

## Federal Election Commission Microfilm Collection

Congress established the Federal Election Commission (FEC) in 1975. Its duties include disclosing campaign finance information and enforcing federal law relating to limits and prohibitions on campaign contributions. FEC jurisdiction is limited to presidential and congressional campaigns.

The FEC Microfilm Collection contains disclosure reports from 1972 through 2004 and enforcement actions from 1975 onward. There is some overlap with online information at the FEC web site. Online coverage dates from 1993 for disclosure reports and from 2000 for enforcement matters.

The FEC Microfilm Collection was originally established by Citizens' Research Foundation (CRF), an independent research institute directed by Herbert Alexander, and was known as the West Coast Data Bank. The collection came to the IGS Library in 1999. The CRF was subsequently disbanded.

This collection consists of a series of microfilm sets of Federal Election Commission records. The three largest sets, labeled **House**, **Senate** and **FEC**, contain campaign finance disclosure reports filed with the FEC.

The fourth large set, Matter under Review (**MUR**), is the documentary trail of FEC investigations and enforcement actions concerning compliance with federal campaign finance laws.

Various other microfilm sequences contain FEC publications, and other material relating to campaign finance disclosure.

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## Campaign Finance Disclosure Reports

Financial disclosure reports appear in three main sequences:

**House**, 1 (1972)-621 (1996).

The House sequence ends with no. 621 (1996), when was superseded by the FEC online reporting system. House candidates and committees both file

electronically and submit disclosure reports which are scanned into the online system.

**Senate**, 1972-2005.

Senate reels are renumbered with each election cycle. The Senate sequence is ongoing, but IGS Library holdings end with 2005. The FEC online reporting system contains only scanned images of Senate filings. Senate candidates and committees do not file electronically.

**FEC**, 45 (1977)-999 (1995); 1 (1995)-339 (1998).

FEC reels are in two numbered sequences; the first ends with no. 999 (1995), and the second begins with no. 1 (1995). The FEC sequence is ongoing, but the IGS Library's holdings stop with no. 339 (1998), because everything from this date forward is in the online system (although Senate filings are scanned copies only). The FEC sequence contains the filings of presidential candidates and committees, but it also contains some House and Senate filings, and all FEC communications with House/Senate committees and candidates.

**Indexes.** There are separate annual index reels for each sequence. The index reels have a "Microfilm Cart/Frame" column. Numbers in the column have the pattern "1162/2407." "1162" is the microfilm reel number. This number corresponds to the number on the microfilm box, except that the numbers on the boxes omit the first digit. So "1162" in the index is really "162" on the box. "2407" is the frame number on the reel. The reel/frame number is printed on the left side of every frame, so it is possible to locate a particular frame in a long reel.

**Searching the Disclosure Reports.** For presidential candidates and committees, search the FEC index reels. For House or Senate candidates and committees, search the respective House or Senate index reels, **and** the FEC index reels, as the FEC set contains some House and Senate filings.

The index reels are in the top two drawers of the microfilm cabinet containing the House files and are arranged by year. The labeling on the reel containers is not consistent.

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## **Matters under Review (MUR)**

The Matters under Review (MUR) microfilm set is the record of FEC investigations of possible campaign finance law violations, and the attendant compliance/enforcement actions when violations are found. MUR microfilm reels are in a single numbered sequence (reel no. 1, 1975- ). There are irregularities in the numbering, notably a jump from reel no. 99 (1993) to reel no. 350 (1993). This large numbering gap is intentional and can be ignored. However, other numbering gaps may be an indication of missing reels in the IGS Library collection. The IGS Library subscription to the MUR microfilm is ongoing.

**MUR Summary Report and Indexes.** The print publication, *MUR Summary Report*, with accompanying indexes, is the MUR access tool. The *MUR Summary Report* lists MURs by their case number. Each entry in the list includes the microfilm location(s), date open/closed, complainants/respondents, citations to possible code/regulation violations, subject listings describing possible violations, and disposition (e.g., closed, no further action, fine, conciliation agreement). There is also a separate list of closed MUR microfilm locations by MUR case number.

The accompanying indexes to the *MUR Summary Report* are by claimant/respondent, code/regulation violation, and subject of violation.

The IGS Library has the August 2003 print edition of the *MUR Summary Report* (call no.: **A8611** 17 v.).

Enforcement actions are online from January 2000 onward in a searchable database called the [FEC Enforcement Query System](#). The database contains public documents from closed cases.

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## Other Materials in the FEC Microfilm Collection

Other materials in the FEC Microfilm Collection include:

**News and Views**, 1975-1984. 12 reels.

"Contains articles from various major newspapers or magazines around the country on the topic of federal campaign races. These articles are photocopies made available from the FEC Press Office."

**Record**, 1975-1981. 1 reel.

"The FEC's monthly newsletter."

Presidential Ethics [index on frame 1], 1979-1984. 1 reel.