

FEDERAL ELECTION COMMISSION



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FEC ADVISES SENATE RULES COMMITTEE OF FY '86 BUDGET

WASHINGTON—"Despite dramatic increases in financial activity and disclosure requests, the Federal Election Commission has maintained both its staff and budget at a relatively stable level," FEC Vice Chairman Joan D. Aikens said today.

Testifying at budget authorization hearings by the Senate Rules Committee, she pointed out that the Commission first opened for business 10 years ago, April 14, 1975, and has seen the funds monitored through the five Congressional election cycles triple.

"The FEC has administered the public funding program for three Presidential elections, assuring proper accountability for more than \$300 million in public money, and the demand for information from the press and public has grown explosively," she said.

Speaking in support of the FEC FY '86 budget request, Commissioner Aikens said the base necessary for "steady-state" maintenance of Commission operations without disruption is \$12,756,000, "a figure we believe will adequately fund the operations of the Commission through the 1986 election."

She continued, "the Commission strongly believes that we must maintain the level and quality of services to candidates, political committees and the public."

"In terms of the Federal budget, the Federal Election Commission makes up around one one-thousandth of one percent. Humbling as this reality may be, it does not diminish the critical role the Commission plays in the American political process and the intense scrutiny to which our actions are subjected by the press, the regulated community and the Congress," Commissioner Aikens said.

Joining her in testifying were FEC Chairman John Warren McGarry, Staff Director John Surina and General Counsel Charles Steele.

Commissioner Aikens said the FEC request includes funds "to carry out our responsibilities under the Voting Accessibility for the Elderly and Handicapped Act." That law requires chief state election officers to report to the FEC on the accessibility or inaccessibility of polling and registration places within the state with respect to each of the next five two-year election cycles. Beginning in 1987, the Commission is to compile the information and report to Congress by April 30 of each year following an election. "The Commission views its obligations under the Handicapped Access Act very seriously and intends to give it priority attention," she told the hearings.
