

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20510

September 16, 2009

Mr. Kenneth Bach
Acting Inspector General
Office of the Inspector General
Corporation for National and Community Service
1201 New York Avenue, N.W. Suite 830
Washington, D.C. 20525

Dear Mr. Bach:

We write to express concern regarding 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, 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.

Such allegations are not new to the Corporation. In 1995, a report from the Corporation’s Inspector General identified fundamental problems with the manner ACORN and its affiliated entities operated in the context of their status as a federal grantee.² Similarly, allegations that ACORN has been inappropriately involved in partisan politics have dogged the nonprofit for years. In 1997, the House Committee on Economic and Educational Opportunities identified numerous problems with ACORN-affiliated entities involving improper participation in partisan political activities.³

As ACORN has received grant monies from the Corporation for National and Community Service (“Corporation”) or its predecessor the Corporation for National Service, we are requesting that you review the Corporation’s grant-making and AmeriCorps funding (including improper uses of AmeriCorps funds) to ACORN and its affiliates. The Corporation does not make public the names of grantees, the purpose of the grants they receive, the amount of the grants, the date the funds were awarded, or the name of the Corporation employee charged with administering and overseeing grants to

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

² Office of the Inspector General, Corporation for National and Community Service, Semiannual Rep. to the Congress, at 3-4 (1995).

³ SUBCOMM. ON OVERSIGHT AND INVESTIGATIONS, 104TH CONG., “Report on the Activities of the Committee on Economic and Educational Opportunities,” H. REP. NO. 104-875, at 69-70 (Comm. Print 1997).

Mr. Kenneth Bach
September 16, 2009
Page 2

ACORN Housing and other ACORN-affiliated organizations and has not done so for the period from January 1994 to the present. Furthermore, the Corporation has not implemented policies and procedures to ensure that grant monies awarded to ACORN or its affiliates are not improperly commingled with the funds of other ACORN entities not specified as a grantee.

Additionally, we are requesting that you look into ACORN's alleged failure to comply with the terms of a Corporation or AmeriCorps Vista grant. If your investigation concludes there is evidence that ACORN and its affiliates misused grant monies, we ask that you refer such evidence to the Commission's Suspension and Debarment Official for a determination of whether or not ACORN and its affiliates need to be placed on the federal government's Excluded Parties List.

For purposes of your review, ACORN and its affiliates includes 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 Ivy Johnson of the Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Government Affairs staff at (202) 224-0609 on the status of your investigation.

Sincerely,



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



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

cc: Chairman Edolphus Towns