

Record

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Federal Election Commission

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Additional 1998 Filing Deadlines for Alabama

In the event that a primary runoff election is necessary in Alabama (to be held on June 30), the following filing deadlines will be in effect for the pre-runoff election report: the close of books will be June 10, the registered/certified mailing deadline will be June 15 and the filing date will be June 18.

See the January *Record* or the FEC's web site—<http://www.fec.gov>—for a comprehensive list of 1998 primary filing deadlines throughout the United States. The *Record* will continue to update reporting dates as election information becomes available, so be sure to check out future issues.

Reports

Disclosure Reports Now on the Web

The FEC's web site now includes digital images of campaign finance reports. The move is part of the FEC's ongoing commitment to rapid development of new technology to enhance public awareness in the field of campaign finance.

Anyone with access to the Internet can view reports filed directly with the Commission. Currently, that list includes all 1997-98 cycle reports filed by PACs, political parties and Presidential and House campaigns. No Senate campaign reports are available because they are filed with the Secretary of the Senate. (The FEC receives copies of these reports on microfilm and cannot achieve the necessary quality for imaging purposes from copies made from the microfilm.)

The web site will be updated regularly throughout the filing season, and within 48 hours of the FEC's receipt of paper reports sent in the mail.

Since 1993, the FEC has scanned into the computer system the reports filed by PAC, party committees and Presidential campaigns. Scanned images of House committee reports were added in 1996. All of these

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Audits

Perot '96 Received Excess Entitlement

The FEC has determined that Perot '96, the Presidential campaign committee of Reform Party nominee Ross Perot, must repay to the U.S. Treasury \$2,310,127 it received in public funding during the 1996 Presidential election.

The Commission made its determination after the agency conducted an audit of the committee, as is required for any authorized candidate committee that receives federal funds. 26 U.S.C. §9007(a). Perot '96 received a little more than \$29 million from the Presidential Election Campaign Fund for the 1996 general election.

An audit of Perot '96 revealed that the excess entitlement the committee received resulted primarily from the inclusion of \$1,447,000 in projected litigation expenses in its Statement of Net Outstanding Qualified Campaign Expenses. Perot '96 had budgeted that amount to cover expenses it expected to incur for litigation allegedly related to the 1996 Presidential election. While the committee argued that the \$1.4 million was directly related to the 1996 campaign, the audit report concluded that the projected litigation expenses

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Reports

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back documents eventually will be added to the web site's menu.

To view the digital images, go the FEC's web site—<http://www.fec.gov>—and click on “View Financial Reports Filed by Presidential and House Campaigns, Parties, and PACs.” Then, simply follow the directions on the screen. Select a committee by choosing a key word in its name. Committees also can be selected by name, state, party or FEC identification number. The system will retrieve the requested report or ask for more detailed information to conduct another search. Once the report appears on the screen, thumb through the pages, using the “next page” option or selecting a specific page. Printouts of the documents will appear with the same clarity as those images viewed and printed at the FEC's headquarters in Washington, DC. In addition to two Internet servers, a back-up system is available in the

Federal Election Commission
999 E Street, NW
Washington, DC 20463

800/424-9530
202/219-3420
202/501-3413 (FEC Faxline)
202/219-3336 (TDD for the
hearing impaired)
800/877-8339 (FIRS)

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<http://www.fec.gov>

event of a system interruption or slow-down.

Other Viewing Options

The FEC will continue to make disclosure reports available at its Public Records Office in Washington, and will continue to maintain its traditional database, which also can be downloaded from the web site. The database includes overall financial activity of committees along with details of specific contributions. The Public Records Office is located at 999 E Street NW.

Reports also are available for viewing at these locations:

- The Legislative Resource Center of the Clerk of the House, B106 Cannon House Office Building, Washington, DC (House candidate committees only).
- Public Records Office of the Secretary of the Senate, 232 Senate Hart Office Building, Washington, DC (Senate candidate committees and the Republican and Democratic senatorial campaign committees only).
- State campaign finance disclosure offices (committees active in the state only).
- University of Southern California-Citizens Research Foundation web site—<http://www.usc.edu/dept/CRF>. ♦

Survey Shows Potential for Electronic Filing

A survey of reporting political committees has found that, while 85 percent of filers have access to computers in their committees or campaign operations, more than half of all filers still complete FEC disclosure reports manually.

The survey, conducted by an independent consulting firm, contacted 1,000 PACs and party and congressional committees registered with the FEC. Sixty nine percent of those responded to the questionnaire. The survey found that 85 percent of the respondents have

access to computers, 75 percent of committees have access to computers with modems and two-thirds of those committees can reach the Internet.

The results show that a majority of the filing community has the basic infrastructure necessary to take advantage of the FEC's voluntary electronic filing program. Nevertheless, 66 percent of filers continue to prepare their disclosure reports the old-fashioned way—with a pen or a typewriter. Nearly half of the respondents—48 percent—stated that electronic filing would give the public easier and more rapid access to campaign finance information, and 70 percent believed that electronic filing would save them time after the initial setup of the software.

