

NEWS FROM...

FEDERAL ELECTION COMMISSION



1325 K Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20463

RELEASE: 12 NOON, TUESDAY
SEPTEMBER 21, 1976

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FEC ISSUES PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN FINANCE SUMMARY --

UNVEILS NEW COMPUTER SYSTEM

WASHINGTON - September 21 - The Federal Election Commission today issued a consolidated campaign finance report on Presidential candidates indicating that a total of \$77,875,647 was reported as campaign expenditures by all Presidential candidates during the January 1975 - August 1976 primary and pre-nomination period.

The FEC report, accompanied by a 126 page computer print-out, was released during the public unveiling of a new FEC computer system that will be used for consolidating and analyzing federal campaign finance data.

The report indicated that Democratic candidates and their campaign committees reported \$42,408,755 in receipts and \$42,806,339 in total expenditures, that Republican candidates and their campaign committees reported \$32,475,977 in receipts and \$29,986,245 in total expenditures, and that other candidates reported \$660,632 in receipts and \$772,288 in total expenditures during the 20-month period. The report also indicated that the 15 candidates receiving federal funds spent \$52.1 million in net campaign expenditures subject to limitation.

FEC Chairman Vernon W. Thomson said, "The new FEC computer system will for the first time make available extensive summaries and analysis of federal campaign finances prior to the November election. In the past, this kind of data has only been developed long after the elections are over."

He said, "Our computerized data indicates that the FEC is monitoring and auditing more than \$100 million in connection with the primary and general elections of the Presidential race alone. This new computer system will assist the FEC in its audit and enforcement tasks. It will also be of invaluable assistance in aiding public disclosure."

"In addition to regularly providing comprehensive computer print-outs like the first one issued today, we also have available a special computer terminal in our Public Records Office which is available to the public and the press for selective inquiry of particular information," Thomson said.

The finance summary released today on Presidential candidates is based on the campaign finance reports as submitted by the candidates and their political committees. Adjustments have not been made for transfers between candidates and committees, loans and loan repayments, unsettled campaign debts, or verification by FEC audit. The figures are based on total figures as reported by the candidates and their committees, and should be regarded as indicators of the total flow of money in a campaign, not necessarily as a net campaign cost.

In addition to today's first Presidential summary report, the FEC plans to release at a later date, reports on the financial activity of multi-candidate special interest groups, and of contributors to the Presidential campaigns. Reports on Congressional campaigns and the Presidential general election will be issued in 1977.

FEC COMPUTER SYSTEM

The computer system being used by the Federal Election Commission has both on-line data entry and on-line inquiry capability, plus a high speed printer to handle the great volume of reports. The system was developed by the FEC in contract with Interactive Sciences Corporation, in Braintree, Massachusetts; the equipment is a DEC PDP-10 provided by the Digital Equipment Corporation, in Maynard, Massachusetts. The computer itself is located in Braintree, and data is transmitted by high speed telephone lines between Washington, D.C. and Massachusetts. The equipment at FEC headquarters includes ten (CRT) data entry video display units for entering data. These are staffed by two shifts of data entry clerks working day and night. The data base in the computer in Massachusetts is then updated every night. Transmittal back to Washington comes in to a high speed printer capable of printing 600 lines per minute, which will regularly provide consolidated up-dated printouts of the computer data. In addition, there are two inquiry terminals which allow for selective inquiry of particular information. One of these terminals is located in the Public Records Office at FEC headquarters and is available for public use.

The computer office has a permanent staff of 18 with an additional 24 temporary employees hired to implement the program in time for the peak general election period. In addition to the data entry staff, the office includes a team to identify documents when they arrive, to assign identification numbers, and ensure that committees and candidates are correctly grouped. A third group is concerned with verification of the data in the computer indexes.

FEC DISCLOSURE SYSTEM

Under the Federal Election Campaign Act Amendments, all candidates, committees and individuals involved in financing a Federal campaign are required to disclose their financial activity on a monthly or quarterly basis, and the Federal Election Commission is required to make these reports available to the public. As a first step the public has direct access to all reports within 48 hours of receipt, either at FEC headquarters or by mail request. Both paper and microfilm copies are available for review or purchase. In addition, the FEC is required to publish a variety of indexes and reports which consolidate and cross reference the data.

The enormous volume of these documents has raised a question of how to make the data readily accessible to the public, and how to consolidate and summarize the data so that it can be of maximum use. For the 1976 campaign, 2,500 Federal candidates and 7,500 political committees are expected to file 100,000 documents representing over a million pages. On the individual level, five Presidential candidates have already filed over 3,000 pages of documentation on their own campaign to meet their disclosure requirements.

In order to handle this volume of documents and to make these indexes and reports available in a timely fashion, the FEC has designed and is implementing a new computer system, which will store information from

the documents, and allow for rapid consolidation and analysis of data. The computer will make it possible to develop a summary picture of the financing of each candidate's campaign; the activity of special interest groups in support of specific Federal candidates; contributors, with total contributions to specific candidates and committees; and independent expenditures by individuals and committees on behalf of candidates. Most importantly this information can reach the public quickly.

The various indexes consolidating this data will be made available in two forms. First, each index will be updated on a daily basis and available in the form of a computer printout in the Office of Public Records at the FEC. Second, each index will be incorporated in a published report for distribution to the public. Each published report will include a printed copy of an index and a summary analysis of the data and will be available in printed or microfilm form. This report is the first in the FEC Disclosure Series, based on the indexes generated by the FEC computer system.

The Commission hopes this FEC Disclosure Series will be of benefit to the general public as well as researchers on the political process. These reports should make it possible to readily select, analyze and draw conclusions about the vast amount of data now becoming available on the financing of Federal elections.