

Federal Election Commission

§ 2.2

§ 1.12 Penalties.

Any person who makes a false statement in connection with any request for a record, or an amendment or correction thereto, under this part, is subject to the penalties prescribed in 18 U.S.C. 494 and 495.

§ 1.13 General exemptions. [Reserved]

§ 1.14 Specific exemptions.

(a) No individual, under the provisions of these regulations, shall be entitled to access to materials compiled in its systems of records identified as FEC audits and investigations (FEC 2) or FEC compliance actions (FEC 3). These exempted systems relate to the Commission's power to exercise exclusive civil jurisdiction over the enforcement of the Act under 52 U.S.C. 30107(a)(6) and (e); and to defend itself in actions filed against it under 52 U.S.C. 30107(a)(6). Further the Commission has a duty to investigate violations of the Act under 52 U.S.C. 30109(a)(2); to conduct audits and investigations pursuant to 52 U.S.C. 30111(b), 26 U.S.C. 9007 and 9038; and to refer apparent violations of the Act to the Attorney General or other law enforcement authorities under 52 U.S.C. 30109(a)(5) and 30107(a)(9). Information contained in FEC systems 2 and 3 contain the working papers of the Commission staff and form the basis for either civil and/or criminal proceedings pursuant to the exercise of the powers and duties of the Commission. These materials must be protected until such time as they are subject to public access under the provision of 52 U.S.C. 30109(a)(4)(B) or 5 U.S.C. 552, or other relevant statutes.

(b)(1) Pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 552a(j)(2), records contained in FEC 12, Office of Inspector General Investigative Files, are exempt from the provisions of 5 U.S.C. 552a, except subsections (b), (c) (1) and (2), (e)(4) (A) through (F), (e) (6), (7), (9), (10), and (11) and (f) , and the corresponding provisions of 11 CFR part 1, to the extent this system of records relates in any way to the enforcement of criminal laws.

(2) Pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 552a(k)(2), FEC 12, Office of Inspector General Investigative Files, is exempt from 552a (c)(3), (d), (e)(1), (e)(4)(G), (H), and (I),

and (f), and the corresponding provisions of 11 CFR part 1, to the extent the system of records consists of investigatory material compiled for law enforcement purposes, except for material that falls within the exemption included in paragraph (b)(1) of this section.

(c) The provisions of paragraph (a) of this section shall not apply to the extent that application of the subsection would deny any individual any right, privilege or benefit to which he or she would otherwise be entitled to receive.

[41 FR 43064, Sept. 29, 1976, as amended at 45 FR 21209, Apr. 1, 1980; 60 FR 4073, Jan. 20, 1995; 75 FR 31, Jan. 4, 2010; 79 FR 77843, Dec. 29, 2014]

PART 2—SUNSHINE REGULATIONS; MEETINGS

Sec.

- 2.1 Scope.
- 2.2 Definitions.
- 2.3 General rules.
- 2.4 Exempted meetings.
- 2.5 Procedures for closing meetings.
- 2.6 Transcripts and recordings.
- 2.7 Announcement of meetings and schedule changes.
- 2.8 Annual report.

AUTHORITY: 5 U.S.C. 552b.

SOURCE: 50 FR 39972, Oct. 1, 1985, unless otherwise noted.

§ 2.1 Scope.

These regulations are promulgated pursuant to the directive of 5 U.S.C. 552b(g) which was added by section 3(a) of Public Law 94-409, the Government in the Sunshine Act, and specifically implement section 3 of that Act.

§ 2.2 Definitions.

(a) *Commission.* *Commission* means the Federal Election Commission.

(b) *Commissioner or Member.* *Commissioner or Member* means an individual appointed to the Federal Election Commission pursuant to 52 U.S.C. 30106(a), but does not include a proxy or other designated representative of a Commissioner.

(c) *Person.* *Person* means an individual, including employees of the Commission, partnership, corporation,

§ 2.3

association, or public or private organization, other than an agency of the United States Government.

(d) *Meeting*. (1) *Meeting* means the deliberation of at least four voting members of the Commission in collegia where such deliberations determine or result in the joint conduct or disposition of official Commission business. For the purpose of this section, *joint conduct* does not include, for example, situations where the requisite number of members is physically present in one place but not conducting agency business as a body (e.g., at a meeting at which one member is giving a speech while a number of other members are present in the audience). A deliberation conducted through telephone or similar communications equipment by means of which all persons participating can hear each other will be considered a *meeting* under this section.

