

REPUBLICAN NATIONAL LAWYERS ASSOCIATION



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Dear Mr. Harshbarger:

We note with interest that ACORN has selected you to “to conduct an independent and comprehensive inquiry and review of the management of its service delivery to communities [and]... to make a full report, including recommendations for restoring ACORN's full capacities to carry out its mission on behalf of low- and moderate-income families.”

These tasks do not appear to include an investigation into the full range of issues raised by the ACORN 8, Anita MonCrief, Elizabeth Kingsley, the RNLA, Representative Issa, Senator Grassley, and other congressional leaders.

Likewise, the tasks do not appear likely to produce meaningful answers regarding the consequences of the Rathke embezzlement and its cover-up, the violations of tax law and campaign laws, the misuse of government funds, and the violation of state election laws.

Finally, the scope of work does not appear to extend to responding to allegations made that ACORN, and its 361 affiliates, have operated as a money-laundering operation to allow government funds, foundation, charity and church-donated funds, and other not-for-profit funds to be used for purposes other than those for which the funding sources intended, including political campaign activities and outright extortion.

The inquiry appears to be limited to determining if ACORN is meeting its goals, and how it can begin to recover from the cavalcade of documented claims about the organization's derelictions and violations of the law. Pardon us for skepticism about whether this report will simply be a “whitewash,” or a “go and sin no more” report.

A thorough and complete investigation of ACORN is needed. There are some preliminary actions you can call for that will demonstrate your commitment to real reform within ACORN:

1. Reinstate the fired ACORN whistleblowers such as Marcel Reid who were removed as board members for asking questions a year ago about Wade Rathke's brother's embezzlement.

2. Publicly release the response of ACORN's board to the report of Elizabeth Kingsley, who reviewed ACORN's governance last year in the wake of the embezzlement.

3. Drop the lawsuit against Anita MonCrief filed by ACORN to shut her up – an outgrowth of the Podesta meeting about ACORN in the spring.

4. Drop the lawsuit filed in Pennsylvania to declare the statute banning payment on a per registration basis unconstitutional.

5. Drop the lawsuit against Hannah Giles and James O’Keefe, the young journalists who exposed the potentially criminal conduct of ACORN employees.

6. Hire a truly independent group of investigators to “follow the money” flowing from all sources – what it is spent on, and then release the findings publicly.

7. Invite the Office of Inspector General of the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to conduct a thorough investigation and oversee and ensure ACORN'S full cooperation.

Unless you broaden the scope of your inquiry, investigate the many complaints that are of public record, and accept input from these persons and groups, we believe your report will not reflect the broad critique of ACORN and its affiliates that is warranted.

Respectfully,



Charles H. Bell
President



Heather Heidelbaugh
First Vice President