

**The original documents are located in Box 24, “2/27/76 - Remarks Upon Reemphasizing the Urgency for Congress to Reconstitute the Federal Election Commission” of the President’s Speeches and Statements: Reading Copies at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.**

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THE PRESIDENT HAS SEEN.....

STATEMENT ON FEDERAL ELECTION COMMISSION

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 27, 1976

ONE YEAR AGO THE FEDERAL ELECTION COMMISSION

WAS SET UP BECAUSE VOTERS ACROSS THE COUNTRY WANTED

A STRONG WATCHDOG TO ENSURE THAT WE HAVE CLEAN AND

HONEST ELECTIONS.

NOW, AS A RESULT OF A SUPREME COURT DECISION  
AND A DELAY IN CONGRESSIONAL ACTION, THE ESSENTIAL POWERS  
OF THAT COMMISSION ARE IN JEOPARDY. UNLESS CONGRESS  
ACTS WITHIN THE 20-DAY EXTENSION JUST GRANTED BY THE  
SUPREME COURT, THE COMMISSION WILL NO LONGER BE ABLE TO:

- ENFORCE THE CAMPAIGN REFORM LAWS:
- ADVISE CANDIDATES ON WHAT THOSE LAWS MEAN:

-- OR CERTIFY CANDIDATES FOR FEDERAL

MATCHING FUNDS•

IN SHORT, THE WATCHDOG WILL HAVE LOST ITS TEETH•

WE MUST NOT RETREAT FROM OUR COMMITMENT

TO CLEAN ELECTIONS•

WHEN THE SUPREME COURT ACTED ON THIS MATTER,

IT MADE IT CLEAR THAT THE CONGRESS COULD REMEDY THIS PROBLEM

BY SIMPLY RECONSTITUTING THE COMMISSION.

I SUPPORTED THE COURT'S VIEW AND ASKED THAT THE CONGRESS

ACT SWIFTLY TO EXTEND THE LIFE OF THE COMMISSION.

INSTEAD, VARIOUS INTERESTS -- BOTH POLITICAL  
AND OTHERWISE, BOTH IN AND OUT OF THE CONGRESS --  
HAVE CHOSEN THIS MOMENT TO ADVANCE A WIDE-RANGE OF HASTILY  
CONSIDERED CHANGES IN THE CAMPAIGN LAWS. MOST OF THE BILLS  
NOW BEING CONSIDERED IN THE CONGRESS WOULD INTRODUCE GREAT  
UNCERTAINTY INTO THE CAMPAIGN PROCESS.

WITH THE 1976 ELECTIONS ONLY NINE MONTHS AWAY,

I DO NOT BELIEVE THIS IS A PROPER TIME TO BEGIN TAMPERING

WITH THE CAMPAIGN REFORM LAWS, AND I WILL VETO ANY BILL

THAT WILL CREATE CONFUSION AND WILL INVITE FURTHER DELAY

AND LITIGATION•

CERTAINLY NO ONE IS FULLY SATISFIED WITH THE  
CAMPAIGN LAWS NOW ON THE BOOKS• WHEN THE CURRENT  
POLITICAL SEASON IS BEHIND US, I ASK THE CONGRESS TO WORK  
WITH ME IN CONDUCTING A THOROUGH REVIEW AND REVISION  
OF THOSE LAWS•

BUT RIGHT NOW, THE MOST PRESSING TASK

IS TO RE-ESTABLISH THE FEDERAL ELECTION COMMISSION

AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE. I URGE THE CONGRESS

TO PUT ASIDE ITS DEBATES AND ENACT THE BILL THAT I HAVE SENT

TO THE CONGRESS TO PROVIDE FOR AN IMMEDIATE AND

SIMPLE EXTENSION OF THE COMMISSION.

WE MUST GET ON WITH THE JOB OF ENSURING THAT THE POLITICAL

PROCESS IN 1976 WILL BE JUST AS FAIR AND HONEST AS WE CAN

MAKE IT.

END OF TEXT