(2) The term *meeting* does not include the process of notation voting by circulated memorandum for the purpose of expediting consideration of routine matters. It also does not include deliberations to schedule a meeting, to take action to open or close a meeting, or to release or withhold information, or to change the subject matter of a meeting under 11 CFR 2.5, 2.6 and 2.7.

[50 FR 39972, Oct. 1, 1985, as amended at 50 FR 50778, Dec. 12, 1985; 65 FR 9206, Feb. 24, 2000; 79 FR 77844, Dec. 29, 2014; 82 FR 60852, Dec. 26, 2017]

§ 2.3 General rules.

(a) Commissioners shall not jointly conduct, determine or dispose of Commission business other than in accordance with this part.

(b) Except as provided in 11 CFR 2.4, every portion of every Commission meeting shall be open to public observation.

(c) No additional right to participate in Commission meetings is granted to any person by this part. A meeting is not part of the formal or informal record of decision of the matters discussed therein except as otherwise required by law. Statements of views or expressions of opinions made by Commissioners or FEC employees at meetings are not intended to represent final determinations or beliefs.

11 CFR Ch. I (1–1–25 Edition)

(d) Members of the public attending open Commission meetings may use small electronic sound recorders to record the meeting, but the use of other electronic recording equipment and cameras requires advance notice to and coordination with the Commission's Press Officer.

§ 2.4 Exempted meetings.

(a) *Meetings required by statute to be closed*. Meetings concerning matters specifically exempted from disclosure by statutes which require public withholding in such a manner as to leave no discretion for the Commission on the issue, or which establish particular types of matters to be withheld, shall be closed to public observation in accordance with the procedures of 11 CFR 2.5.

(1) As required by 52 U.S.C. 30109(a)(12), all Commission meetings, or portions of meetings, pertaining to any notification or investigation that a violation of the Act has occurred, shall be closed to the public.

(2) For the purpose of this section, *any notification or investigation that a violation of the Act has occurred* includes, but is not limited to, determinations pursuant to 52 U.S.C. 30109, the issuance of subpoenas, discussion of referrals to the Department of Justice, or consideration of any other matter related to the Commission's enforcement activity, as set forth in 11 CFR part 111.

(b) *Meetings closed by Commission determination*. Except as provided in 11 CFR 2.4(c), the requirement of open meetings will not apply where the Commission finds, in accordance with 11 CFR 2.5, that an open meeting or the release of information is likely to result in the disclosure of:

(1) Matters that relate solely to the Commission's internal personnel decisions, or internal rules and practices;

(i) This provision includes, but is not limited to, matters relating to Commission policies on working conditions, or materials prepared predominantly for internal use, the disclosure of which would risk circumvention of Commission regulations; but

(ii) This provision does not include discussions or materials regarding employees' dealings with the public, such

Federal Election Commission

§ 2.5

as personnel manuals or Commission directives setting forth job functions or procedures;

(2) Financial or commercial information obtained from any person which is privileged or confidential;

(3) Matters which involve the consideration of a proceeding of a formal nature by the Commission against a specific person or the formal censure of any person;

(4) Information of a personal nature where disclosure would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy;

(5) Investigatory records compiled for law enforcement purposes, or information which if written would be contained in such records, but only to the extent that the production of such records or information would:

(i) Interfere with enforcement proceedings,

(ii) Deprive a person of a right to a fair trial or an impartial adjudication,

(iii) Constitute an unwarranted invasion of personal privacy,

(iv) Disclose the identity of a confidential source,

(v) Disclose investigative techniques and procedures, or

(vi) Endanger the life or physical safety of law enforcement personnel;

(6) Information the premature disclosure of which would be likely to have a considerable adverse effect on the implementation of a proposed Commission action, as long as the Commission has not already disclosed the content or nature of its proposed action, or is not required by law to disclose it prior to final action; or

(7) Matters that specifically concern the Commission's participation in a civil action or proceeding, or an arbitration, or involving a determination on the record after opportunity for a hearing.

(c) Notwithstanding the applicability of any exemptions set forth in 11 CFR 2.4(b), the Commission may determine that the public interest requires a meeting to be open.

