

FEDERAL ELECTION COMMISSION

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FEC DOCUMENTS BUDGET NEEDS

WASHINGTON--The Federal Election Commission today presented a Senate Appropriations Subcommittee documentary support of its request for a 1985 fiscal year budget of \$13,648,000. Some \$1.1 million of that represents special one-time only costs related to the Commission's proposed relocation based on a facilities efficiency and safety study conducted for the Government Services Administration by an independent reviewer.

FEC Vice Chairman John Warren McGarry, testifying before the Subcommittee on Treasury, Postal Service and General Government, said:

"The volatile growth in campaign spending, over which the Commission has no control, places an ever-increasing burden on our limited resources. Our budget request reflects the Commission's best judgment for fiscally responsible, full performance funding that will greatly enhance our ability to fulfill our statutory mandate".

Addressing the difference between the Commission's request and the Administration's budget proposal, Commissioner McGarry said the administration's recommendation "is inconsistent with the Federal Election Commission's compelling need for alternative quarters, as well as our unique responsibilities in 1984 and 1985 resulting from the presidential elections".

The GSA facilities study, which has been provided to Congressional committees, shows that it would be more expensive to renovate the FEC's present space than to relocate the agency. The study said that intensive use by the public and staff, and deferral of fundamental maintenance, has made the present physical plant inefficient and unsafe. "The study substantiates numerous safety hazards both to employees and to the increasing numbers of people who utilize our facilities", McGarry said.

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Areas cited in the testimony as requiring adequate funding include renewal of the Commission's computer contract, which Vice-Chairman McGarry said, "in the light of the explosion in the amount of information with which we must deal, it is essential that we obtain the most current and efficient technology available";

* Restoration of activities which previously were reduced or discontinued because of budgetary cuts and limitations. This includes entering into the data base identity of all individuals who contribute over \$200 in a year to candidate and political committees--a disclosure activity which had been sharply curtailed;

* Rebuilding audit capability which was reduced in 1982 by a reduction-in-force and only partially restored in 1983;

* Add positions in the General Counsel's Office, in part to respond to increased legal work generated by the growth in the number of political committees filing reports and the number of transactions reported.

* "Our disclosure program accurately informs the public of the sources and uses of campaign funds, and our compliance program reinforces the disclosure requirements and seeks to remedy violations of the law," Commissioner McGarry said.

"Almost as important as the material benefit to the electoral process which flows from our efforts is the contribution made by a credible Federal Election Commission to enhancing the general public's faith in the integrity of the American political system."

Both the Congress and the courts have cited this point as a significant rationale for an effective and visible Federal Election Commission, he said.

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