

## Reports

### **Campaign Finance Data Available from the Federal Election Commission**

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The Federal Election Commission (FEC) announces the release of a new computer data tape which provides longitudinal information on all non-party political committees (PACs) which have filed reports with the Commission during the years 1977-1984. With this release the FEC has expanded its offerings of computer data tapes of interest to researchers, with special regard for the growing ability to examine campaign finance behavior over time.

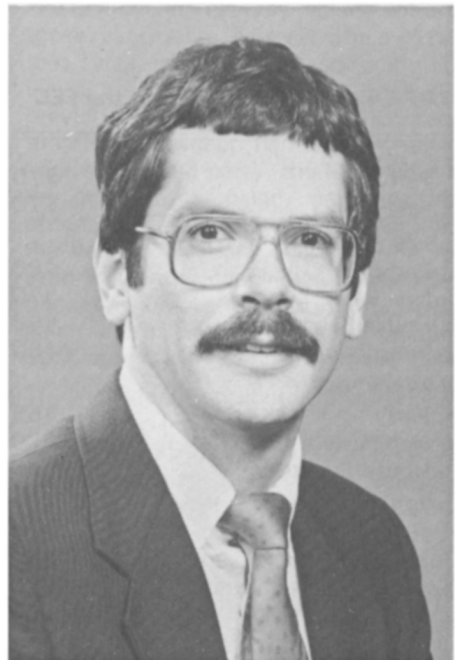
The Longitudinal PAC tape includes a separate record for each PAC which filed reports with the commission during any of the four election cycles from 1977-1984. Each record contains information on the PAC, including its name, sponsoring organization, special interest group classification, and its type. In addition, the record contains the total receipts and disbursements of the PAC for each of the four cycles. Researchers can use these variables to examine, for example, the effect of growth or maturation on the contribution behavior of PACs.

*The file also contains summary information on the contribution behavior of each*

*PAC in each election cycle. Total contributions to each type of candidate (e.g., House Democratic open-seat) are presented. Contributions made during the first 18 months of the election cycle are broken out for each candidate type to allow an examination of early contributions, and contributions to candidates not running in the current cycle (e.g., Senate candidates not up during a given cycle) are also included. Independent expenditures for and against each candidate type are included in each record.*

#### **Other FEC Computer Tapes**

The Longitudinal PAC tape is only one of many computer data tapes available for



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## News of the Profession

purchase by researchers by the FEC. The Commission has available two broad categories of tapes: tapes made in conjunction with the FEC's *Reports on Financial Activity* (RFA tapes) and those made available through the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA tapes). Each of these series of tapes are available for election cycles beginning with 1977-78. Researchers interested in exploring the Commission's data offerings are encouraged to call the Data Development Division at (202) 376-5240 or (800) 424-9530.

The RFA tapes generally present summary information on the financial activity of different categories of filers. Separate tapes present data on PACs, party committees, House and Senate campaigns, and presidential candidates. These tapes are generally available during the year following the end of an election cycle. In contrast, FOIA tapes present each transaction of a filer. They include the amount and date of each separate transaction in the FEC data files. The FOIA tapes are essentially dumps of the FEC data files, and may be requested for the current cycle to date or for a previous cycle.

### RFA Tapes Available From the FEC

|                     |      |
|---------------------|------|
| <hr/>               |      |
| 1977-78             |      |
| Party               | \$70 |
| Non-Party           | \$70 |
| 1979-80             |      |
| Party               | \$65 |
| Non-Party           | \$70 |
| House/Senate        | \$65 |
| Presidential        | \$80 |
| 1981-82             |      |
| Party               | \$65 |
| Non-Party           | \$70 |
| House/Senate        | \$70 |
| 1983-84             |      |
| Party               | \$55 |
| Non-Party           | \$70 |
| House/Senate        | \$70 |
| Presidential        | \$80 |
| <i>Longitudinal</i> |      |
| Non-Party           | \$70 |
| <hr/>               |      |

## RFA Tapes

Four types of RFA tapes are available for the different election cycles from the Commission, with prices ranging from \$65 to \$80. The PAC tapes (non-party RFA tapes) contain two files. The spread file contains one record for each political action committee. Each record summarizes the committee's total receipts, disbursements, contributions from other committees, contributions of \$500 and more by individuals, cash on hand and debts. In addition, the record contains summary information on the contribution behavior of the PAC by candidate status (incumbent, challenger, open seat) and by party.

The crosstabs file contains one or more records for each PAC. The unit of analysis is the committee/candidate combination. For each committee, there is a separate record for each candidate it supported or opposed. If a given PAC contributed to sixteen candidates, there would be sixteen records for that PAC summarizing the total amounts contributed to each candidate, and some descriptive information on the candidate.

The Party RFA tapes is structured in an identical manner to the PAC tape, with a summary and a detailed file. The information in each file is the same as the PAC tape.

