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FEC Adopts Interim Verification Procedure for Filings Containing Possibly False or Fictitious Information

WASHINGTON – The Federal Election Commission today announced an interim procedure staff will follow to verify information in filings from the 2016 election cycle that appear to be unlawfully false or fictitious. The new procedure comes in response to an increase this election cycle in the filing of registration and statement of candidacy forms (FEC Forms 1 and 2) that provide patently false candidate or treasurer names, questionable contact or bank information, or material that does not relate to campaign finance, such as drawings, essays and personal court records.

The Commission has authorized staff to send verification letters to filers listing fictional characters, obscene language, sexual references, celebrities (where there is no indication that the named celebrity submitted the filing), animals, or similarly implausible entries as the name or contact information of the candidate or committee. These letters will:

- notify the filer of the potential penalties for false filings with a federal agency;
- note the seemingly false information (candidate name, contact information, etc.) that was filed on the relevant Statement of Organization (FEC Form 1) or Statement of Candidacy (FEC Form 2);
- direct the filer to file a letter either confirming or withdrawing the filing, or to file an amended Form 1 or 2, within 30 days of the date of the verification letter;
- indicate that withdrawing the filing or failing to respond to the verification letter will lead to the Form 1 or 2 being removed from the searchable candidate/committee filings database on the Commission's website; and
- note that removal of the filing from the Commission's searchable database does not waive the Commission's authority to pursue or refer action for false filing under 52 U.S.C. Section 30109(a) or otherwise report such filings under 52 U.S. C. Section 30107(a)(9).

A staff working group will devise and recommend a prospective solution for the Commission's consideration and implementation in conjunction with the Reports Analysis Division's Review and Referral Procedures approval process for the 2017-2018 election cycle.

The Federal Election Commission (FEC) is an independent regulatory agency that administers and enforces federal campaign finance laws. The FEC has jurisdiction over the financing of campaigns for the U.S. House of Representatives, the U.S. Senate, the Presidency and the Vice Presidency. Established in 1975, the FEC is composed of six Commissioners who are nominated by the President and confirmed by the U.S. Senate.

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