the Federal Election Campaign Act during the past decade.

Our greatest achievement has been to provide the most complete disclosure of campaign finance information that the nation has ever had. An array of graphs, published in this volume, suggest the wealth of information generated by the Commission's disclosure program.

Meaningful disclosure, however, depends on enforcement of the law. When the Watergate bubble burst, people realized that the existing election law was not being enforced. Congress recognized that an independent election agency was needed not just to administer the law but to enforce it. Thus, the Federal Election Commission was created.

Now, ten years later, the Federal Election Commission has made campaign finance disclosure and the observance of the election law a reality.

Recognizing that the law is complex, we will continue to provide information to help our constituents understand the law. We believe this is an effective way to achieve compliance and to effect complete disclosure.



April 14, 1985.

THE FEDERAL ELECTION CAMPAIGN LAWS: A SHORT HISTORY

Before the 1971 Federal Election Laws

The first Federal campaign finance legislation was an 1867 law that prohibited Federal officers from requesting contributions from Navy Yard workers. Over the next hundred years, Congress enacted a series of laws which sought broader regulation of Federal campaign financing. These legislative initiatives, taken together, sought to:

- Limit contributions to ensure that wealthy individuals and special interest groups did not have a disproportionate influence on Federal elections;
- Prohibit certain sources of funds for Federal campaign purposes;
- Control campaign spending; and
- Require public disclosure of campaign finances to deter abuse and to educate the electorate.

This effort to bring about more comprehensive campaign finance reform began in 1907 when Congress passed the Tillman Act, which prohibited corporations and national banks from contributing money to Federal campaigns. The first Federal campaign disclosure legislation was a 1910 law affecting House elections only. In 1911, the law was amended to cover Senate elections as well, and to set spending limits for all Congressional candidates.

The Federal Corrupt Practices Act of 1925, which affected general election activity only, strengthened disclosure requirements and increased expenditure limits. The Hatch Act of 1939 and its 1940 amendments asserted the right of Congress to regulate primary elections and included provisions limiting contributions and expenditures in Congressional elections. The Taft-Hartley Act of 1947 barred

both labor unions and corporations from making expenditures and contributions in Federal elections.

The campaign finance provisions of all of these laws were largely ignored, however, because none provided an institutional framework to administer their provisions effectively. The laws had other flaws as well. For example, spending limits applied only to committees active in two or more States. Further, candidates could avoid the spending limit and disclosure requirements altogether because a candidate who claimed to have no knowledge of spending on his behalf was not liable under the 1925 Act.

The evasion of disclosure provisions became evident when Congress passed the more stringent disclosure provisions of the 1971 Federal Election Campaign Act (FECA). In 1968, still under the old law, House and Senate candidates reported spending \$8.5 million, while in 1972, after the passage of the FECA, spending reported by Congressional candidates jumped to \$88.9 million.¹

The 1971 Election Laws

The Federal Election Campaign Act of 1971 (P.L. 92-225), together with the 1971 Revenue Act (P.L. 92-178), initiated fundamental changes in Federal campaign finance laws. The FECA, effective April 7, 1972, not only required full reporting of campaign contributions and expenditures, but also

¹*Congressional Quarterly Weekly Report*, Vol. xxvii, No. 49, December 5, 1969, p. 2435, Clerk of the House, "The Annual Statistical Report of Contributions and Expenditures Made During the 1972 Election Campaigns for the U.S. House of Representatives" (1974), p. 161; Secretary of the Senate, "The Annual Statistical Report of Receipts and Expenditures Made in Connection with Elections for the U.S. Senate in 1972" [undated], p. 33.

limited spending on media advertisements.² (These limits were later repealed.)

The FECA also provided the basic legislative framework for separate segregated funds,³ popularly referred to as PACs (political action committees), established by corporations and unions. Although the Tillman Act and the Taft-Hartley Act of 1947 banned direct contributions by corporations and labor unions to influence Federal elections, the FECA provided an exception whereby corporations and unions could use treasury funds to establish, operate and solicit voluntary contributions for the organization's separate segregated fund (i.e., PAC). These voluntary donations could then be used to contribute to Federal races.

Under the Revenue Act—the first of a series of laws implementing Federal financing of Presidential elections—citizens could check a box on their tax forms authorizing the Federal government to use one of their tax dollars to finance Presidential campaigns in the general election.⁴ Congress implemented the program in 1973 and, by 1976, enough tax money had accumulated to fund the 1976 election—the first publicly funded Federal election in U.S. history.

The Federal Election Campaign Act of 1971 did not provide for a single, independent body to monitor and enforce the law. Instead, the Clerk of the House, the Secretary of the Senate and the Comptroller General of the United States General Accounting Office (GAO) monitored compliance with the FECA, and the Justice Department was responsible for prosecuting violations of the law referred by the overseeing officials. Following the 1972 elections, although Congressional officials referred about 7,000 cases to the Justice Department, and the Comptroller General referred about 100 cases to Justice,⁵ few were litigated.

1974 Amendments

Not until 1974, following the documentation of campaign abuses in the 1972 Presidential elections,

²"Contribution" and "expenditure" are special terms defined in 2 U.S.C. and 11 CFR.

³"Separate segregated fund" is a special term defined in 2 U.S.C. and 11 CFR.

⁴In 1966, Congress enacted a law to provide for public funding of Presidential elections, but suspended the law a year later. It would have included a taxpayers' checkoff provision similar to that later embodied in the 1971 law.

⁵Comptroller General of the United States, "Report of the Office of Federal Elections of the General Accounting Office in Administering the Federal Election Campaign Act of 1971" (February 1975), pp. 23 and 24.

did a consensus emerge to create an independent body to ensure compliance with the campaign finance laws. Comprehensive amendments to the FECA (P.L. 93-443) established the Federal Election Commission, an independent agency to assume the administrative functions previously divided between Congressional officers and GAO. The Commission was given jurisdiction in civil enforcement matters, authority to write regulations and responsibility for monitoring compliance with the FECA. Additionally, the amendments transferred from GAO to the Commission the function of serving as a national clearinghouse for information on the administration of elections.

Under the 1974 amendments, the President, the Speaker of the House and the President pro tempore of the Senate each appointed two of the six voting Commissioners. The Secretary of the Senate and the Clerk of the House were designated nonvoting, ex officio Commissioners. The first Commissioners were sworn in on April 14, 1975.

The 1974 amendments also completed the system currently used for the public financing of Presidential elections. The amendments provided for partial Federal funding, in the form of matching funds, for Presidential primary candidates and also extended public funding to political parties to finance their Presidential nominating conventions.