The House/Senate RFA tapes also contain two files. The spread file contains a record for each campaign. Each record contains summary information for the campaign, including the party and status (e.g., incumbent) of the candidate, the total receipts, disbursements, beginning and ending cash, and transfers by the campaign. It also contains totals for contributions of \$500 or more from individuals, party contributions and coordinated expenditures, contributions from different types of PACs (corporate, labor, etc.), independent expenditures and communication costs. The crosstabs file contains one or more records for each campaign. As in the PAC and Party tapes, the unit of analysis for this file is the candidate/filer combination. A separate record will exist for each committee which contributed to a candidate or spent money for or against his or her campaign,

and will include the total contribution and expenditures made by that committee, along with some identifying information concerning the candidate and the committee. *Note:* There is no House/Senate RFA tape available for the 1977-78 election cycle.

Finally, the Presidential RFA tapes cover the pre-nomination financial activity of all presidential candidates who raised or spent at least \$100,000 during the pre-nomination period. The tape contains three files. The structure of the first two files is similar to those on the other tapes in the RFA series. The spread file contains one record for each candidate. Each record contains summary financial information about the campaign, including total receipts, individual contributions, federal matching funds, PAC contributions and independent expenditures by committee type, party contributions and expenditures, and communication costs, and expenditures in each state. The crosstabs file contains multiple records for each campaign. The unit of analysis is the candidate/filer combination. In the Presidential tape, however, the records may contain not only committee/candidate combinations, but also records for each individual contributor who made at least one contribution of \$500 or more. The third file, the state expenditure limits file, contains the expenditure limits for each state, which may be compared with the actual spending by the candidate from the first file.

### **FOIA Tapes**

While the RFA tapes present summary information concerning different groups of filers, the FOIA tapes contain information for each separate transaction. Since these tapes are dumps of the FEC computer files, the data may change from day to day. Reports filed with the Commission often contain errors which may be entered into the computer and corrected later by the FEC staff. For this reason, FOIA tapes of the current election cycle should be used with a good deal of caution. Tapes for previous cycles will generally contain fairly "clean" data which changes only on rare occasions. Tapes are available for all elections begin-

ning with the 1977-78 cycle. The costs of the tape vary with the volume of information in the file when the tape is made.

Although the RFA tapes may be easily read into an SPSS or SAS file, the FOIA tapes contain large amounts of information, and for some applications may require a database management system to join records on different tapes. Eight different tapes are available, but only four of them are of general interest to political scientists.

The Committee Master tape contains a record for every registered political committee for a given cycle. These committees include PACs, party committees, joint fundraising committees, House and Senate campaign committees, and presidential campaign committees. Each record contains the FEC ID number, name, sponsor, party or special interest group category, committee type (PAC, party, House, etc.), address, and the name of the treasurer. This tape may be used to identify the committees whose ID numbers appear on other FOIA tapes.

The Candidate Master includes records for all candidates registered with the Federal Election Commission during the election cycle. This may include not only those candidates seeking office during that cycle, but also those seeking office in a future cycle or repaying debts from a previous election. Each record contains the FEC ID number, name, party, candidate status and party, the ID number of the principal campaign committee, the office sought, the state and district, and the year of election. This tape may be used to identify candidates whose identification number (or that of their campaign committee) appears on another FOIA tape.

The Individual Contributor tape lists individuals who have made at least one contribution of \$500 or more to a candidate for federal office. The record includes the filer ID number, the contributor's name, city, state, and zip code, the transaction type (contribution, expenditure, etc.), the date of the transaction, and the ID of the recipient. *Note:* This information may not be sold or used to solicit contributions from individuals. Lists are often salted to determine unlawful solicitation.

## News of the Profession

This information is not available for the 1985-86 election cycle.

Finally, the PAC Contributions tape contains contributions and expenditures made in support of or against candidates. Each record contains the ID of the committee and the recipient, the type of the transaction, the date, the microfilm location of the transaction in the FEC microfilm files, and the amount of the transaction. Researchers may use the Committee Master and the Candidate Master to identify the committees and candidates involved.

### Which Tapes to Use? A Brief Guide

Those who are new to campaign finance research are encouraged to contact the Federal Election Commission at the number listed earlier to discuss their research agenda and the tapes most appropriate for this research. In general, the most basic questions are best answered by the spread files on the RFA tapes, while more detailed questions are addressed by the data on the RFA crosstabs files. For much more specific questions, the FOIA tapes may contain the only available data.

