



NEWS RELEASE

N.J. Election Law Enforcement Commission

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For Release: IMMEDIATELY
May 25, 1983

The Election Law Enforcement Commission has called upon the state Legislature to consider and act upon recent proposals to amend the Campaign Contributions and Expenditures Reporting Act. That law requires candidates and political committees, including PACs, to file periodic reports of campaign finance activity.

In a letter sent May 24, 1983 to the leadership of the New Jersey Senate and Assembly, the Commission urged the Legislature to act upon recent proposals to amend the Reporting Act in time for the implementation for the November 1983 general election.

Writing on behalf of the Commission members, Scott A. Weiner, the Commission's Executive Director, stated:

The Commission is confident that each of you share a desire to make the advantages of the proposed amendments available to candidates and the public at the earliest possible date. Continuation of the current campaign finance reporting system is unnecessarily burdensome to candidates and political committees, especially those raising or spending relatively limited amounts of funds.

A copy of the text of the letter is attached.

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State of New Jersey

COMMISSIONERS:

ELECTION LAW ENFORCEMENT COMMISSION

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CHAIRMAN
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SCOTT A. WEINE
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
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May 24, 1983

Hon. Carmen A. Orechio, President
New Jersey Senate
State House
Trenton, NJ 08625

Hon. Alan J. Karcher, Speaker
New Jersey Assembly
State House
Trenton, NJ 08625

Hon. Joseph Hirkala
Senate Majority Leader
State House
Trenton, NJ 08625

Hon. John P. Doyle
Assembly Majority Leader
State House
Trenton, NJ 08625

Hon. Donald T. DiFrancesco
Senate Minority Leader
State House
Trenton, NJ 08625

Hon. Dean A. Gallo
Assembly Minority Leader
State House
Trenton, NJ 08625

Gentlemen:

At a meeting of the Election Law Enforcement Commission held on May 23, 1983, the members of the Commission requested that I correspond with you to urge your assistance and cooperation in obtaining prompt consideration of legislative proposals to amend the Campaign Contributions and Expenditures Reporting Act.

As you know, in November 1982 the Commission published a report recommending various amendments to the Reporting Act. That report represented the end product of a nine month evaluation by the Commission of the requirements of the Reporting Act which had remained essentially unchanged since the inception of the law in 1973.

The publication of the Commission's report was met with bipartisan support and encouragement. Through its report the Commission sought to initiate consideration of appropriate amendments, and did not propose a single solution. Therefore, three bills, each proposing variations to the Commission's recommendations, were introduced in both houses of the legislature: Senate Bill 1963 (Lipman), Assembly Bill 2290 (Zimmer), and Assembly Bill 3099 (Bocchini). While each bill presented its own set of policy considerations and choices, it appeared that a foundation had been laid for legislative consideration which would lead to the enactment of a comprehensive revision of the Reporting Act.

The Commission's report together with the legislative proposals present an opportunity to streamline and modernize the Reporting Act, thereby reducing the burdens that accompany unnecessary regulation while at the same time improving the quality of information available to the public. Included in each of the proposed bills are provisions that would increase from \$1,000 to \$2,000 the amount of money which could be spent by a candidate prior to having to complete detailed reports of expenditures, provide candidates and committee treasurers more time to prepare and file financial reports of campaign activity, and implement a new reporting schedule for ongoing political committees, including political action committees.

The Commission is confident that each of you share a desire to make the advantages of the proposed amendments available to candidates and the public at the earliest possible date. Continuation of the current campaign finance reporting system is unnecessarily burdensome to candidates and political committees, especially those raising or spending relatively limited amounts of funds.

At the time of the introduction of the bills, each anticipated enactment in time for the 1983 primary. Unfortunately, formal consideration of the bills has not commenced, by way of legislative committee hearing, thereby jeopardizing the prospect of enactment in time for the 1983 November general election. While the Commission is aware that members of various legislative staffs have recently considered further refinements to the bills and have confirmed the possibility of action within the coming month, as of this writing the Commission has not been informed about whether a hearing has been scheduled or about the prospects of further amendments to the bills as introduced.

In response to our shared desire to provide for prompt implementation of any amendments, the Commission's staff has started to revise reporting forms, instructions and manuals. However, final drafting, including the preparation of agency regulations must await enactment of specific legislation. In order to complete work necessary to accomplish an effective implementation for the 1983 general election, it is necessary for the Commission to be advised of the final version of the statute by June 30, 1983.

Needless to say, enactment during the coming five weeks appears increasingly unlikely. The Commission will continue to take those actions which remain practical in anticipation that the Legislature desires to see implementation of the changes for the 1983 general election. If, however,

the June 30, 1983, target date becomes unrealistic, the Commission would appreciate prompt notification of your decision to postpone enactment so that agency and staff resources may be reallocated to other projects.

On behalf of the members of the Election Law Enforcement Commission I would like to express appreciation for your anticipated attention to the proposed amendments to the Reporting Act and your continued support for the Commission and its activities.

Very truly yours,

SCOTT A. WEINER
Executive Director

SAW/dkk

c Senator Wynona Lipman
Assemblyman Joseph Bocchini
Assemblyman Richard Zimmer
Assemblywoman Barbara Kalik