Complementing these provisions, Congress also enacted strict limits on both contributions and expenditures. These limits applied to all candidates for Federal office and to political committees influencing Federal elections.⁶

Another amendment relaxed a 1939 prohibition on contributions from Federal government contractors. The FECA, as amended, now permitted corporations and unions with Federal contracts to establish and operate PACs.

Buckley v. Valeo

Key provisions of the 1974 amendments were immediately challenged as unconstitutional in a lawsuit filed by Senator James L. Buckley (Republican Senator from New York) and Eugene McCarthy (former Democratic Senator from Minnesota) against the Secretary of the Senate, Francis R. Valeo. The Supreme Court handed down its ruling on January 30, 1976. *Buckley v. Valeo*, 424 U.S. 1 (1976).

⁶"Political committee" is a special term defined in 2 U.S.C. and 11 CFR.

The Court upheld contribution limits because they served the government's interest in safeguarding the integrity of elections. However, the Court overturned the expenditure limits, stating: "It is clear that a primary effect of these expenditure limitations is to restrict the quantity of campaign speech by individuals, groups and candidates. The restrictions . . . limit political expression at the core of our electoral process and of First Amendment freedoms." Acknowledging that both contribution and spending limits had First Amendment implications, the Court stated that the new law's "expenditure ceilings impose significantly more severe restrictions on protected freedom of political expression and association than do its limitations on financial contributions." The Court implied, however, that the expenditure limits placed on publicly funded candidates were constitutional because Presidential candidates were free to disregard the limits if they chose to reject public financing; later, the Court affirmed this ruling in *Republican National Committee v. FEC*, 445 U.S. 955 (1980).

The Court also sustained other provisions of the public funding law and upheld disclosure and recordkeeping requirements. However, the Court found that the method of appointing FEC Commissioners violated the constitutional principle of separation of powers, since Congress, not the President, appointed four of the Commissioners, who exercised executive powers. As a result, beginning on March 22, 1976, the Commission could no longer exercise its executive powers.⁷ The agency resumed full activity in May, when, under the 1976 amendments to the FECA, the Commission was reconstituted and the President appointed six Commission members, who were confirmed by the Senate.

1976 Amendments

In response to the Supreme Court's decision, Congress revised campaign finance legislation yet again. The new amendments, enacted on May 11,

⁷The Supreme Court stayed its judgment concerning Commission powers for 30 days; the stay was extended once.

1976, repealed expenditure limits (except for candidates who accepted public funding) and revised the provision governing the appointment of Commissioners.

The 1976 amendments contained other changes, including provisions that limited the scope of PAC fundraising by corporations and labor organizations. Preceding this curtailment of PAC solicitations, the FEC had issued an advisory opinion, AO 1975-23 (the SunPAC opinion), confirming that the 1971 law permitted a corporation to use treasury money to establish, operate and solicit contributions to a PAC. The opinion also permitted corporations and their PACs to solicit the corporation's employees as well as its stockholders. The 1976 amendments, however, put significant restrictions on PAC solicitations, specifying who could be solicited and how solicitations would be conducted. In addition, a single contribution limit was adopted for all PACs established by the same union or corporation.

1979 Amendments

Building upon the experience of the 1976 and 1978 elections, Congress made further changes in the law. The 1979 amendments to the FECA (P.L. 96-187), enacted on January 8, 1980, included provisions that simplified reporting requirements, encouraged party activity at State and local levels and increased the public funding grants for Presidential nominating conventions. Minor amendments were adopted in 1977, 1982, 1983 and 1984.

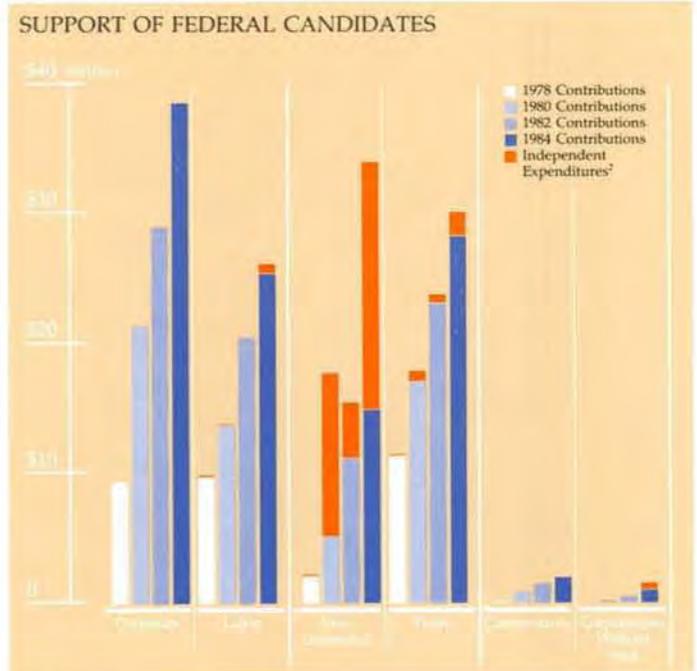
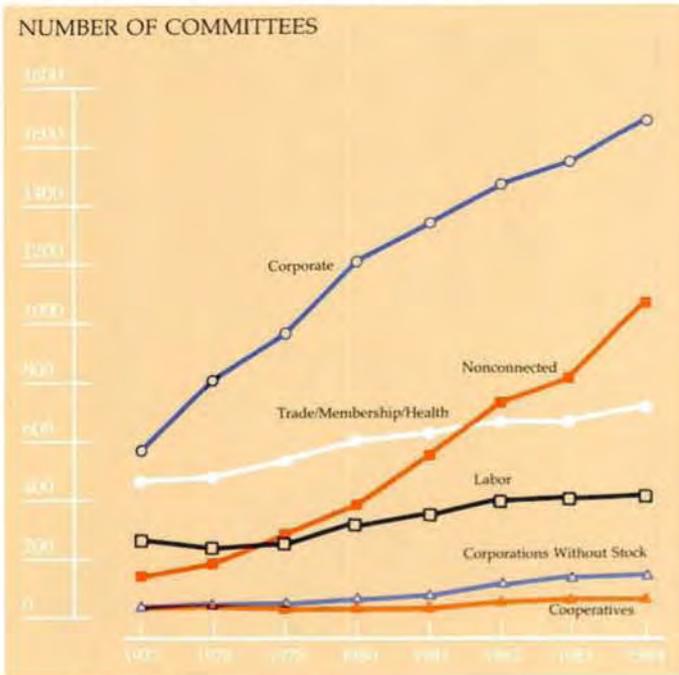
Summary

In one decade, Congress has fundamentally altered the regulation of Federal campaign finances. Through the passage of the Revenue Act, the FECA and its amendments, Congress has provided public financing for Presidential elections, limited contributions in Federal elections, required substantial disclosure of campaign financial activity and created an independent agency to administer and enforce these provisions.

