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Funding of Presidential Nominating Conventions: An Overview

Updated May 4, 2016

Congressional Research Service
https://crsreports.congress.gov
R43976

CRS REPORT
Prepared for Members and
Committees of Congress

Summary

During the 113th Congress, legislation (H.R. 2019) became law (P.L. 113-94) eliminating Presidential Election Campaign Fund (PECF) funding for convention operations. The 2012 Democratic and Republican convention committees each received grants, financed with public funds, of approximately $18.2 million (for a total of approximately $36.5 million, as rounded). Barring a change in the status quo, the 2016 presidential nominating conventions will, therefore, be the first since the 1976 election cycle not supported with public funds.

Changes in PECF funding for convention operations do not affect separately appropriated security funds. The 114th Congress enacted one law (P.L. 114-113) in FY2016 that affected convention security funding with the appropriation of $100 million for the Democratic and Republican nominating conventions (each was allocated $50 million). This security funding will not be provided to party convention committees but to the state and local law enforcement entities assisting in securing the convention sites.

Because public funding for convention operations has now been eliminated, this report provides a historical overview of how PECF convention funding functioned and describes private funding sources that remain available. This report will be updated if public financing for nominating conventions again becomes a major legislative issue. For historical discussion of policy debates that preceded the decision to repeal PECF convention funds, see archived CRS Report RL34630, *Federal Funding of Presidential Nominating Conventions: Overview and Policy Options*, by R. Sam Garrett and Shawn Reese.

For discussion of increased private fundraising limits for political parties, including for party conventions, see CRS Report R43825, *Increased Campaign Contribution Limits in the FY2015 Omnibus Appropriations Law: Frequently Asked Questions*, by R. Sam Garrett.

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Introduction

Every four years, the two major political parties, and some third parties, select their presidential nominees at conventions. These conventions are run by and for parties, without a formal role for the federal government. Until recently, voluntary taxpayer designations provided certain financial support to convention committees that chose to accept public money. Congress appropriates separate federal funding for the securing of the convention venues.

A variety of policy issues surrounds convention financing. Before public funding for convention operations was eliminated, some observers questioned why federal funds subsidized conventions, considering the availability of substantial private resources and that they are party, rather than governmental, events. Others contended that private funds, particularly so-called "soft money," which falls outside the scope of federal campaign finance law, had become too pervasive in conventions and that tighter restrictions were needed. These divergent views on the use of public funds to support party conventions also appear in other contexts in the debate surrounding campaign finance policy.[1]

Two taxpayer-supported revenue sources were available to conventions until recently: (1) presidential public campaign funds and (2) security funds. Approximately $136.5 million from those sources went toward the 2012 Democratic and Republican national conventions. No third parties received convention funds for the 2012 election cycle.[2] Of that $136.5 million total, the 2012 Democratic and Republican conventions received a total of approximately $36.5 million[3] from the Presidential Election Campaign Fund (which generally excludes security costs). Although convention financing has been eliminated, Congress has chosen to continue appropriating separate security funds.

Before proceeding, it is important to note the distinction between presidential public funds and security funds. Presidential public funds and security funds came from separate revenue sources. They were allocated differently, were used for different purposes, and were subject to different points of debate. Although both presidential public funds and security funds support (or supported) conventions, Congress may reassess them separately.

Because public funding for convention operations has now been eliminated, this report provides a historical overview of how PECF convention funding functioned and describes private funding sources that remain available. For historical discussion of policy debates that preceded the decision to repeal PECF convention funds, see archived CRS Report RL34630, *Federal Funding of Presidential Nominating Conventions: Overview and Policy Options*, by R. Sam Garrett and Shawn Reese. For discussion of increased private fundraising limits for political parties, including for party conventions, see CRS Report R43825, *Increased Campaign Contribution Limits in the FY2015 Omnibus Appropriations Law: Frequently Asked Questions*, by R. Sam Garrett.

[1] For additional discussion of current campaign finance issues, see CRS Report R41542, *The State of Campaign Finance Policy: Recent Developments and Issues for Congress*, by R. Sam Garrett.

