

FEDERAL ELECTION COMMISSION  
1325 K Street, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20463

RELEASE: ON RECEIPT,  
THURSDAY, AUGUST 7, 1975

CONTACT: David Fiske  
Director of Press Relations  
202/382-4733

FEC RESTRICTS CONTRIBUTIONS  
FOR INCUMBENT CONSTITUENT SERVICES

WASHINGTON - AUGUST 7 - The Federal Election Commission today issued "Advisory Opinions" restricting corporation, union, and incorporated state bank "contributions" to office accounts or other constituent activities of incumbent Congressmen.

Last week, the Commission approved a proposed regulation providing that separate office funds and accounts maintained by federal officeholders, apart from their federally appropriated allowances, are subject to contribution and expenditure limits of the federal campaign law, with the exception of "the cost of preparing or printing . . . frankable matter" which is specifically exempted from campaign expenditure or contribution limits by Postal laws. Congress has the power to disapprove the proposed regulation within thirty legislative days following its July 30 transmission to Congress.

The "Advisory Opinions" (AOR 1975-14) issued today are not effective until October 1, 1975 and deal with three specific situations:

(a) CORPORATE COMPUTER ASSISTANCE" "It is the opinion of the Commission that a corporate donation of the use of a computer to analyze the results of a questionnaire would constitute a corporate contribution made for purposes of influencing a Federal election. The fact that the questionnaire was mailed under the frank would not extend the coverage of 39 U.S.C. §3210(f) to the analysis of questionnaire results, and accordingly the donation of the services of the corporate computer would constitute a corporate contribution prohibited under 18 U.S.C. §610." (Opinion requested by U.S. Representative W. Henson Moore (R-La.-6))

(b) UNION DUES CONTRIBUTIONS: "It is the opinion of the Commission that money from the "educational fund" of a labor union may not be donated to the office accounts of incumbent United States Senators and Representatives, if the fund is composed of dues money from various local lodges of the union. Since the money in the fund would be derived from dues, and not from separate voluntary donations by union members to support the office accounts of Congressmen, contributions of this money by a union would be prohibited under 18 U.S.C. §610." (Opinion requested by William J. Holayter, Director of the Machinists Non-Partisan Political League.)

(c) BANK CONTRIBUTIONS TO CONSTITUENT CONFERENCE: "It is the opinion of the Commission that contributions by incorporated state banks, or bank holding corporations, to an agricultural conference organized by a member of Congress would constitute a direct or indirect contribution by these banking institutions in connection with a federal election. If the agricultural conference is not funded directly through a Congressional appropriation, it will be conclusively presumed to be funded from an office or constituent service account utilized by the member of Congress for political purposes. Accordingly, contributions by state bank corporations or bank holding corporations to the conference would be prohibited under 18 U.S.C. §610. The Commission does not wish to discourage conferences involving policy development of important economic and other issues, but will examine the particulars of each such proposed conference for any implications under 18 U.S.C. §610." (Opinion requested by U.S. Representative M. Caldwell Butler, R-Va.-6)