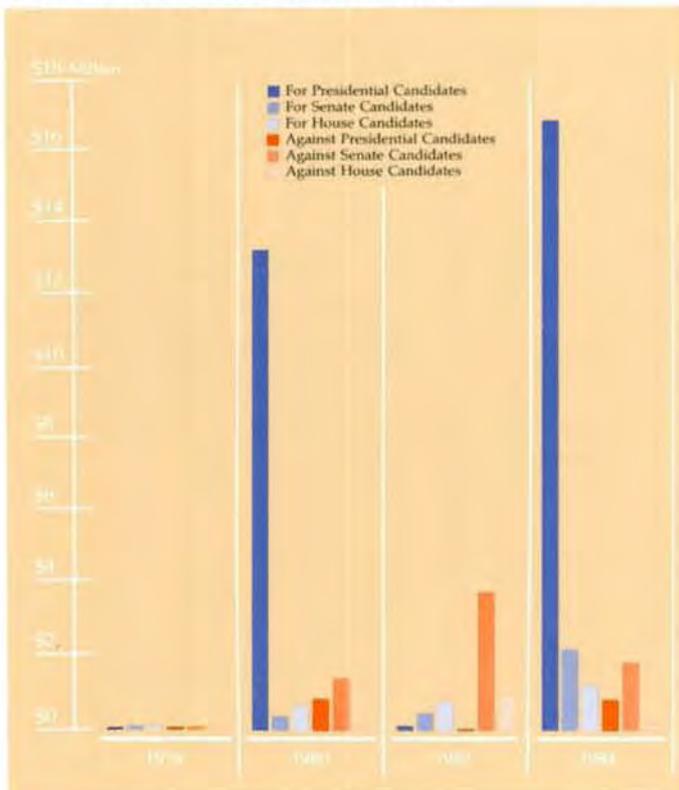
Campaign Finance Statistics

The election laws have resulted in substantial data on Federal campaign finance. These selected graphs, covering the past several years, display some of this information.