[2] Although third-party conventions are occasionally eligible for presidential public financing grants, Congress only appropriated security funds for the 2004, 2008, and 2012 Democratic and Republican conventions.

[3] According to December 2012 Financial Management Service data provided to CRS, net disbursements (after repayments to the PECF) were approximately $36.1 million.

Convention Financing: An Overview

Federal Funds

Through the 2012 presidential election cycle, two sources of federal funds supported different aspects of presidential nominating conventions. First, funds for convention operations came from the Presidential Election Campaign Fund (PECF), which provides financial assistance to publicly financed presidential campaigns.[4] Second, funds were appropriated by Congress to the Department of Justice (DOJ) for security costs incurred by state and local governments hosting the conventions. Although PECF convention funding was repealed in 2014 via P.L. 113-94, Congress has chosen to continue appropriating separate security funds.

PECF Funds

Congress made no appropriations for PECF funds (including amounts used to support conventions). Rather, amounts in the PECF were and are determined by "checkoff" designations on individuals' federal income tax returns. Although the convention-financing aspect of the checkoff has been eliminated, the checkoff question remains on tax forms and designations still support separate benefits for publicly financed presidential candidates. Individuals may choose to designate $3 of their tax liability to the PECF. Married couples filing jointly may designate a total of $6 to the fund.[5]

Federal law permitted the two major parties' conventions to receive grants of approximately $18.2 million each for the 2012 election cycle (an inflation-adjusted base amount of $4 million each). These grants were awarded to the relevant party's convention committee.[6] Qualifying convention committees were not obligated to accept PECF funds, but doing so was standard practice. Third parties were eligible for limited public convention funds, but they rarely qualified.[7]

DOJ Funds

The second source of federal convention funds, which was unaffected by P.L. 113-94, comes through the Office of Justice Programs (OJP), within Department of Justice (DOJ). This OJP funding, specifically the Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant program has only been available in FY2004, FY2008, FY2012, and FY2016, arguably as a result of the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks.[8] In 2004, Congress appropriated $100 million, through DOJ, for the

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[4] On the PECF, see 26 U.S.C. §9001 *et seq.* and CRS Report RL34534, *Public Financing of Presidential Campaigns: Overview and Analysis*. Convention funding was added through the 1974 Federal Election Campaign Act (FECA) amendments. See P.L. 93-443; 88 Stat. 1263.

[5] The checkoff question does not permit taxpayers to distinguish between making a designation to publicly financed presidential *candidates* versus to publicly financed *conventions*. In other words, taxpayers may choose to make a PECF designation, but may not specify how those funds are distributed or spent.

[6] Convention committees are separate political committees (i.e., candidate committees, party committees, and political action committees (PACs)) "responsible for conducting the day to day arrangements and operations of that party's presidential nominating convention," including receiving public funds. See 11 C.F.R. §9008.3(a)(2).

[7] 26 U.S.C. §9008(b).

[8] However, federal assistance for convention security has been provided in at least one election year prior to 2004. According to The Campaign Finance Institute, in 1980 the cities of Detroit and New York City received "Federal Law Enforcement Assistance grants" of $3.2 million and $3.5 million respectively for convention security. Steve Weissman with the assistance of Margaret Sammon and Jennifer Sykes, *Inside Fundraising for the 2008 Party Conventions: Party*

Democratic and Republican presidential nominating conventions in Boston and New York City.[9] In 2008, Congress appropriated $100 million for the Democratic and Republican presidential nominating convention security in Denver and Minneapolis-St. Paul.[10] In 2012, $100 million was administered through OJP's Edward Byrne Memorial State and Local Law Enforcement Assistance Programs for convention security in Charlotte and Tampa.[11] DOJ used most of this funding to reimburse state and local law enforcement entities for overtime costs associated with convention security. In 2016, Congress has appropriated $100 million, administered like past election years through OJP, for state and local law enforcement activities associated with the conventions to be held in Cleveland, OH, and Philadelphia, PA.[12]

Even though DOJ administers the convention security funding, DOJ is not responsible for security at the 2016 presidential nominating conventions. Rather, the U.S. Secret Service (USSS) is responsible for planning, coordinating, and implementing security operations at conventions. Congress authorized the USSS—when directed by the President—to be the lead federal agency for convention security in P.L. 106-544 (the Presidential Threat Protection Act of 2000) because the conventions are designated as National Special Security Events (NSSE).[13] In addition to presidential nominating conventions, NSSEs include such events as presidential inaugurations, major international summits held in the United States, and some major sporting events.

