DARRELL E. ISSA, CALIFORNIA CHAIRMAN

DAN BURTON, INDIANA
JOHN L. MICA, FLORIDA
TODD RUSSELL PLATTS, PENNSYLVANIA
MICHAEL R. TURNER, OHIO
PATRICK MCHENRY, NORTH CAROLINA
JIM JORDAN, OHIO
JASON CHAFFETZ, UTAH
CONNIE MACK, FLORIDA
TIM WALBERG, MICHIGAN
JAMES LANKFORD, OKLAHOMA
JUSTIN AMASH, MICHIGAN
ANN MARIE BUERKLE, NEW YORK
PAUL A. GOSAR, D.D.S., ARIZONA
RAUL R. LABRADOR, IDAHO
PATRICK MEEHAN, PENNSYLVANIA
SCOTT DESJARLAIS, M.D., TENNESSEE
JOE WALSH, ILLINOIS
TREY GOWDY, SOUTH CAROLINA
DENNIS A. ROSS, FLORIDA
FRANK C. GUINTA, NEW HAMPSHIRE
BLAKE FARENTHOLD, TEXAS
MIKE KELLY, PENNSYLVANIA

LAWRENCE J. BRADY STAFF DIRECTOR ONE HUNDRED TWELFTH CONGRESS

Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND GOVERNMENT REFORM
2157 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING

WASHINGTON, DC 20515-6143

MAJORITY (202) 225–5074 FACSIMILE (202) 225–3974 MINORITY (202) 225–5051 http://oversight.house.gov

June 28, 2012

ELIJAH E. CUMMINGS, MARYLAND RANKING MINORITY MEMBER

EDOLPHUS TOWNS, NEW YORK
CAROLYN B. MALONEY, NEW YORK
ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON,
DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
DENNIS J. KUCINICH, OHIO
JOHN F. TIERNEY, MASSACHUSETTS
WM. LACY CLAY, MISSOURI
STEPHEN F. LYNCH, MASSACHUSETTS
JIM COOPER, TENNESSEE
GERALD E. CONNOLLY, VIRGINIA
MIKE QUIGLEY, ILLINOIS
BRUCE L. BRALEY, IOWA
PETER WELCH, VERMONT
JOHN A. YARMUTH, KENTUCKY
CHRISTOPHER S. MURPHY, CONNECTICUT
JACKIE SPEIER, CALIFORNIA

The Honorable J. Russell George Inspector General for Tax Administration Treasury Inspector General for Tax Administration City Center Building 1401 H Street, N.W., Suite 469 Washington, D.C. 20005

Dear Mr. George:

Over the past several months, the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) sent many organizations, operating under tax exempt status, lengthy and detailed questionnaires that many are equating to a campaign of intimidation. While the IRS should provide appropriate scrutiny of organizations applying for tax exempt status, several experts suggest that these recent IRS questionnaires exceed appropriate scrutiny. For example, Marcus Owens, who ran the IRS's exempt organizations department for a decade, called the IRS initiative an "overreach."

Moreover, the IRS must apply the same criteria for all organizations applying for tax exempt status. News reports, however, indicate that the IRS effort lacks balance, with conservative organizations being the target of the IRS's heightened scrutiny. *Roll Call* contacted several liberal groups and reported that none had received the recently-sent questionnaire:

[A] spokesman for Protect-YourCare, a 501(c)(4) set up to defend the new health care law, said the group has not received any kind of questionnaire from the IRS. Another liberal 501(c)(4) granted tax exempt status in May received only a modest six-part questionnaire.³

³ Id.

¹ Janie Lorber, "IRS Oversight Reignites Tea Party Ire: Agency's Already Controversial Role Is in Dispute After Questionnaires Sent to Conservative Groups," Roll Call, March 8, 2012; Susan Jones, "IRS Accused of 'Intimidation Campaign' Against Tea Party Groups," CNSNews.com, March 7, 2012.

² Janie Lorber, "IRS Oversight Reignites Tea Party Ire: Agency's Already Controversial Role Is in Dispute After Questionnaires Sent to Conservative Groups," Roll Call, March 8, 2012

The Honorable J. Russell George June 28, 2012 Page 2

On March 8, 2012, Committee staff and Treasury Inspector General for Tax Administration (TIGTA) staff discussed potential problems with IRS's recent effort to increase scrutiny of organizations operating under 501(c)(4) status. We understand that because of our March meeting, TIGTA is conducting ongoing work to better understand this IRS initiative. We would greatly appreciate if you provided Committee staff periodic updates and a copy of TIGTA's final report on this matter.

Sincerely,

Darrell Issa Chairman Jim Jordar

Chairman

Subcommittee on Regulatory Affairs, Stimulus Oversight and Government Spending

cc: The Honorable Elijah E. Cummings, Ranking Minority Member

The Honorable Dennis Kucinich, Ranking Minority Member Subcommittee on Regulatory Affairs, Stimulus Oversight, and Government Spending