



Suit Seeks Open GOP Records

WASHINGTON (AP) — Common Cause today announced it had filed suit in U.S. District Court here to force public disclosure of the financial backers who contributed more than \$10 million to President Nixon's reelection campaign prior to April 7.

The suit was against the Finance Committee to Re-elect the President and its branches, charging them with violation of the Federal Corrupt Practices Act of 1925. Common Cause is a public-interest group.

John Gardner, chairman of Common Cause and a former secretary of Health, Education and Welfare, said in a statement that "the President and his advisers did not read the law very carefully in taking the position that they did not have to file any reports or reveal any names prior to April 7."

April 7 was the effective date of the new Federal Election Campaign Act, which requires disclosure of all contributions of more than \$100.

But the Nixon fund-raisers took the position they did not have to disclose the source of funds raised before April 7.

Gardner said, however, that the 1925 act requires periodic disclosure reports from "any committee which accepts contributions or makes expenditures for the purpose of influencing the election of candidates or presidential and vice-presidential electors in two or more states."

The suit contends that the President's finance committees "clearly fall within the language and the purpose of the reporting requirements of the former law."

The 1925 act was repealed by the new elections law, but Common Cause said the suit could be filed since the alleged violations occurred while it was still in effect.

"It must be emphasized," Gardner said, "that we are not dealing only with past events. The \$10 million raised before April 7 may profoundly influence events between now and November."

He said he informed Clark MacGregor, the President's campaign manager, of the legal basis for the suit on Aug. 7, but had received no reply.

The suit urged quick action by the court on grounds that disclosure of the sources of the Nixon campaign contributions is needed to enable voters to cast "an informed ballot."

Gardner said: "In recent months, citizens have been treated to several highly questionable instances of huge sums flowing to the President's political campaign while government favors flowed in the other direction. Perhaps the instances were all coincidental. The way to dispel the aura of mystery and suspicion is to bring all the facts out in the open."

The General Accounting Office recently reported "apparent violations" of the new Federal Election Campaign Act by Nixon's campaign organization in its handling of some \$350,000 in campaign funds.

NOST