Recent Federal Convention Funding

As **Table 1** shows, the federal government provided a total of approximately $136.5 million—combining PECF grants and security expenditures—to support the 2012 Democratic and Republican conventions. Each convention was allocated approximately $68.2 million.[14]

Table 1. Federal Funds Supporting the 2012 Presidential Nominating Conventions

(in millions of dollars)

	Presidential Election Campaign Fund (PECF) Grants	Security Funding	Total Federal Funding
Democratic Convention	$18.2	$50.0	$68.2
Republican Convention	$18.2	$50.0	$68.2
Total	**$36.5**[a]	**$100.0**[b]	**$136.5**

Sources: PECF data appears in U.S. Treasury Department, Financial Management Service, "Disbursements From the Presidential Election Campaign Fund and Related Payments," various monthly reports provided to CRS by

Surrogates Gather Soft Money While Federal Regulators Turn a Blind Eye (Washington: Campaign Finance Institute, 2008). See the table entitled "Sources of Funding for Major Party Presidential Nominating Conventions, 1980-2004," which is not paginated.

[9] In P.L. 108-287 (An Act Making Appropriations for the Department of Defense for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2005, and For Other Purposes), §11002, Congress appropriated $25 million for Boston and $25 million for New York City convention security. In P.L. 108-199 (An Act Making Appropriations for Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies for the Fiscal Year Ending September 30, 2004, and for Other Purposes), §103, Congress appropriated $50 million for the 2004 presidential nominating conventions.

[10] P.L. 110-161, Div. B, Title II.

[11] 125 Stat. 615.

[12] 129 Stat. 2306-2307.

[13] For information on the U.S. Secret Service's missions, see CRS Report RL34603, *The U.S. Secret Service: History and Missions*, by Shawn Reese.

[14] These amounts do not sum due to rounding.

the Office of Legislative and Public Affairs, Financial Management Service. The 112th Congress appropriated $100 million (through OJP) for securing the 2012 presidential nominating conventions in P.L. 112-55.

Notes: CRS aggregated totals in the table. According to December 2012 Financial Management Service data provided to CRS, net PECF disbursements (after repayments) were approximately $36.1 million.

a. Figures do not sum due to rounding. CRS rounded totals in the Treasury Department data cited above.

b. This amount does not include any funding that the U.S. Secret Service may expend in protecting major presidential candidates at the conventions.

No third parties qualified for any federal funding in 2012. A third party most recently received PECF funds in 2000. That year, the Reform Party reportedly qualified for $2.5 million in federal funds.[15] Congress has never appropriated funds for a third party's convention security. It should be noted that in 2016 there is $100 million for security.

Conditions on PECF Funds

In exchange for receiving public funds, a party's convention committee was required to agree not to raise or spend additional funds.[16] Certain exceptions were permitted for legal or accounting fees. Among other requirements, convention committees receiving public funds filed disclosure reports with the FEC, agreed to provide the commission with any requested documents, and submitted to an audit of their PECF spending.[17]

Federal law placed relatively few restrictions on how PECF convention funds were spent, as long as purchases were lawful and used to "defray expenses incurred with respect to a presidential nominating convention."[18]

FEC regulations provided additional guidance on permissible and prohibited spending. Per FEC regulations, *permissible* PECF convention expenses included items such as

- "preparing, maintaining, and dismantling" the convention site;
- personnel and staff expenses (including bonuses);
- convention operations and planning;
- security;[19]
- transportation;
- certain entertainment;
- administrative items (e.g., office supplies);
- gifts for convention staff or volunteers (limited to $150 per person or $20,000 total);
- production of candidate biographical films; or
- investment of PECF funds if the profits were to be used to defray convention costs.[20]

[15] Anthony Corrado, "Public Funding of Presidential Campaigns," in Anthony Corrado, Thomas E. Mann, Daniel R. Ortiz, and Trevor Potter, eds. *The New Campaign Finance Sourcebook* (Washington: Brookings Institution Press, 2005), p. 191.

