

COMMITTEE ON HOUSE ADMINISTRATION

115TH CONGRESS

COMMITTEE RESOLUTION 115-__

February 07, 2017

Resolution to Approve Committee Views and Estimates

Resolved, pursuant to § 301(d) of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974 and House Rule X, clause 4(f), the Committee adopts the following views and estimates for Fiscal Year 2018:

COMMITTEE ON HOUSE ADMINISTRATION

VIEWS AND ESTIMATES FOR FISCAL YEAR 2018

Federal Election Commission

The Federal Election Commission (FEC) is an independent, bipartisan commission which facilitates transparency in the federal election process through public disclosure of campaign finance data, and encourages compliance with the Federal Election Campaign Act by providing information and policy guidance. The FEC administers and interprets the Federal Election Campaign Act, the Presidential Election Campaign Fund, and the Presidential Primary Matching Payment Account Act. The FEC also enforces these Acts through audits, investigations, and civil litigation.

The FY 17 appropriated amount for the FEC totaled \$76,119,000. This and any increased funding requires appropriate allocation. The Committee will conduct vigorous oversight to identify and realize future potential savings.

Presidential Election Campaign Fund

One means to reduce the budget needs of the FEC is to eliminate the Presidential Election Campaign Fund (PECF). The PECF provides taxpayer financing for presidential campaigns. The PECF receives its funds through a voluntary election on tax returns to have \$3 of the taxpayer's taxes directed to the fund. For primary elections the PECF provides payments to candidates to match private contributions. Candidates who elect to participate are subject to state-by-state spending limits. For general elections the PECF provides a single grant payment to participating candidates, in return for which the candidate agrees not to spend funds from any other source.

The FEC incurs costs to administer the PECF and to audit recipients of PECF funds. These costs could be eliminated if the PECF were eliminated.

The fund is underutilized by candidates. After pledging to participate in the PECF, in 2008 then-Senator Obama declined public financing during the general election. In the 2012 campaign, only three candidates received PECF funds – Buddy Roemer (Americans Elect and the Reform Party), Gary Johnson (Libertarian) and Jill Stein (Green). The total they received was \$1,356,108. Both major party candidates rejected PECF financing in both the primary and general elections. No major party candidate utilized PECF financing in the 2016 campaign.

If candidates did chose to accept PECF funds and the accompanying restrictions, the fund would be undercapitalized because the American public chooses to no longer contribute. Public support for the PECF has declined precipitously since its introduction. The percentage of taxpayers participating dropped from 28.7% in 1980 to approximately 5.4% in 2015, even though participating does not affect tax liability.

In the 112th Congress, the House twice voted to eliminate the Presidential Election Campaign Fund by passing both H.R. 359 and H.R. 3463. In the 113th Congress, the Committee reported H.R. 95, which would eliminate the PECF and would reduce direct spending by approximately \$130 million by 2023. In the 114th Congress, the Committee has reported H.R. 412, which would transfer \$88,202,400 to the 10-Year Pediatric Research Initiative to fight childhood diseases and the remaining amount, roughly \$170 million, to the United States Treasury to pay down the national debt. In the 115th Congress, H.R. 133 has been introduced, which would transfer \$63,002,400 to the 10-Year Pediatric Research Initiative to fight childhood diseases and the remaining amount, roughly \$250 million, to the United States Treasury to pay down the national debt.

Given the scarce resources available and our duty to the American tax payer to set priorities for federal spending, eliminating a needless and underutilized fund while paying down our national debt and directing more money to pediatric illness research is an appropriate and crucial step toward fiscal responsibility.

The Committee does not support continued operation of the PECF and strongly supports the elimination of the PECF.

Election Assistance Commission

The Election Assistance Commission (EAC) is an independent, bipartisan commission which develops guidance to meet Help America Vote Act (HAVA) requirements, adopts voluntary voting system guidelines, and serves as a national clearinghouse of information on election administration. The EAC also establishes voluntary voting system guidelines, certifies voting systems, accredits test laboratories, and audits the use of funds provided the states through election reform grants.

No funding for election reform grants was appropriated in FY 11, FY 12, FY 13, FY 14, FY 15 or FY 16. The FY 16 appropriated amount for the EAC totals \$9,600,000, which includes a transfer of \$1,500,000 to the National Institute of Standards and Technology. The EAC is left with an operating budget of \$8,100,000. Further reductions from the President's budget are warranted.

In the 112th Congress, a majority of the House twice voted to eliminate the EAC, with 235 Members voting in favor of both H.R. 672 and H.R. 3463. A majority of the Committee's members voted in favor of eliminating the EAC on three occasions. In the 113th Congress, the Committee reported H.R. 1994, which would eliminate the EAC. The CBO estimate for H.R. 1994 stated that eliminating the EAC would save taxpayers \$42 million over five years. In the 114th Congress, the Committee reported H.R. 195, which would eliminate the EAC. The CBO estimate for H.R. 195 stated that eliminating the EAC would save taxpayers \$40 million over five years. In that report, the Committee stated that the EAC's "operations and budget show that its mission cannot justify maintaining a federal agency." In the 115th Congress, H.R. 634 has been introduced, which would eliminate the EAC.

The Committee does not support continued funding for the EAC and strongly supports the elimination of the EAC.

Cybersecurity

The Committee supports appropriate funding to support policies that improve cybersecurity within each of the Legislative branch entities and agencies and across the Legislative Branch. The Committee supports the Legislative Branch Cybersecurity Working Group for its work on coordinating cybersecurity practices and policies.