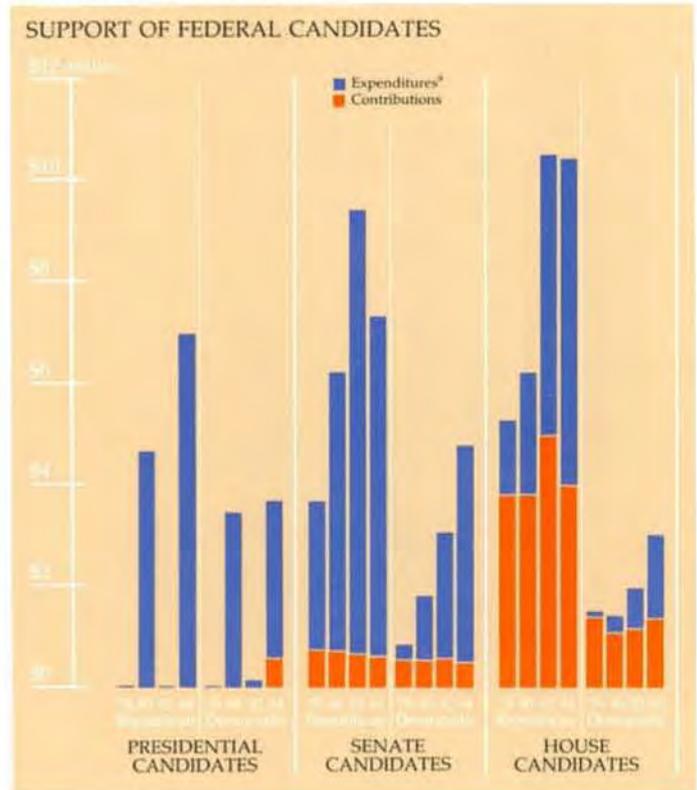
POLITICAL ACTION COMMITTEES¹



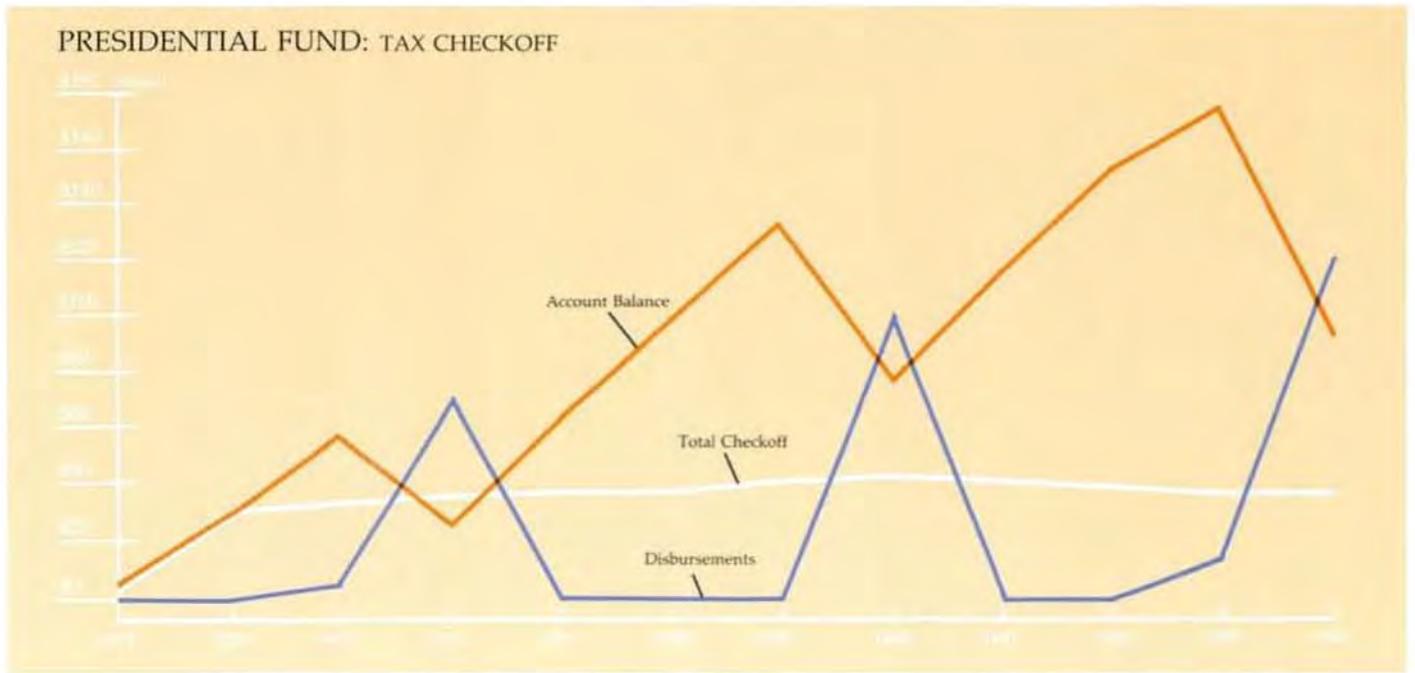
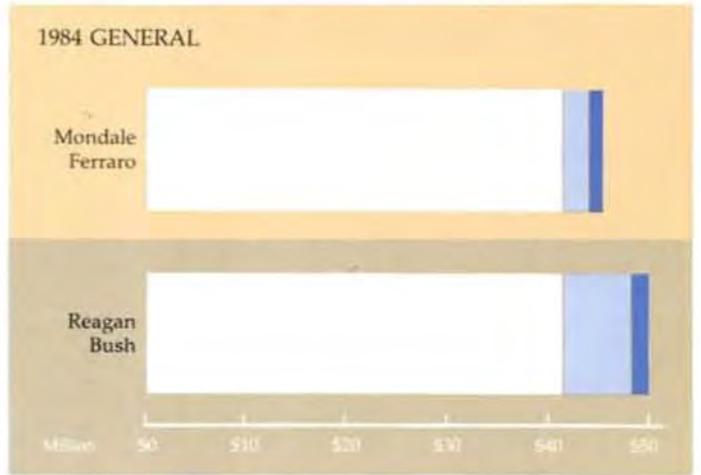
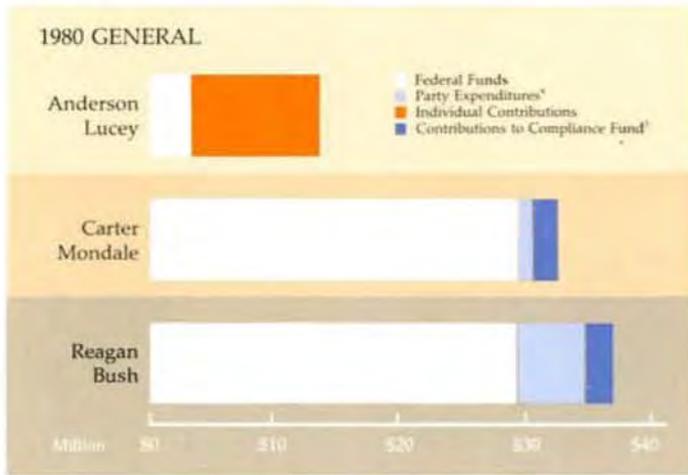
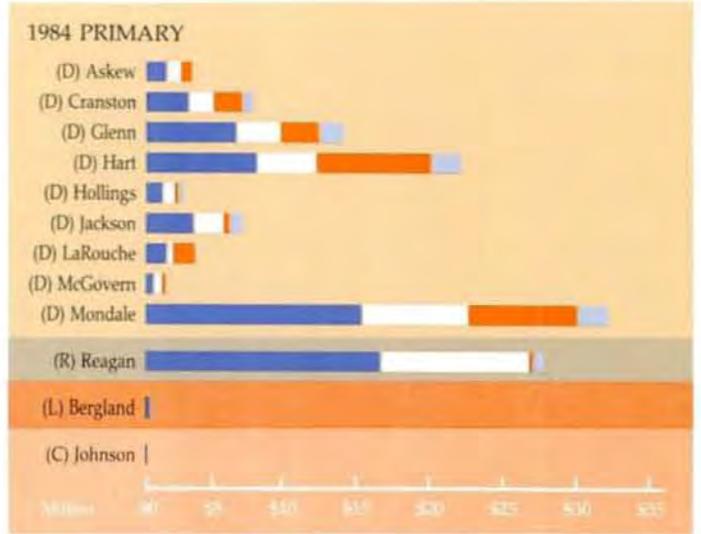
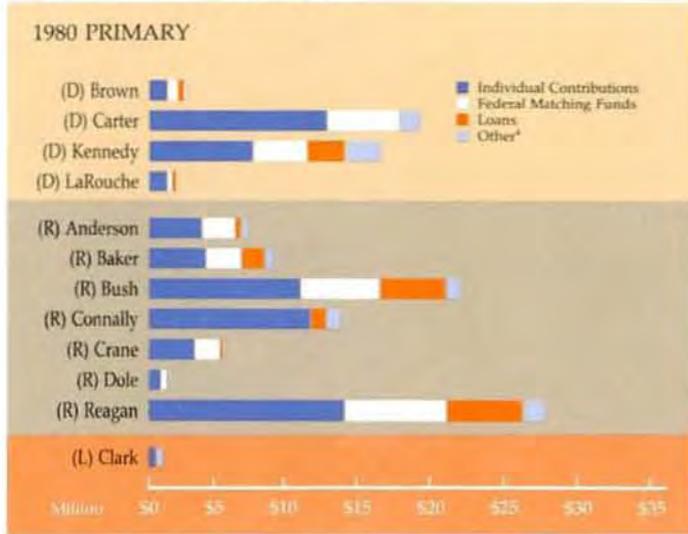
INDEPENDENT EXPENDITURES²



