

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20510

September 16, 2009

The Honorable Kenneth M. Donohue, Sr.
Inspector General
Office of Inspector General
U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
451 7th Street S.W., Room 8256
Washington, D.C. 20410-4500

Dear Inspector General Donohue:

We write to express concern that the activities of the Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now (“ACORN”) and the organization’s receipt of federal funds. As you are probably aware, several states and localities have issued indictments related to activities by ACORN employees and volunteers during last fall’s election.¹ In addition, the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform issued a minority staff report alleging that ACORN may have engaged in serious wrongdoing.

ACORN and its affiliates have received over \$53 million of taxpayer dollars from 1994 to the present.² President Obama’s \$75 billion “Making Home Affordable” program would extend more federal resources to ACORN.³ The Department of Housing and Urban Development (“HUD”) has disbursed at least \$11,011,175 in grants, contracts, entitlements or other forms of assistance to ACORN affiliates between 2000 and 2007.⁴

We are requesting that you review HUD’s grants, contracts, entitlements and other forms of assistance to ACORN and its affiliates. Specifically, we ask that you determine whether HUD has appropriate oversight mechanisms in place for all grants, contracts, entitlements and assistance provided to ACORN Housing or any other ACORN-affiliated organization. We also ask that, for each grant, contract, entitlement,

¹ Steve Friess, *Acorn Charged in Voter Registration Fraud Case in Nevada*, NEW YORK TIMES, May 5, 2009.

² Kevin Mooney, *ACORN got \$53 million in federal funds since 94, now eligible for up to \$8 billion more*, WASH. EXAMINER, May 6, 2009, available at <http://www.washingtonexaminer.com/opinion/columns/special-editorial-reports/ACORN-got-53-million-in-federal-funds-since-94-now-eligible-for-up-to-8-billion-more-44406217.html> (last visited May 8, 2009).

³ Renae Merle, *More Homeowners Getting Aid, but Demand Keeps Rising*, WASH. POST, May 14, 2009, available at: <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/05/13/AR2009051303440.html> (last visited June 9, 2009).

⁴ OMB WATCH, available at: http://www.fedspending.org/faads/faads.php?reptype=r&detail=-1&datatype=T&sortBy=t&database=faads&recip_id=10661&fiscal_year=2006&record_num=f500 (last visited June 9, 2009).

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or other assistance an ACORN-affiliated entity received pursuant to the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) of 2009, HUD determine its oversight plan to ensure that funds were spent in a manner consistent with the legislation.

Additionally, we request that you ensure ACORN and its affiliates used HUD funds in accordance with the terms of the grant, contract, entitlement or other form of assistance. If your investigation concludes there is evidence that ACORN or its affiliates misused funds, we ask that you refer such evidence to the Commission's Suspension and Debarment Official for a determination of whether ACORN and its affiliates need to be placed on the federal government's Excluded Parties List.

For purposes of your investigation, ACORN and its affiliates include but are not limited to: ACORN, Project Vote/Voting for America, Inc., CCI, Citizens Services Inc. ("CSI"), ACORN Housing Corporation ("AHC"), ACORN Community Labor Organizing Center ("ACLOC"), American Institute for Social Justice ("AISJ"), SEIU Local 100, SEIU Local 880, ACORN Institute, ACORN Votes, and Communities Voting Together ("CVT").

Thank you for your attention to these matters. Please provide updates to Daniel Epstein of the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform staff at (202) 225-5074 or Brandon Millhorn of the Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Government Affairs staff at (202) 224-0820 on the status of your investigation.

Sincerely,



Rep. Darrell Issa
Ranking Member
U.S. House Committee on Oversight
and Government Reform



Senator Susan Collins
Ranking Member
U.S. Senate Committee on Homeland
Security and Government Affairs

cc: Chairman Edolphus Towns