

Summary of Opening Statement of John J. Sullivan  
Nominee for Commissioner  
Federal Election Commission

Before the Senate Committee on Rules and Administration  
June 10, 2009

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you this afternoon as President Obama's nominee to the Federal Election Commission (FEC). I have spent most of my professional life working as an election lawyer fighting to protect the rights of my fellow Americans to register to vote and to freely cast their ballots, and I have also acted as a neutral official or observer in numerous elections, both here and abroad. I know only too well the corrosive effect that cynicism can have on the willingness of citizens to take time out of a day already crowded with the obligations of work and family, to participate in election campaigns and to vote. Nothing can feed that cynicism more than the idea that the system is corrupt, that money counts more than votes, and that the voices of ordinary Americans are being ignored by candidates and elected officials in the debate over important issues. It is the elimination of corruption, and arguably as important, the elimination of the appearance of corruption, which serves as the foundation of our campaign finance laws. In this way, the FEC has the important responsibility of combating that cynicism by fairly enforcing our campaign finance laws.

I believe that the clear articulation of the requirements and protections of the law, and its open and fair enforcement, is vital to the working of our democracy, and should I be confirmed, it would be a great honor to serve as a Commissioner of the FEC.