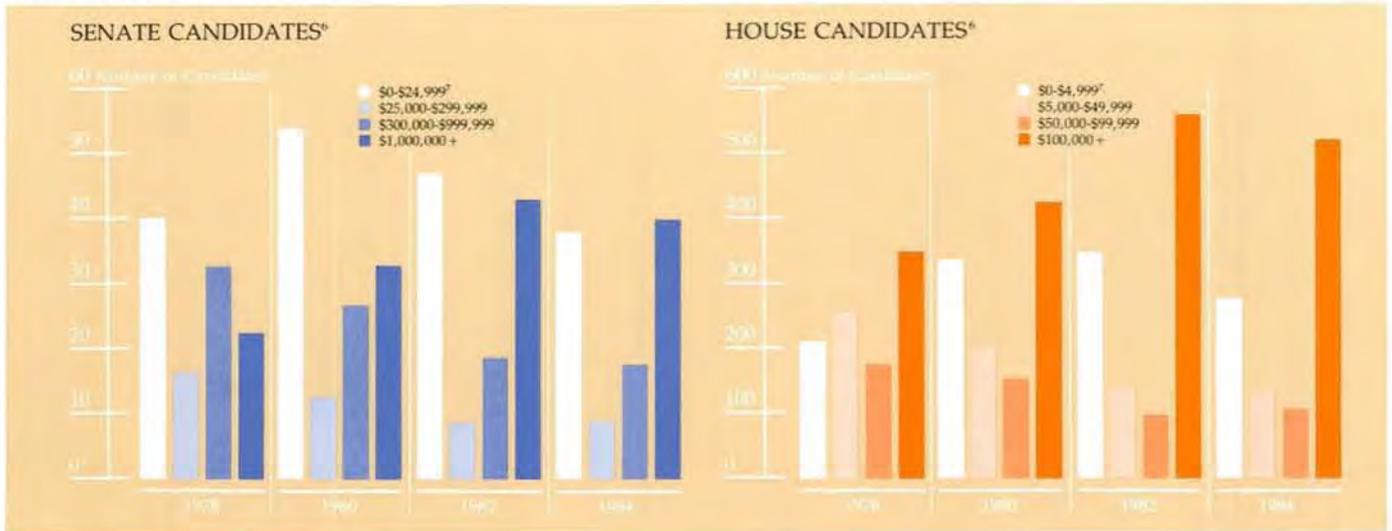
PARTY COMMITTEES



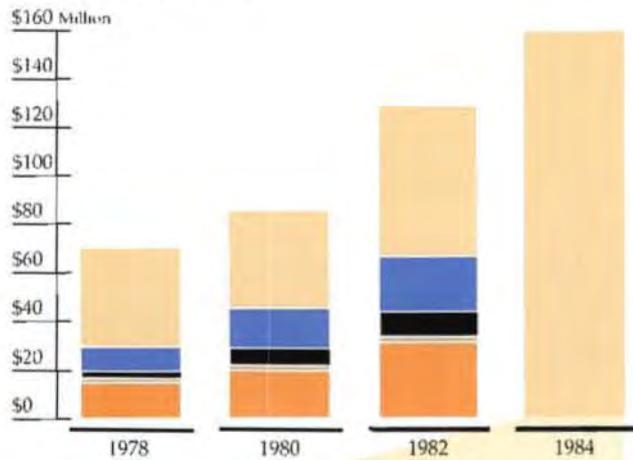
PRESIDENTIAL FUNDING³



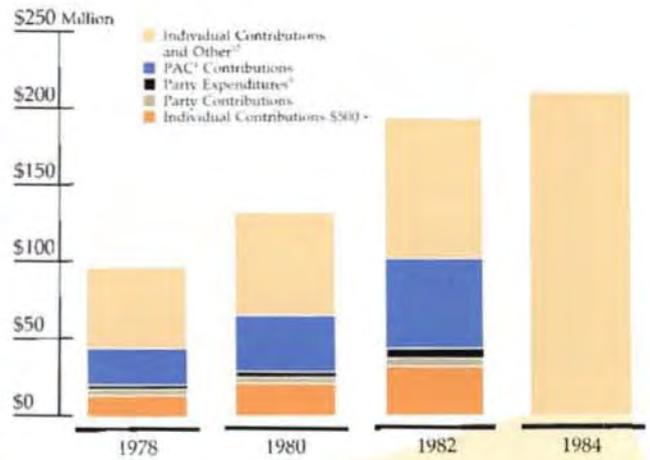
CAMPAIGN SPENDING



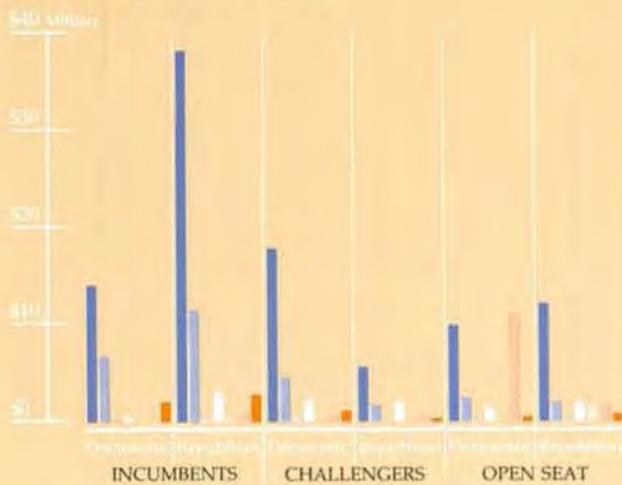
SOURCES OF FUNDING⁸ SENATE CANDIDATES



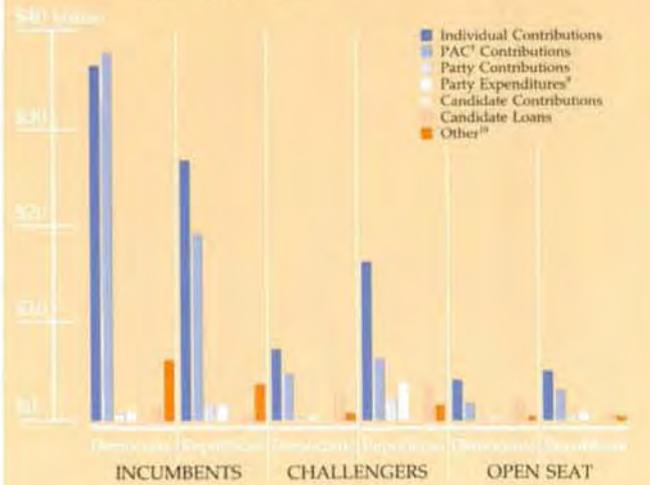
HOUSE CANDIDATES



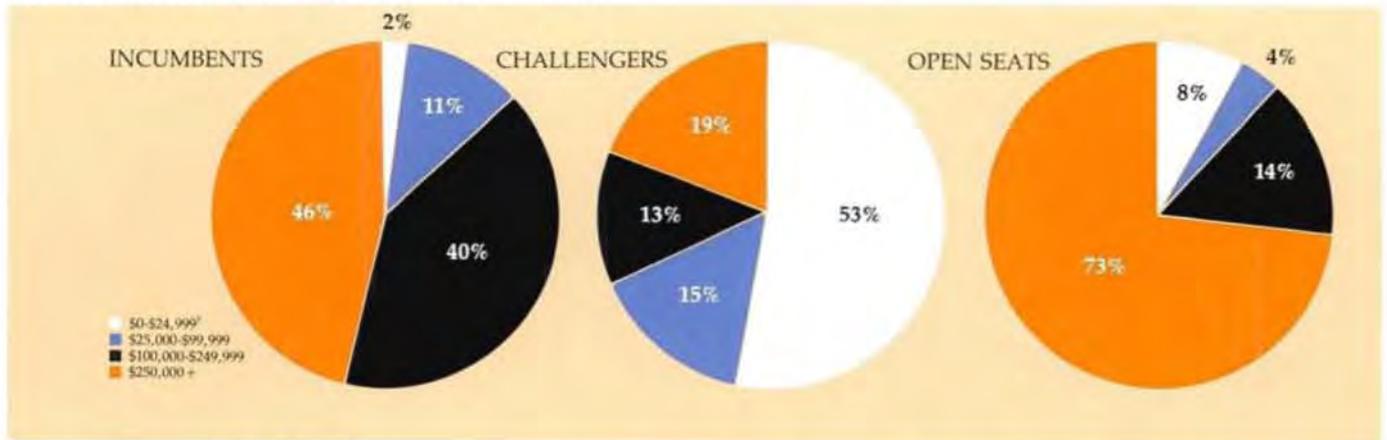
SENATE CANDIDATES, 1984⁸



HOUSE CANDIDATES, 1984⁸

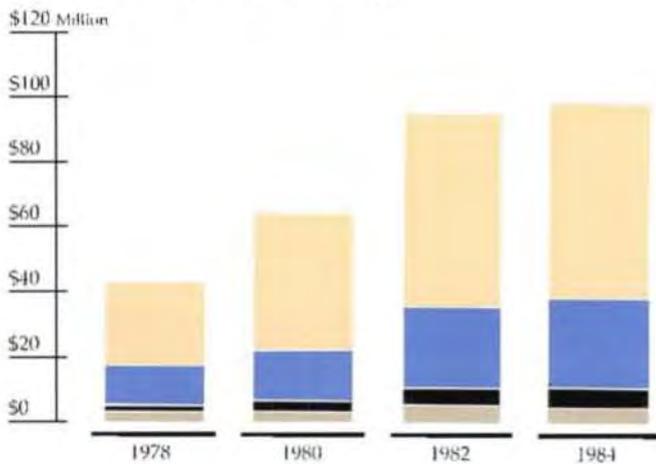


SPENDING BY HOUSE CANDIDATES, 1984¹¹

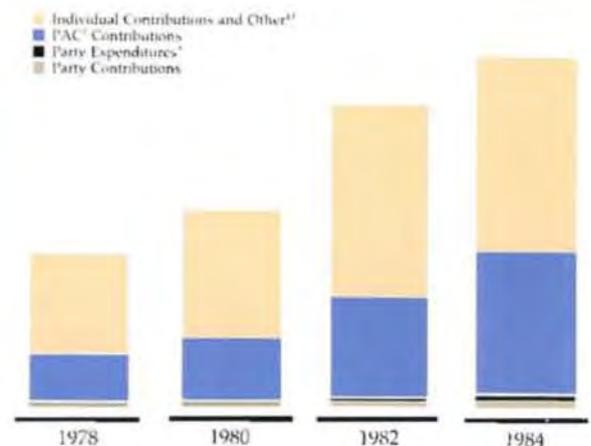


SOURCES OF FUNDING⁸

HOUSE REPUBLICAN CANDIDATES



HOUSE DEMOCRATIC CANDIDATES



1. A "PAC" (or political action committee) is a political committee that is neither a candidate committee nor a party committee.
2. An "Independent Expenditure" is an expenditure for a communication expressly advocating the election or defeat of a clearly identified candidate that is not made with the cooperation or prior consent of, or in consultation with, or at the request or suggestion of, any candidate or his/her authorized committees or agents.
3. Graph includes Presidential candidates whose campaign activity exceeded \$300,000.
4. "Other" includes refunds, rebates, interest, dividends, contributions by candidates to their own campaigns, and contributions by committees.
5. "Contributions to Compliance Fund" are contributions made to finance legal and accounting services related to compliance with the Federal election laws.
6. Graph covers all campaign spending (primary, runoff and general) of candidates running in the general election.
7. Included are a few individuals who have raised and spent less than \$5,000 and are therefore not statutory "candidates" under the Federal Election Campaign Act.
8. Graph covers general election candidates, showing their sources of funding in primary, runoff and general elections.
9. "Party Expenditures" are limited expenditures made by party committees on behalf of Federal candidates in the general election. Independent expenditures made in Presidential campaigns are shown on the Independent Expenditures graph on page 4.
10. "Other" includes loans, rebates, refunds, contributions from unregistered entities and other campaign committees, interest and dividends.
11. Graph covers all campaign spending (primary, runoff and general) of major party candidates running in the general election.
12. "Individual Contributions and Other" includes contributions from individuals in amounts less than \$500, loans, loans and contributions by the candidate, rebates, refunds, contributions from unregistered entities and other campaign committees, interest and dividends.
13. "Individual Contributions and Other" includes contributions from individuals, loans, loans and contributions by the candidate, rebates, refunds, contributions from unregistered entities and other campaign committees, interest and dividends.