Imagine a researcher who has identified two sets of PACs whose contribution behavior she wishes to compare and contrast. The RFA PAC tape spread file would enable her to compare the receipts and disbursements of these PACs, their contributions to candidates from each party, and their contributions to incumbents, challengers, and open-seat candidates. If her research question concerned the contributions of these PACs to members of specific House or Senate committees, she could use the crosstabs file to identify the candidates in question and compare the total contributions by each committee to each candidate. If she was interested in not only the amounts contributed to each candidate but also the timing of these contributions (e.g., before or after a crucial committee vote), the FOIA tapes would contain the dates of each separate contribution made by the committee. In addition, she could also obtain from the FOIA data whether the contribution was a cash contribution or a contribution of goods or services (in-

kind). In the case of the latter, she could then use the microfilm location of the transaction to obtain a copy of the actual report filed by the committee, which may describe in more detail the specific goods or services provided. □

## Southern Association Reports on 1986 Meeting

At its 1986 meeting in Atlanta, held November 6-8, the Southern Political Science Association presented awards for the outstanding papers delivered at the 1985 meeting. Winning the award for the best paper were Thomas Konka and Lee Sigelman for "Trends in Evaluations of the American Parties." Alissa Pollitz Worden received the Brooks/Cole Award for the best paper by a graduate student for "Trial Judges' Responsiveness to Political Climate: Sentencing Disparities in Georgia's Criminal Courts." The recipient of the award for the best paper on women and politics was Beverly Cook for her paper titled "A Cross National Comparison of the Access of Women to Courthouses."

New officers elected at the meeting are M. Margaret Conway, University of Maryland, President; Donald Vaughn, University of Mississippi, President-Elect; William Keech, University of North Carolina, Vice President; Bradley Canon, University of Kentucky, Vice President-Elect; Gerald Johnson, Auburn University, Recording Secretary; and as new members of the Executive Council for three-year terms, Pamela Conover, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill; Robert Montjoy, Auburn University; and Robert Thomas, University of Houston.

After many years of valuable service to the Association, Manning J. Dauer retired as secretary-treasurer and managing editor of the *Journal of Politics*. The remaining year of his term as secretary-treasurer will be filled by Alfred Clubok of the University of Florida. In acknowledgement of his many years of service to the Association and the political science discipline, the Association voted to create the Manning J. Dauer Award for service to the profession.

The Association also decided to transfer publication of the *Journal of Politics* to the University of Texas Press, with the transfer to be effective with the first issue published in 1988. Editorial control will remain with the editor of the *Journal of Politics*, who is selected by the Association. The term of the current editor, Micheal Giles of Emory University, expires with the November 1987 issue. The search for an editor whose three-year term will begin in 1988 is currently underway. Chair of the search committee is Robert J. Huckshorn of Florida Atlantic University.

Finally, the Association authorized the creation of the position of Executive Director. The Executive Director will negotiate hotel and airline contracts for the annual meeting and assist the local arrangements and program committees. Michael Maggiotto of the University of South Carolina was appointed Executive Director. □

## Announcements

### Symposia Published

The following journals offer symposia of interest to political scientists:

#### *Comparative Political Studies*

"The State in Comparative and International Perspective," to be published in late 1987.

Available: Sage Publications, 275 South Beverly Drive, Beverly Hills, CA 90212. \$6, single issue; \$25, annual.

#### *European Journal of Political Research*

"Cycles in Politics," Wilhelm Burklin, ed., Vol. 15, No. 2, April 1987.

Available: European Consortium for Political Research, University of Essex, Wivenhoe Park, Colchester CO4 3SQ, England. \$28, annual (6 issues) for individuals + \$5 surface postage or \$17 air mail; \$104, institutions. Single issue for approximately 1/4 of annual subscription.

#### *Legislative Studies Quarterly*

"New Directions in Coalition Research," Eric C. Browne and Mark N. Franklin, eds., Vol. XI, No. 4, November 1986.

"Comparing Mass Media in Legislative Campaigns," Michael W. Traugott and Edie N. Goldenberg, eds., Vol. XII, No. 2, May 1987.

Available: Comparative Legislative Research Center, 349 Schaeffer Hall, The University of Iowa, Iowa City, IA 52242. \$10, single issue; \$21, annual, individuals; \$42, annual, institutions.

#### *National Forum*

"Global Militarization," Vol. LXVI, No. 4, Fall 1986.

Available: Subscriptions, National Forum, 216 Petrie Hall, Auburn University, AL 36849. \$2.75, single issue; \$10, annual. □

## Network Formed for Political Scientists with Experience in Public Office

Political scientists who have served in public office generated a lively discussion at the August 1986 APSA convention in the roundtable on "The Collision between Direct Experience and Formal Research: Different Modes of Political Knowing." Participants included Robert C. Wood, Brad Patterson, and Eugene Lewis. Joe Freeman chaired the roundtable. The roundtable results are published in the Fall 1986 issue of *Presidency Research*, Bruce Buchanan, University of Texas, editor.

Political scientists who have served in office or who are pursuing biographical approaches in their research are invited to join the conversation. Please send your name and address or that of political scientists who are serving or have served to either: Joseph F. Freeman, Department of Political Science, Lynchburg College, Lynchburg, VA 24501; or Matthew Holden, Institute of Government, 207 Minor Hall, Charlottesville, VA 22903. □