



Republican National Lawyers Association

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For Immediate Release
Tuesday, September 29, 2009

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ACORN'S ACTIONS ANYTHING BUT "INDEPENDENT"

WASHINGTON, DC – Republican National Lawyers Association (RNLA) Co-Chair Clela Mitchell issued the following statement today on behalf of RNLA in response to the Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now (ACORN) CEO Bertha Lewis' announcement that ACORN's "independent Advisory Council" will appoint an independent auditor to investigate the organization's "systems and processes":

"The notion that this is an 'independent Advisory Council' is suspect from the get-go, especially when one sees who the members are. The SEIU President, Andy Stern? When SEIU is directly involved in much of ACORN's nefarious activities? And John Podesta? When Center for American Progress hosted a meeting just a few months ago on how to stem attacks from RNLA and others against ACORN?

Here are 5 things this so-called 'independent' Advisory Council must do to truly demonstrate independence:

1. Reinstatement of 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. 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.
5. 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.

Otherwise, this 'independent' review doesn't pass the smell test, much less the laugh test. The

reality is that ACORN has been accused of serious and criminal acts and it is the responsibility of Congress, as well as HUD and the Department of Justice to investigate their actions and the possible misuse of millions of taxpayer dollars. Any other actions are simply not sufficient and will not have the confidence of the American people.”

To view the RNLA’s official Complaint to the Office of Inspector General of the Department of Housing and Urban Development and the Department of Justice, [click here](#).

BACKGROUND:

Bertha Lewis: ACORN’s Independent Advisory Council “Will Assist ACORN In Naming An Independent Auditor And Investigator”:

“In response to recently released videos of frontline ACORN staff, ACORN CEO Bertha Lewis made the following announcement Wednesday morning: ‘As a result of the indefensible action of a handful of our employees, I am, in consultation with ACORN’s Executive Committee, immediately ordering a halt to any new intakes into ACORN’s service programs until completion of an independent review. I have also communicated with ACORN’s independent Advisory Council, and they will assist ACORN in naming an independent auditor and investigator to conduct a thorough review of all of the organizations relevant systems and processes. That reviewer, to be named within 48 hours, will make recommendations directly to me and to the full ACORN Board. We enter this process with a commitment that all recommendations will be implemented.’ ” (Ben Smith, “[ACORN Tries Reform](#),” Politico, 9/16/09)

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