COMMISSION ACTIVITIES

Despite continued public debate on the government regulation of Federal election financing, the Federal Election Commission is recognized as playing a necessary role in overseeing federal election laws. By the end of 1984, the Commission had implemented the Federal Election Campaign Act (the FECA) throughout five election cycles and had administered the public financing of three Presidential elections. The sections below describe the major functions the Commission undertakes in performing its role under the election laws.

Administering Public Funding

The FEC has overseen the public financing of three Presidential elections—in 1976, 1980 and 1984—and to date has certified payments to 43 candidates and 6 Democratic and Republican nominating convention committees. The payments are actually made by the U.S. Treasury Department. As of February 19, 1985, \$304 million from the tax checkoff fund had been used to finance Presidential elections.

Before certifying payments, the Commission makes sure that those requesting public funds have met qualifying conditions. Major party Presidential nominees and convention committees receive outright grants, and Presidential primary candidates receive Federal matching funds for certain contributions they receive. (Up to \$250 of an individual's contribution is matched with an equivalent payment from the tax checkoff fund.) In addition, the law specifies the conditions under which minor party candidates and new party candidates may become eligible for partial public funding of their general election campaigns.⁸

The FEC audits all public funding recipients and may require repayment of public funds to the U.S. Treasury under certain circumstances—for example, if a candidate or convention committee uses Federal money for expenses unrelated to the campaign.

The public funding programs of 1980 and 1984 were noteworthy for several reasons. In 1980, the Commission certified the first public funds to a new party candidate, John Anderson, who received over \$4 million shortly after the general election. This post-election funding was based on the number of votes he received in the election. In 1984, Sonia Johnson became the first third-party candidate to receive primary matching funds. Additionally, in 1984, President Reagan became the first candidate ever to raise enough in matchable contributions to qualify for the maximum amount of primary matching funds. His campaign received \$10.1 million in public funds.

Disclosing Campaign Finance Information

Public interest in all aspects of campaign financing has steadily grown through the years. In response, the Commission has stepped up its efforts to make campaign finance data available more quickly and in more usable formats.

