

October 13th, 2015

President Barack Obama
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue
Washington, D.C., 20500

Dear President Obama,

As representatives of millions of working men and women across America whose voices are being drowned out in our political system, we urge you to sign an Executive Order requiring businesses that receive federal funding to fully disclose their political contributions.

The Supreme Court's ill-fated 2010 decision in *Citizens United v. FEC* and other recent cases have opened the floodgates for corporations to spend unlimited amounts of money to influence elections across the country. *Citizens United* was premised on the dangerous and faulty idea that spending is equivalent to speech. The Court further assumed that disclosure of donors would reveal to the public political spending in real time, thereby combatting the possibility of corruption.

However, the last several years have shown this hope to be unmerited. Opponents of campaign finance regulations have found new ways to conceal campaign contributions. This is part of a larger effort to slowly dismantle contribution limits, eliminate restrictions on corporate and other special interest campaign spending, reduce disclosure of sources, and weaken enforcement of remaining laws on the books. As Justice Breyer stated in his dissent in *McCutcheon v. FEC*, the Supreme Court has "eviscerate[d] our Nation's campaign finance laws, leaving a remnant incapable of dealing with the grave problems of democratic legitimacy that those laws were intended to resolve."

As a result, since 2010 spending by entities outside of campaigns has exceeded \$1.8 billion. At least \$600 million of this spending came from faceless, nameless donors. Without appropriate measures that ensure full transparency, voters are denied critical information about the sources and funders of the campaign advertising meant to influence their decisions.

An Executive Order requiring government contractors to disclose their political spending would reach at least 70 percent of the Fortune 100 companies – an important step in shedding light on the millions of dollars influencing our campaigns and elections.

Letter to the President

Page 1

10/13/2015

We urge you in the strongest terms to lead the fight for transparency and sign an Executive Order requiring businesses that benefit from taxpayer dollars to disclose their political spending.

We thank you in advance for your leadership on this critical issue that is central to a functioning and healthy democratic process.

Sincerely,

American Federation of Government Employees (AFGE)
American Federation of Labor – Congress of Industrial Unions (AFL-CIO)
National Education Association (NEA)
American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME)
Amalgamated Transit Union (ATU)
American Postal Workers Union (APWU)
Association of Flight Attendants (AFA-CWA)
Communications Workers of America (CWA)
International Brotherhood of Teamsters (IBT)
International Union, United Automobile, Aerospace & Agricultural Implement Workers of America (UAW)
Jobs With Justice (JWJ)
Service Employees International Union (SEIU)
United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW)

CC:

Vice President Joe Biden
Secretary of Labor Tom Perez
Director Shaun Donovan, Office of Management and Budget
Chief of Staff Denis McDonough
Senior Advisor Valerie Jarrett