[16] 26 U.S.C. §9008(d).

[17] 11 C.F.R. §9008.3.

[18] 26 U.S.C. §9008(c).

[19] Although PECF funds could be spent on security, it is likely that security would be paid for with other federal funds discussed elsewhere in this report.

[20] 11 C.F.R. 9008.7(a).

It is important to note, however, that although federal regulations permitted the types of spending described above, individual convention committees did not necessarily choose to fund all of those activities.

Convention committees were *prohibited* from spending PECF funds on items including

- candidate or delegate participation in the convention, except in limited circumstances;
- any item that would violate federal or state laws;
- penalties resulting from enforcement of federal election law; or
- replacing lost or stolen items, except in limited circumstances.[21]

Conditions on Security Funds

There were no conditions on security funds per se; however, convention security funding could only be used for costs associated with specifically identified presidential nominating conventions. In 2016, the Democratic convention in Philadelphia and the Republican convention in Cleveland are the only ones authorized to receive federal security funding.

The $100 million Congress appropriated for the FY2016 presidential nominating conventions is, reportedly, primarily to reimburse states and localities for law enforcement costs associated with their participation in securing the convention sites. In 2004, 2008, and 2012, the main security costs that state and local law enforcement entities incurred involved overtime payments. This overtime of state and local law enforcement personnel might be the result of their participation in not only securing the convention venue, but participating in such activities as advance planning, conducting liaison for venue and air space security, training, and establishing and maintaining communications.[22] Reportedly, GOP convention organizers have security concerns for the Cleveland convention and Cleveland law enforcement entities are purchasing riot gear.[23]

There are other security costs incurred by the federal government associated with the conventions that are not part of the $100 million appropriated in FY2016. Some of these additional security costs include the USSS protection of the major presidential candidates (whether at the convention or at other campaign locations)[24] and the use of other federal government personnel which assist in securing the convention sites, such as Federal Protective Service law enforcement officers.[25] Other federal security costs include the securing of the convention venue through the positioning of fencing and barricades, as well as the pre-positioning of federal law enforcement K-9 units and other teams such as the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's (DHS's) Domestic Emergency Support Teams, and Urban Search and Rescue Teams.[26]

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[21] 11 C.F.R. 9008.7(b).

[22] U.S. Department of Homeland Security, U.S. Secret Service, Office of Legislative Affairs, "National Special Security Events: Meeting the Counter-Terrorism Challenge" (Washington: 2006), p. 1. This document is only available to congressional clients from the U.S. Secret Service's Office of Legislative Affairs upon request.

[23] William Douglas, "GOP Convention Security Gears Up amid Fears of Threats," McClatchyDc.com, March 25, 2016, http://www.mcclatchydc.com/news/politics-government/election/article68309317.html.

[24] In FY2012, Congress appropriated $113 million for major presidential candidate protection. See H.Rept. 112-331, p. 983.

[25] U.S. Department of Homeland Security, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, Federal Protective Service, "Fiscal Year 2009 Congressional Justification," p. 5.

[26] U.S. Department of Homeland Security, Office of the Press Secretary, "National Special Security Events: Fact Sheet," available at http://www.dhs.gov/xnews/releases/press_release_0207.shtm.

