

U. S. House of Representatives
Washington, D. C. 20515

June 23, 2015

The Honorable Barack Obama
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President,

In 2011 you released a Draft Executive Order entitled ‘Disclosure of Political Spending by Government Contractors’ which would have required any entity bidding for a federal contract to fully disclose its political spending. In the two election cycles since the draft was released, nearly half a billion dollars of undisclosed money has flooded into U.S. elections. In light of this alarming trend, we urge you to re-propose and finalize an Executive Order requiring those who receive federal contracts to fully disclose their political activities.

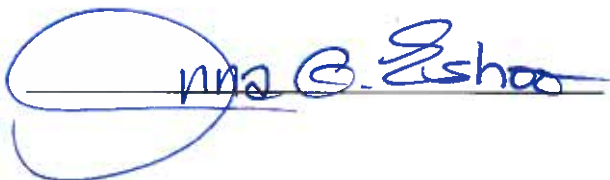
The Supreme Court’s *Citizens United* decision and related cases have allowed corporations to spend unlimited sums on independent election expenditures. To make matters worse, corporations often funnel this spending through nonprofit organizations in order to hide their contributions altogether. According to the Center for Responsive Politics, a combined \$482 million was spent in the 2012 and 2014 election cycle to influence elections by groups that do not disclose their donors. Among the top 15 recipients of federal contracting dollars, a recent analysis by Public Citizen found that less than half fully disclose their contributions to non-disclosing 501(c)(4) nonprofit organizations.

As you know, appropriations riders prohibit any Executive Order that would require contractors to disclose political contributions during the bid process. It should be noted that your Draft Executive Order was never intended to politicize the procurement process or influence the acquisition workforce. Instead, it ensured that taxpayers are fully aware of the contributions of those who are awarded federal contracts. This laudable goal could still be achieved through Executive Order without offending the appropriations riders by requiring contractors to disclose all contributions after a contract has been awarded.

As your Draft Executive Order made clear in 2011, you are authorized by the Federal Property and Administrative Services Act (FPASA) to take any policy measures necessary to promote “economy” or “efficiency” in federal procurement. Nothing in FPASA or appropriations riders bars you from issuing an Executive Order to ensure that the contracting award process is free from undue political influence by contractors by requiring post-bid disclosure, and we believe that implementing this Executive Order would indeed promote both economy and efficiency in federal contracting.

Taxpayers have a right to know where their money is spent and you have the power to ensure that the American people can obtain this information. With public funds come public responsibilities, and any company receiving federal tax dollars should be required by Executive Order to fully disclose their political spending in a timely and accessible manner. Thank you for your leadership on this issue and we look forward to working with you to add disclosure to the democratic process.

Sincerely,


Nina B. Esch


Michael E. Caporano


Donna F. Edwards


Steve J. Largent


James R. Latta

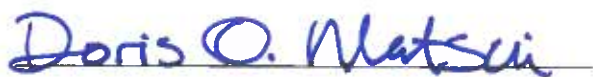

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