



## NEWS RELEASE

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CONTACT: FREDERICK M. HERRMANN, Ph.D.  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR  
(609) 292-8700

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### PRESS RELEASE

William H. Eldridge, Chairman of the New Jersey Election Law Enforcement Commission (ELEC), today announced the release of the Commission's 1994 Annual Report.

Eldridge, who has called for comprehensive legislation that would discourage deliberately false political advertising, said that a major emphasis of the report is placed on recommendations for legislative action.

"One of my main personal goals as Chairman is to witness the enactment of legislation that would prohibit deliberately false political advertising and at the same time encourage healthy debate," said Eldridge. "Recent events have pointed to the need for keeping all political discourse at the highest level."

Eldridge added: "The Commission continues to believe that contributions from corporations and unions should be prohibited."

"As part of its annual report," he continued, "the Commission has

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advanced recommendations for modifying the gubernatorial public financing program in ways that would preserve public money and at the same time level the playing field among candidates and maintain the election fund that partially supports candidate spending."

According to Eldridge, the Commission is proposing that the primary and general election public fund caps be reduced to \$1 million and \$2 million from \$1.6 million and \$3.9 million respectively; the primary election spending limit be increased from \$2.6 million to \$3.5 million; there be three, instead of two, debates required for publicly financed candidates; and the income tax checkoff be increased to preserve the integrity of the program's funding.

Owen V. McNany, III, Vice Chairman of ELEC, said that the Commission is proposing that expenditures made by lobbyists for grassroots lobbying campaigns be subject to reporting.

"Grassroots lobbying campaigns are being undertaken increasingly by organized, well-financed, special interests," said McNany. "The Commission has long held that the lobbying law be revised to require that expenditures made in behalf of this type of activity by registered lobbyists be disclosed."

McNany added that "the Commission feels also that the law be modified to allow for periodic quadrennial adjustments of lobbying thresholds."

Commissioner David Linett added that the annual report recommendations include recommendations for strengthening the Personal Financial Disclosure Law.

"The Commission believes," said Linett, "that there should be uniform disclosure of gifts, reimbursements, and honoraria of over \$200 in a calendar year and that their value be disclosed."

Commissioner Linett said that candidates required to file personal financial disclosure forms should be required to list the occupation and employer of individuals providing reportable benefits.

"The Commission each year sets forth recommendations for improving and strengthening the laws under its jurisdiction," concluded Eldridge. "It is our belief that this is a very important function and we hope that the Legislature will consider action on these proposals."

Copies of the report are now available at the Commission.

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