Remaining Types of Convention Funding

Following the 2014 repeal of public convention funding, it appears that two sources of private funds will fund convention operations beginning with the 2016 cycle. First, convention committees may engage in traditional, private fundraising subject to the Federal Election Campaign Act's (FECA's) limitations and reporting requirements.[27] Second, state and local entities, particularly "host committees," may raise funds outside of FECA's requirements.[28] In addition, security funding could be affected by nonfederal funds. This section contains additional detail on each type of funding.

Private Fundraising for Convention Committees

Now that PECF funds have been eliminated, convention committees must raise private funds, similar to other federal political committees (e.g., candidate committees or political action committees). Two recent policy developments may affect private convention funding, as noted below.

- In October 2014, the Federal Election Commission (FEC) issued an advisory opinion (AO), responding to a joint request from the Democratic National Committee and Republican National Committee seeking permission for convention committees to raise private funds in light of P.L. 113-94.[29] The FEC determined that the national parties could each establish a separate political committee for convention fundraising and that those committees enjoyed separate contribution limits from the national parties themselves.
- In December 2014, Congress enacted, and the President signed, H.R. 83, the Consolidated and Further Continuing Appropriations Act, 2015 (P.L. 113-235). The law tripled individual and political action committee (PAC) limits for contributions to national party committees and permitted those committees to establish new accounts, with separate contribution limits, to support party conventions.[30] Overall, it appears that, at minimum, an individual could give $100,200 (triple the base $33,400 limit) to support convention committees in 2015-2016. Multicandidate PACs could contribute at least $97,200 to conventions.

As a practical matter, contribution amounts could be shaped by fundraising practices or future advisory opinions or regulation. Additional discussion appears in another CRS report.[31]

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[27] FECA was previously codified at 2 U.S.C. §431 *et seq*, now codified at 52 U.S.C. §30101 *et seq*. The Office of Law Revision Counsel reclassified the Federal Election Campaign Act (FECA) and related portions of campaign finance law to a new Title 52 in September 2014. For background on the reclassification, see Office of Law Revision Counsel, *Editorial Reclassification*, http://uscode.house.gov/editorialreclassification/reclassification.html.

[28] Host committees are "any local organization," such as civic associations, whose "principal purpose is the encouragement of commerce in the convention city, as well as the projection of a favorable image of the city to the convention attendees." See 11 C.F.R. §9008.50(b). On FEC receipt and expenditure regulations, see 11 C.F.R. §9008.52.

[29] See Federal Election Commission, AO 2014-12. The approved document, which is "Draft B" is available via the commission's AO search feature at http://saos.fec.gov/saos/searchao.

[30] Separate accounts are also permitted for legal activities and facilities. For additional discussion, see CRS Report R43825, *Increased Campaign Contribution Limits in the FY2015 Omnibus Appropriations Law: Frequently Asked Questions*, by R. Sam Garrett.

[31] See CRS Report R43825, *Increased Campaign Contribution Limits in the FY2015 Omnibus Appropriations Law:*

Convention-Related Activities for State and Local Entities

Nonfederal funds are a major source of money associated with the political (as opposed to security) side of presidential nominating conventions.[32] Nonfederal funds[33] are generally not subject to the limits on contribution sources and amounts found in federal campaign finance law, although some FEC reporting requirements apply.[34] In addition to the private fundraising in which convention committees participate, local host committees may solicit and spend private contributions for activities related to the convention. Permissible expenses include, for example "use of an auditorium or convention center," promoting the convention city, and hosting receptions or tours for attendees.[35]

As a practical matter, the regulation of federal versus nonfederal funds rests on how FECA and the FEC have treated each source. FECA is largely silent on campaign finance aspects of nonfederal funds, and the FEC has determined that nonfederal funds do not explicitly support the conventions per se, even if they support events associated with those conventions. In particular, a 2003 FEC rulemaking reaffirmed the commission's long-held view that

> donations of funds to host committees are, as a matter of law, distinct from other donations by prohibited sources [defined in FECA] in that they are motivated by a desire to promote the convention city and hence are not subject to the absolute ban on corporate contributions in 2 U.S.C. 441b [a FECA provision]. This conclusion is buttressed by the fact that frequently members of the opposite political party have played prominent and active roles in convention host committees.[36]

State or local governments, or coalitions of those governments, may also provide financial assistance to conventions through entities known as "municipal funds."[37] The FEC has also permitted corporations and labor unions, which may not provide direct financial support to federal campaigns, to make certain contributions of goods or services to host committees and

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Frequently Asked Questions, by R. Sam Garrett.