Commission disclosure of campaign finance activity is based on the reports submitted by political committees. These reports focus on the flow of money in and out of campaigns and the sources of

⁸“Major party,” “minor party” and “new party” are special terms defined in 26 U.S.C. and 11 CFR.

campaign support. The reports are available from the Public Records Office, which was the first of the Commission's offices to be fully staffed and operative. A store-front facility, the Public Records Office makes reports available for public review and copying within 48 hours of receipt, as required by law. By the end of 1984, the office had made public 5.59 million pages of documents.

In addition to maintaining the reports, the Commission enters data taken from reports into a computer system. The resulting data base has enhanced public disclosure in several ways. Computerized indexes, which sort and aggregate reported financial data in a variety of formats, are readily available to the public. The first indexes compiled manually by the FEC staff in 1975 are primitive when compared to the variety of FEC computer indexes now available. Utilizing its computerized data base, the Commission periodically provides press releases summarizing the activity of campaigns, party committees and PACs. The Commission also publishes comprehensive studies of each two-year election cycle. These *Reports on Financial Activity* (previously called the *Disclosure Series*) present cumulative data and provide a basis for research on patterns of campaign financing. The charts on the preceding pages—most of them based on these published reports—present a sampling of available data covering several election cycles.

The Commission, in cooperation with State officials, initiated a pilot program in 1984 to provide several State election offices with direct computer access to FEC campaign finance data.⁹ Computer terminals installed in the offices give the press and the public immediate access to three FEC computer indexes, updated daily. Once it has surveyed public demand for this service, the Commission may expand the program to encompass more States.

The growing interest in campaign finance, coupled with the wealth of information available from the Commission, has dramatically increased the activity of the FEC's Public Records Office and Press Office. In 1984, the Public Records Office served 17,240 people and received 13,183 telephone inquiries. Similarly, the Press Office assisted 1,922 visitors in 1984 and answered 15,317 phone inquiries.

Encouraging Compliance with the Law

From the beginning, the FEC has fostered voluntary compliance with the law by offering infor-

mation, advice and clarification to those seeking help.

Central to the agency's information and assistance program are the toll-free telephone lines. They give political committees and candidates direct access to Commission staff who answer questions about what the law requires.

The Commission's publications also play a major role in promoting compliance by explaining the law, in easy-to-understand terms, to a variety of readers. Expanded over the years, FEC publications now include a monthly newsletter, in-depth campaign manuals and a series of brochures that focus on specific aspects of the law. As the number of publications has increased, so has the number of requests for them; the Commission filled 16,669 orders for FEC materials in 1984 alone. In addition, through workshops and two-day seminars, Commissioners and staff provide technical assistance to candidates, parties and political committees around the country.

FEC advisory opinions have also been an effective means of encouraging voluntary compliance.¹⁰ The advisory opinion procedure permits a person involved in political campaigns to request the Commission's advice on a specific activity and to obtain the protection of a binding legal opinion. Advisory opinions also clarify the law for persons who are in the same situation as the person who requested the opinion. From 1975 to 1984, the Commission issued 762 advisory opinions.

The agency has also recognized that clearly written regulations, which interpret and explain the law, contribute to voluntary compliance. The Commission prescribed its first regulations in 1977 and adopted substantial changes in 1980 to help committees understand the 1979 amendments to the law. Since then, the Commission has continued to amend its rules to clarify them and to address practical problems encountered by political committees.

The Commission also makes suggestions for modifying the election law itself. Every year, in accordance with the FECA, the Commission submits a list of legislative recommendations to Congress based on the agency's experience in administering the election law. In the 1979 amendments to the FECA, Congress adopted recommendations from the Commission's 1978 *Annual Report* to reduce reporting requirements and to strengthen the role of political parties by encouraging certain grassroots activities.

⁹States participating in the test are California, Colorado, Georgia, Illinois, Massachusetts, Washington, Rhode Island and Alabama.

¹⁰"Advisory opinion" is a special term used in 2 U.S.C. and 11 CFR.

Monitoring Compliance with the Law

The Commission reviews all campaign finance reports in order to fulfill two of its responsibilities: to enforce the law and to disclose campaign finance data. If an error, omission or other potential violation of the law is discovered, the agency sends a letter requesting that additional information be provided to clarify or amend information initially reported. The committee has the opportunity to amend its report voluntarily and help preserve the integrity of the public record.

Examination of a committee's reports sometimes reveals that the committee may have serious recordkeeping problems. In such cases, the Commission may audit the committee to define the problems and offer solutions. Again, the committee may voluntarily amend its reports. Since 1975, the Commission has completed 366 audits. These include the audits of Presidential candidates receiving public funding which are required by law. See the table below.

Occasionally, as a result of the review of the reports, the Commission determines that a committee may have serious reporting difficulties or other problems, which may result in violations of the law. These determinations may develop into compliance cases, discussed below.

FEC Audits, 1975-1984

Presidential*	46
Presidential Joint Fundraising**	6
Senate	12
House	108
Party (National)	38
Party (Other)	97
PACs	59
Total	366

*"Presidential" refers to audits of principal campaign committees of primary and general candidates, and of convention committees (both party and host committees).

**"Presidential Joint Fundraising" refers to audits of committees established by two or more political committees, one or more of which are Presidential committees, for the purpose of jointly raising funds.

Enforcing and Defending the Law

The Federal Election Campaign Act assigns the Commission the duty of determining whether a candidate or committee has violated the law. Possible violations are brought to the Commission's attention either internally—through the report-review procedures and audits described above—or externally—through complaints filed by members of the

public or through referrals from other government agencies. Once a formal complaint or referral is filed, the Commission opens a compliance case (referred to as a Matter Under Review or MUR). The Act itself dictates the procedures the agency must follow when it opens a case. First, the Commission must keep the matter confidential until the case is closed and put on the public record. Second, the Commission must give respondents—those alleged to have violated the law—a reasonable opportunity to demonstrate that no action should be taken against them. Finally, if the Commission finds probable cause to believe the law has been violated, the agency must try to settle the case through conciliation prior to filing a civil action.

By the end of 1984, the Commission had closed the file on over 1,700 compliance cases. Until 1979, a large portion of these cases were relatively simple in nature. However, in recent years, a greater number of cases have involved more complex issues requiring detailed legal analysis and, sometimes, significant civil penalties.

Some compliance matters require court action. The Commission brings suit when it is hampered in its duty to investigate alleged violations—for example, when persons refuse to cooperate in an investigation. The Commission also files suit as a means of enforcing the law if the agency cannot reach a conciliation agreement with a respondent who has violated the law, or if the respondent does not comply with the agreement. Moreover, because the FECA affords the complainant the opportunity to challenge the Commission's compliance actions, the Commission must sometimes defend its enforcement decisions in court.