[50 FR 39972, Oct. 1, 1985, as amended at 75 FR 31, Jan. 4, 2010; 79 FR 77844, Dec. 29, 2014]

§ 2.5 Procedures for closing meetings.

(a) *General.* No meeting or portion of a meeting may be closed to the public

observation under this section unless a majority of the Commissioners votes to take such action. The closing of one portion of a meeting shall not justify closing any other portion of a meeting.

(b) *Certification.* Each time the Commission votes to close a meeting, the General Counsel shall publicly certify that, in his or her opinion, each item on the agenda may properly be closed to public observation. The certification shall state each relevant exemption provision. The original copy of the certification shall be attached to, and preserved with, the statement required by 11 CFR 2.5(d).

(c) *Voting procedures.* (1) No meeting need be held to consider closing a meeting. The Commission may vote to close a meeting or any portion thereof by using its notation vote procedures.

(i) A separate vote shall be taken with respect to each item on an agenda proposed to be closed in whole or in part pursuant to 11 CFR 2.4, or with respect to any information proposed to be withheld under 11 CFR 2.4.

(ii) A single vote may be taken with respect to a particular matter to be discussed in a series of closed meetings, or with respect to any information concerning such series of meetings, so long as each meeting in the series is scheduled to be held no more than 30 days after the initial meeting.

(iii) This section shall not affect the Commission's practice of setting dates for closed meetings more than 30 days in advance of such meetings.

(2) The Commission Secretary shall record the vote of each Commissioner participating in the vote. No proxies, written or otherwise, shall be counted.

(3)(i) A Commissioner may object to a recommendation to close the discussion of a particular matter or may assert a claim of exemption for a matter scheduled to be discussed in an open meeting. Such objection or assertion will be discussed by the Commission at the next scheduled closed meeting, to determine whether the matter in question should be discussed in a closed meeting.

(ii) An *objection for the record only* will not cause the objection to be placed on any agenda.

(d) *Public statement of vote.* (1) If the Commission votes to close a meeting,

§ 2.6

or any portion thereof, under this section, it shall make publicly available within 24 hours a written statement of the vote. The written statement shall contain:

(i) A citation to the provision(s) of 11 CFR 2.4 under which the meeting was closed to public observation and an explanation of why the specific discussion comes within the cited exemption(s);

(ii) The vote of each Commissioner participating in the vote;

(iii) A list of the names of all persons expected to attend the closed meeting and their affiliation. For purposes of this section, affiliation means title or position, and name of employer, and in the case of a representative, the name of the person represented. In the case of Commission employees, the statement will reflect, through the use of titles rather than individual names, that the Commissioners, specified division heads and their staff will attend; and

(iv) The signature of the Commission Secretary.

(2) The original copy of the statement shall be maintained by the Commission Secretary. A copy shall be posted on a public bulletin board located in the Commission's Public Records Office.

(e) *Public request to close a meeting.* A person whose interests may be directly affected by a portion of a meeting may request that the Commission close that portion to the public for any of the reasons referred to in 11 CFR 2.4. The following procedures shall apply to such requests:

(1) The request must be made in writing and shall be directed to the Chairman of the Commission.

(2) The request shall identify the provisions of 11 CFR 2.4 under which the requestor seeks to close all or a portion of the meeting.

(3) A recorded vote to close the meeting or a portion thereof shall be taken.

(4) Requests made under this section shall become part of the official record of the underlying matter and shall be disclosed in accordance with 11 CFR 2.6 on completion of the matter.

(5) If the Commission decides to approve a request to close, the Commission will then follow the procedures for

11 CFR Ch. I (1–1–25 Edition)

closing a meeting set forth in 11 CFR 2.5 (a) through (d).

[50 FR 39972, Oct. 1, 1985, as amended at 65 FR 9206, Feb. 24, 2000]

§ 2.6 Transcripts and recordings.

(a) The Commission Secretary shall maintain a complete transcript or electronic recording adequate to record fully the proceedings of each meeting, or portion of a meeting, closed to public observation. An electronic recording of a meeting shall be coded, or other records shall be kept in a manner adequate to identify each speaker.

