

FEC Distributes \$22 Million To Presidential Candidates

Reuter

The government yesterday distributed more than \$22 million in campaign funds to 1996 presidential candidates, with Senate Majority Leader Robert J. Dole (R-Kan.) edging out President Clinton as the biggest recipient.

The Federal Election Commission said presidential candidates had qualified for more than \$37 million in federal matching funds. However, due to cash flow problems, it was able to deliver just under 60 cents on the dollar. The rest of the money will follow later in the year.

Among Republicans, Dole was by far the biggest beneficiary. His campaign qualified for \$9.2 million and received \$5.6 million, ahead of Sen. Phil Gramm (R-Tex.), who qualified for \$6.7 million and received almost \$4 million. Conservative commentator Patrick J. Buchanan qualified for \$3.9 million, former Tennessee governor Lamar Alexander \$3.2 million, and Sen. Richard G. Lugar (R-Ind.) \$2.3 million.

Clinton, the only serious Democratic candidate, qualified for \$9 million and received \$5.4 million.

Republican candidate Malcolm S. "Steve" Forbes Jr., a multimillionaire magazine publisher, is financing his campaign himself. His campaign spokeswoman Gretchen Morgensen declined to say how

much he had spent, although news reports say he already has gone over \$7 million and Forbes has said he was willing to put up \$25 million.

Fund-raising is even more important this year because most of the state primaries have been squeezed into a narrow six-week period in February and March. That means there will be little time to raise more money once the primaries begin.

The FEC matches campaign contributions from individuals up to a \$250 limit for the primary campaign. Individuals may give up to \$1,000 per candidate and the money must be spent by the end of the summer when the parties hold nominating conventions. The government funds the candidates' general election campaigns to the tune of \$60 million each.

Campaign spokesman Nelson Warfield said Dole raised just under \$25 million in 1995 and finished the year with \$4.4 million cash on hand. Gramm raised just under \$16 million for the year but had spent all but \$1 million. Alexander raised more than \$10 million but had spent almost all of it and took a \$1 million loan to finance a TV campaign.

Buchanan raised \$6.7 million for the year but had spent all but \$100,000. Lugar raised \$4.6 million and had spent all but \$200,000.