

The League Of Women Voters Urges Congress To Reform The Federal Election Commission

Elections cost money, but money shouldn't be able to buy elections! Fair and clean elections, determined by the vote of American citizens, should be at the center of our democracy. But big money, secret money, is taking over our elections while the Federal Election Commission (FEC), the agency that governs money in politics, sits on its hands. The FEC is broken and it is time for a change.

Paralyzed by its own structure with six commissioners, three Republicans and three Democrats who regularly cast tie votes on a partisan basis, the FEC has failed to enforce the nation's already weak campaign finance laws. FEC Commissioner Ann Ravel has recently resigned, saying she's had enough of the gridlock and infighting.

The existing bipartisan approach must be replaced by an enforcement agency with an odd-number of commissioners so the public interest comes before partisan interests. Legislation currently in Congress would create a new independent agency, the Federal Election Administration of five commissioners, to replace the FEC. Two from each major party would be appointed by the president and confirmed by the Senate and the fifth commissioner would be appointed on a nonpartisan basis from a list of candidates selected by a blue-ribbon panel of retired federal judges, former law enforcement officials or individuals with election law experience. With this five-member structure, the new legislation would end gridlock at the Commission and put the public's interests over partisan interests.

The new Federal Election Administration will still have the responsibilities previously held by the FEC to administer campaign finance laws and the presidential public financing system, as well as to issue regulations and advisory opinions. The FEA would also have the authority to conduct investigations of possible violations. However, the legislation sets up a new system of administrative law judges with jurisdiction over individual enforcement cases in order to provide for consistent and impartial enforcement.

Join the fight to end gridlock at the FEC. Tell Congress to support the Federal Election Administration Act of 2017.

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