(b)(1) In the case of any meeting closed pursuant to 11 CFR 2.4(b), as the last item of business, the Commission will determine which, if any, portions of the electronic recording or transcript and which if any, items of information withheld under 11 CFR 2.5 contain information which should be withheld pursuant to 11 CFR 2.4.

(2) Portions of transcripts or recordings determined to be outside the scope of any exemptions under 11 CFR 2.6(b)(1) shall be promptly made available to the public through the Commission's Public Records Office at a cost sufficient to cover the Commission's actual cost of duplication or transcription. Requests for such copies shall be made and processed in accordance with the provisions of 11 CFR part 5.

(3) Portions of transcripts or electronic recordings not made available immediately pursuant to 11 CFR 2.6(b)(1), and portions of transcripts or recordings withheld pursuant to 11 CFR 2.4(a), will be made available on request when the relevant exemptions no longer apply. Such materials shall be requested and processed under the provisions of 11 CFR 2.6(b)(2).

(c) A complete verbatim copy of the transcript or a complete electronic recording of each meeting, or portion of a meeting, closed to the public, shall be maintained by the Commission Secretary in confidential files of the Commission, for a minimum of two years subsequent to such meeting, or a minimum of one year after the conclusion of any agency proceeding with respect to which the meeting, or portion of the

Federal Election Commission

§ 4.1

meeting, was held, whichever occurs later.

[50 FR 39972, Oct. 1, 1985, as amended at 75 FR 31, Jan. 4, 2010]

§ 2.7 Announcement of meetings and schedule changes.

(a)(1) In the case of each meeting, the Commission shall publicly announce and shall submit such announcement for publication in the FEDERAL REGISTER at least seven days prior to the day on which the meeting is to be called to order. The Commission Secretary shall also forward a copy of such announcement for posting in the Commission's Public Records Office.

(2) Announcements made under this section shall contain the following information:

- (i) The date of the meeting;
- (ii) The place of the meeting;
- (iii) The subject matter of the meeting;
- (iv) Whether the meeting is to be open or closed to the public; and
- (v) The name and telephone number of the official designated by the agency to respond to requests for information about the meeting.

(b) The public announcement and submission for publication shall be made when required by 11 CFR 2.7(a) in the case of every Commission meeting unless a majority of the Commissioners decide by recorded vote that Commission business requires that the meeting be called at an earlier date, in which case the Commission shall make at the earliest practicable time, the announcement required by this section and a concurrent submission for publication of that announcement in the FEDERAL REGISTER.

(c) The time or place of a meeting may be changed following the public announcement required by 11 CFR 2.7 (a) or (b) only if the Commission announces the change at the earliest practicable time.

(d) The subject matter of a meeting, or the determination of the Commission to open or close a meeting, or portions of a meeting, to the public may be changed following the public announcement required by 11 CFR 2.7 (a) or (b) only if:

(1) A majority of the entire membership of the Commission determines by

recorded vote that Commission business so requires and that no earlier announcement of the change was possible; and

(2) The Commission publicly announces the change and the vote of each member upon the change at the earliest practicable time. Immediately following this announcement, the Commission shall submit for publication in the FEDERAL REGISTER a notice containing the information required by 11 CFR 2.7(a)(2), including a description of any change from the earlier published notice.

§ 2.8 Annual report.

The Commission shall report annually to Congress regarding its compliance with the requirements of the Government in the Sunshine Act and of this part, including:

- (a) A tabulation of the total number of Commission meetings open to the public;
- (b) The total number of such meetings closed to the public;
- (c) The reasons for closing such meetings; and
- (d) A description of any litigation brought against the Commission under the Sunshine Act, including any costs assessed against the Commission in such litigation (whether or not paid by the Commission).

PART 4—PUBLIC RECORDS AND THE FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT

Sec.

- 4.1 Definitions.
- 4.2 Policy on disclosure of records.
- 4.3 Scope.
- 4.4 Availability of records.
- 4.5 Categories of exemptions.
- 4.6 Discretionary release of exempt records.
- 4.7 Requests for records.
- 4.8 Mediation services and appeal of denial.
- 4.9 Fees.

AUTHORITY: 5 U.S.C. 552, as amended.

SOURCE: 44 FR 33368, June 8, 1979, unless otherwise noted.

§ 4.1 Definitions.

As used in this part:

(a) *Commission* means the Federal Election Commission, established by the Federal Election Campaign Act of 1971, as amended.