[32] Previous estimates suggest that the nonfederal funds, such as those associated with host committees, have accounted for 75% or more of total spending surrounding conventions. See, for example, Steve Weissman with the assistance of Margaret Sammon and Jennifer Sykes, *Inside Fundraising for the 2008 Party Conventions: Party Surrogates Gather Soft Money While Federal Regulators Turn a Blind Eye* (Washington: Campaign Finance Institute, 2008). See "Sources of Funding for Major Party Presidential Nominating Conventions, 1980-2004," which is not paginated. The report is available at http://www.cfinst.org/books_reports/conventions/2008Conventions_Rpt1.pdf.

[33] On the various funding sources discussed in this and the preceding sections, see Anthony Corrado, "Public Funding of Presidential Campaigns," pp. 62-63.

[34] Nonfederal funds that support conventions (except for security funding) are sometimes called "soft money," a term of art used to describe money believed to influence elections, but which falls outside federal campaign finance law. On FEC reporting requirements for host committees and municipal funds (discussed below), see 11 C.F.R. §9008.51.

[35] Host committees are "any local organization," such as civic associations, whose "principal purpose is the encouragement of commerce in the convention city, as well as the projection of a favorable image of the city to the convention attendees." See 11 C.F.R. §9008.50(b). On FEC receipt and expenditure regulations, see 11 C.F.R. §9008.52.

[36] Federal Election Commission, "Public Financing of Presidential Candidates and Nominating Conventions," 68 *Federal Register* 47401, August 8, 2003. The provision previously cited at 2 U.S.C. §441b is now cited at 52 U.S.C. §30118.

[37] Municipal funds are "any fund or account of a government agency, municipality, or municipal corporation whose principal purpose is the encouragement of commerce in the municipality and whose receipt and use of funds is subject to the control of officials of the State or local government." See 11 C.F.R. §9008.50(c). On FEC receipt and expenditure regulations, see 11 C.F.R. §9008.53. Former FEC chairman David Mason provided consultations on some points regarding commission regulation of host committees and municipal funds in the original version of this report (email correspondence with R. Sam Garrett).

municipal funds.[38] In addition, "commercial vendors" may provide goods or services to convention committees "at reduced or discounted rates, or at no charge" in certain circumstances.[39]

Security Operations

As noted above, Congress has previously appropriated separate security funding for conventions. Even though the primary use of the $100 million of federal funds previously appropriated through DOJ's security grants was to offset the security costs incurred by state and local governments, additional funds were likely needed. Additionally, nonfederal funding (state and local government funding) may have been used to secure the conventions.[40] Any nonfederal funding was based on the costs to state and local law enforcement entities that work with the USSS and other federal law enforcement agencies during the convention. Additionally, unlike the funding used by party convention committees, any nonfederal funds used for convention security came from state and local governments, not PECF designations.

Recent Legislative Activity

Repeal of PECF Convention Funding

The 113th Congress and President Obama eliminated the convention-funding portion of the PECF in April 2014. Specifically, P.L. 113-94 (H.R. 2019) terminated convention funding and directed that PECF amounts reserved for conventions be transferred to an unrelated health research account, the "10-Year Pediatric Research Initiative Fund."[41]

Debate on the public financing portion of the legislation (as opposed to the health research component, which is beyond the scope of this report) was relatively limited. During the 113th Congress and previously, however, those opposed to continuing convention financing typically argued that private host-committee receipts demonstrated the viability of private support, making convention financing an unnecessary taxpayer-funded subsidy for political parties. Proponents of convention financing countered that, particularly in the 1970s, conventions had a history of questionable fundraising and that eliminating public funding raised the prospects for real or apparent corruption.