The Commission also defends the constitutionality of the campaign finance law when persons bring suit claiming that certain provisions abridge rights protected under the Constitution. *Buckley v. Valeo* was the first of these constitutional challenges. In the *Buckley* case, and in the cases that have followed, the courts have had to weigh the value of the law as a safeguard on the integrity of elections against its potential for curtailing constitutional rights.

Overall, the Commission's litigation activities have been effective in enforcing and defending the law. Of the 27 court cases closed during 1984, for example, the Commission's position was upheld in 19 cases. The court disagreed with the Commission in three cases.¹¹

¹¹Of the remaining five cases, three were voluntarily dismissed during the year and another two were dismissed as moot.

Serving as a Clearinghouse on Election Administration

The FEC's Clearinghouse on Election Administration provides information services to State and local election agencies. In contrast with the Commission's primary purpose of regulating the flow of money in Federal elections, the Clearinghouse focuses on assisting State and local jurisdictions in the administrative conduct of the elections themselves. Established under the 1971 Act as part of the General Accounting Office, the Clearinghouse was transferred to the Commission under the 1974 amendments to the Act. The Clearinghouse gathers and disseminates information through published research studies, regional seminars and State workshops. As a central information office, the Clearinghouse received 3,882 phone and mail inquiries in 1984. Over the past ten years, it has published reports on such topics as State campaign finance laws, voting registration systems, bilingual election services and voting machine technology.

To make sure that it responds to the needs of its constituents, the Clearinghouse has organized an Advisory Panel composed of 17 State and local election officials. Panel members meet periodically with Clearinghouse staff to discuss current issues in their field and to recommend possible Clearinghouse projects and studies.

The Commissioners

The six Commissioners—three Democrats and three Republicans¹²—are appointed by the President

¹²Under the election law, no more than three Commissioners can be affiliated with the same political party.

and confirmed by the Senate. Two ex officio Commissioners, the Secretary of the Senate and the Clerk of the House of Representatives, are nonvoting members. They appoint special deputies to represent them at the Commission.

The six voting Commissioners serve full time and are responsible for overseeing administration of the Federal Election Campaign Act. They generally meet twice a week, once in closed session to discuss matters that, by law, must remain confidential, and once in a meeting open to the public. At these meetings, they formulate policy and vote on significant legal and administrative matters.

The Statutory Officers

The law provides for two statutory officers, a Staff Director and a General Counsel. The Staff Director carries the responsibilities of appointing staff, with the approval of the Commission, and implementing Commission policy. The Staff Director oversees the Commission's public disclosure activities, outreach efforts, review of reports and the audit program, as well as the administration of the agency.

The General Counsel directs the agency's enforcement activities and represents and advises the Commission in any legal actions brought against it. The Office of General Counsel handles all civil litigation, including several cases which have come before the Supreme Court. The Office is also responsible for drafting, for Commission consideration, regulations and advisory opinions, as well as other legal memoranda interpreting the Act.

APPENDIX

Presidential Spending Limits as Increased by Cost-of-Living Adjustments

	Unadjusted Limit	1976	1980	1984
COLA*	—	9.1%	47.2%	102%
Primary Election Limit**	\$10 million	\$10.9 million	\$14.7 million	\$20.2 million
General Election Limit	\$20 million	\$21.8 million	\$29.4 million	\$40.4 million
Party Convention Limit				
1976	\$2 million	\$2.2 million		
1980	\$3 million		\$4.4 million	
1984	\$4 million			\$8.1 million
Party Limit for Presidential Nominee***	2 cents × U.S. voting age population (VAP)	\$3.2 million (VAP = 146.8 million)	\$4.6 million (VAP = 157.5 million)	\$6.9 million (VAP = 171.4 million)

*COLA means the cost-of-living adjustment, which the Department of Labor annually calculates using 1974 as the base year.

**Primary candidates receiving matching funds must comply with two types of spending limits. A national limit (listed in the above table) and a separate limit for each State. The State limit is \$200,000 or 16 cents multiplied by the State's voting age population, whichever is greater. (Both amounts are adjusted for increases in the cost of living.) The maximum amount of primary matching funds a candidate may receive is half of the national spending limit.

***Limit applies to expenditures made by the national committee of a political party on behalf of its nominee in the general election, regardless of whether the nominee receives public funding. The expenditures are sometimes called "coordinated party expenditures" or "441a(d) expenditures." They are not considered contributions and do not count against a publicly funded candidate's expenditure limit.

Contribution Limits

Contribution Limits	To Candidate Per Election	To National Party Per Year	To Any Other Committee Per Year	Total Contributions Per Year
Individual	\$1,000	\$20,000	\$5,000	\$25,000
Political Committee	\$1,000	\$20,000	\$5,000	No Limit
Multicandidate Committee*	\$5,000	\$15,000	\$5,000	No Limit

*A multicandidate committee is any committee with more than 50 contributors which has been registered for at least six months and, with the exception of State party committees, has made contributions to five or more Federal candidates.

COMMISSIONERS AND OFFICERS 1975-1985

Commissioners

Joan D. Aikens April 1975—April 1989 (reappointed May 1976, December 1981 and August 1983).
Thomas B. Curtis April 1975—May 1976.
Thomas E. Harris April 1975—April 1985 (reappointed June 1979).
Neil O. Staebler April 1975—September 1978.
Vernon W. Thomson April 1975—June 1979; January 1981—December 1981.
Robert O. Tiernan April 1975—November 1981.
William L. Springer May 1976—January 1979.
John Warren McGarry October 1978—April 1989 (reappointed July 1983).
Max L. Friedersdorf March 1979—December 1980.
Frank P. Reiche July 1979—April 1985.
Lee Ann Elliott December 1981—April 1987.
Danny L. McDonald December 1981—April 1987.

Ex Officio Commissioners

Clerk of the House

W. Pat Jennings April 1975—November 1975.
Edmund L. Henshaw, Jr. December 1975—January 1983.
Benjamin J. Guthrie January 1983—.

Secretary of the Senate

Francis R. Valeo April 1975—March 1977.
Joseph Stanley Kimmitt April 1977—January 1981.
William F. Hildenbrand January 1981—January 1985.
Jo-Anne L. Coe January 1985—.

Statutory Officers

Staff Director

Orlando B. Potter May 1975—July 1980.
B. Allen Clutter, III September 1980—May 1983.
John C. Surina July 1983—.

General Counsel

John G. Murphy, Jr. May 1975—December 1976.
William C. Oldaker February 1977—October 1979.
Charles N. Steele December 1979—.