“[T]he results of the FEC Survey for Electronic Filing illustrate the variation in computer capabilities and attitudes within the filing community,” the report found. “However, they also underscore the high level of computerization and the positive attitude that most FEC filers have toward the electronic filing of disclosure reports.”

Transmitting Reports to the FEC

As is the case in the larger realm of electronic transmissions, security concerns are an issue with FEC filers. When asked for their preferences for submitting reports to the agency, more than half said they preferred a dedicated modem-based system in order to dial directly into an FEC telephone line devoted solely to receiving such reports. The other half of respondents said they either preferred mailing computer diskettes (the current method for delivering disclosure reports to the FEC electronically) or transmitting their reports to the FEC via Internet e-mail.

During this month, the FEC's Data Division will be developing the framework for incorporating all three alternatives, thus giving filers a choice of filing methods. See future issues of the *Record* for

details about how these filing options will work.

Copies of the survey are available at the FEC's web site—<http://www.fec.gov>—and from the FEC Press Office (202/219-4155). For more information about FECFile, the FEC's free electronic filing software that is available now, call the FEC's Data Division (202/219-3730). ♦

Audits

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were not qualified campaign expenses because they were not incurred prior to the close of the expenditure report period—December 5, 1996—and were not valid winding-down costs. 11 CFR 9004.4(a).

The audit also found (1) excessive contributions in the form of staff advances by a Perot '96 campaign worker who paid for the transportation, travel and campaign expenses of other individuals using a personal credit card and (2) a material number of contributors for whom occupations and employers were not disclosed on FEC reports. The committee stated that it was unable to locate a credit card company willing to offer it credit cards and, therefore, the use of the individual's personal credit card was the only alternative. It would have been impractical, the committee said, for Mr. Perot and vice presidential nominee Pat Choate to stand in hotel cashier lines to pay their bills. The committee also filed amendments to its reports to include the missing contributor information.

This audit report is available from the FEC's Public Records Office by calling 800/424-9530 (press 3) or 202/219-4140. Copies are also available at the FEC, which is located in Washington, DC, at 999 E Street, NW. The executive summary that accompanies this report is available at the FEC's web site—<http://www.fec.gov>. ♦

Advisory Opinions

Advisory Opinion Requests

Advisory opinion requests are available for review and comment in the Public Records Office.

AOR 1997-27

Use of campaign funds to pay legal expenses (Congressman John Boehner, December 19, 1997; 3 pages plus 3-page attachment)

AOR 1997-28

Reinstatement of terminated candidate committee to retire debt to candidate (W. Ben Bius, December 11, 1997; 1 page plus 17-page attachment)

AOR 1997-29

Status as state committee of a political party (The Green Party of New Mexico, December 16, 1997; 2 pages plus 32-page attachment)

AOR 1998-1

Use of campaign funds to pay legal expenses of candidate (Congressman Earl F. Hilliard, January 12, 1998; 4 pages plus 9-page attachment)

AOR 1998-2

Status as national committee of political party; status of affiliated state parties as state committees of political party (The Executive Committee of the Reform Party of the United States of America, January 12, 1998; 9 pages plus 55-page attachment) ♦

Federal Register

Federal Register notices are available from the FEC's Public Records Office.

Notice 1998-1

Filing Dates for the New York Special Election (63 FR 2240, January 14, 1998)

FEC 1998 Conference Schedule

The FEC will hold three conferences this year. To register, call Sylvester Management at 1/800-246-7277 or send an e-mail message to:

TSYLVESTER@WORLDNET.ATT.NET.

Washington, DC

For candidate committees

Date: February 23

Location: Madison Hotel

Registration: \$175

Hotel rate: \$124

Denver

For candidates, political parties and corporate and labor organizations

Date: March 25-27

Location: Westin Tabor Center

Registration: \$180

Hotel rate: \$136

Washington, DC

For nonconnected committees

(this includes partnership, leadership and ideological PACs)

Date: April 27

Location: Madison Hotel

Registration: \$175

Hotel rate: \$165

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FEDERAL ELECTION COMMISSION

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Washington, DC 20463

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New York Special General Election Reporting

Committees¹ involved in the February 3 Special Election to fill the 6th Congressional District seat vacated by Congressman Floyd Flake must follow the reporting schedule below. Note that 48-hour notices are required of authorized committees that receive contributions (including loans) of \$1,000 or more between January 15 and January 31.

	Close of Books	Certified/ Registered Mail Date	Filing Date
Pre-General² (1997 Activity)	Dec. 31, 1997	Jan. 20 ³	Jan. 22
Pre-General² (1998 Activity)	Jan. 14	Jan. 20 ³	Jan. 22
Post-General	Feb. 23	March 5	March 5

¹ These committees include authorized committees of candidates running in the election and other political committees that support these candidates and do not file monthly.

² Because reports may not include activity for more than one calendar year, committees must file the Pre-General report on two forms. One form will cover July 1, 1997, through December 31, 1997, and be labeled "Year-End Report." The other form will cover January 1 through January 14 and be labeled "Pre-General Report." The filing of these two forms satisfies both Pre-General and Year-End filing requirements.

³ The mailing date has been adjusted because the computed mail date would have fallen on a federal holiday.

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