The House passed H.R. 2019 (295-103) on December 11, 2013.The Senate passed the bill by unanimous consent on March 11, 2014, and President Obama signed it on April 3, 2014. Also during the 113th Congress, the Committee on House Administration also reported two other related bills (H.R. 94; H.R. 95). H.R. 94 would have eliminated convention financing; H.R. 95 would have eliminated the entire public financing program. Other bills that would have eliminated convention financing included H.R. 260, H.R. 1724, H.R. 2857, and S. 118. Another

[38] See 11 C.F.R. §§9008.52 and 9008.53(b).

[39] 11 C.F.R. §9008.9.

[40] The term "nonfederal funds" can apply in both campaign finance and security contexts and is used distinctly in this report. "Campaign finance nonfederal funds," as used in this report, generally refers to private funds not subject to FECA provisions. By contrast, the term generally refers to state and local public funds in the security context.

[41] Health-research matters are beyond the scope of this report. Additional information on health-research provisions in the bill is available to congressional clients from CRS Analyst Judith Johnson upon request.

bill, H.R. 270, would have eliminated convention financing but revamped other parts of the presidential public financing program.

Efforts to repeal convention financing had begun years earlier. In the 112th Congress, both chambers passed separate bills to eliminate PECF convention funding, but none became law. In the Senate, an amendment (containing text from S. 3257) to the 2012 Agriculture Reform, Food and Jobs Act, S. 3240, would have eliminated PECF convention funding.[42] The amendment and the underlying bill passed the Senate on June 21, 2012.[43] Separately, S. 194 proposed to eliminate the entire public financing program. The House passed (239-160) H.R. 359 on January 26, 2011.[44] On December 1, 2011, the House passed (235-190) H.R. 3463.[45] That bill's public financing provisions were virtually identical to H.R. 359. H.R. 3463 also would have eliminated the Election Assistance Commission (EAC), a topic that is unrelated to public financing of presidential campaigns and conventions.[46] Another bill, H.R. 5912, would have eliminated only convention financing. Other legislation would have maintained the public financing program for candidates but would have altered convention financing. These bills include H.R. 414 and S. 3312. Both would have eliminated convention funding.

In the 111th Congress, H.R. 2992 proposed to eliminate PECF convention funding. Two other 111th bills, H.R. 6061 and S. 3681, although bolstering other elements of the public financing program, also would have eliminated convention funding. None of these measures appeared to affect separate security funding discussed in this report.

Four bills introduced in the 110th Congress would have affected PECF convention financing. Only one of those bills (H.R. 72) was principally concerned with convention funding. Others emphasized broader presidential public financing issues. None of these measures became law.

The 114th Congress appropriated $100 million for convention security in FY2012 (P.L. 114-113). The convention security appropriations are to be divided between the two convention sites in Philadelphia and Cleveland at $50 million apiece.

Conclusion

Public money funded convention operations through the PECF from 1976 through 2012. The 2014 elimination of convention financing means that, barring a change in the status quo, the 2016 conventions will be the first in more than a generation financed entirely with private funds. This report has provided historical background in the event Congress chooses to reconsider public financing.

The role of the federal government in funding convention security is a fairly new development since the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. As federal, state, and local governments further refine their homeland security activities generally, and specifically convention security operations, Congress may consider different options for how the federal government provides funding for state and local costs incurred in securing convention venues.

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[42] For additional discussion of the Senate-passed 2012 "farm bill" legislation, see CRS Report R42552, *The 2012 Farm Bill: A Comparison of Senate-Passed S. 3240 and the House Agriculture Committee's H.R. 6083 with Current Law*, coordinated by Ralph M. Chite

[43] The Coburn conventions amendment, no. 2214, passed 95-4; roll call vote no. 162.

[44] Roll call vote no. 25.

[45] Roll call vote no. 873.

[46] For additional EAC discussion, see CRS Report RL32685, *Election Reform: The Help America Vote Act and Issues for Congress*, by Eric A. Fischer and Kevin J. Coleman.

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