

FEDERAL ELECTION COMMISSION

PR



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SENATE RULES COMMITTEE HEARS FEC'S FY '90 BUDGET NEEDS

WASHINGTON -- "It is our belief that a strong well-funded Federal Election Commission is a critical part of the United States' political process, which is increasingly becoming a model for new democracies", FEC Vice-Chairman John Warren McGarry said today before the Senate Rules Committee.

As Chairman of the FEC's Finance Committee, Commissioner McGarry was testifying before the Committee on the Agency's fiscal year 1991 budget request. In presenting the request, he said the FEC and the Office of Management and Budget were in agreement on the \$17,500,000 that is included in the President's budget. The request "provides for sufficient staff...to enable the Commission to meet its mission", Mr. McGarry said.

Also, participating in today's presentation were FEC Chairman Lee Ann Elliott and Commissioner Joan D. Aikens who is a member of the Finance Committee.

Total spending for the 1990 federal elections is projected to be \$1.45 billion, a 32% increase over the 1986 election cycle, Commissioner McGarry said. He also predicted that total spending for the 1992 election will involve between \$1.75 and \$2 billion dollars. He explained that these increases in overall campaign spending have a direct and overwhelming dollar impact on every aspect of the FEC's operations and noted that the FEC's request would provide sufficient staff in enforcement and audit, as well as support for that staff to carry out its duties.

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The request also includes some funding for a public education program informing taxpayers of the tax check-off system by which Presidential campaigns are funded. On three previous occasions over the past few months, the FEC has advised the Congress, the President and the Secretary of the Treasury of a potential shortfall in the fund because of a continuing decrease in taxpayer participation in the check-off program. Unless that trend is reversed, the shortfall could adversely affect public funding for the 1996 Presidential election, and possibly even the 1992 election.

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