

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

September 22, 2009

Mr. Daniel P. Mullhollan, Director
Congressional Research Service
The Library of Congress
101 Independence Avenue, SE
LM- 213
Washington, DC 20540-7500

Dear Mr. Mullhollan:

We are writing to request that the Congressional Research Service (CRS) research and issue a comprehensive report concerning proposed and pending Congressional and other activity relating to the Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now, ACORN Housing Corporation, and their employees, agents, and affiliates (collectively, ACORN). ACORN, formed in 1970, is the nation's largest grassroots community organization of low- and moderate-income people with over 400,000 member families organized into more than 1,200 neighborhood chapters in about 75 cities across the country. Because of the recent charges and countercharges that have been leveled at ACORN and various proposals for action, we believe it is important that CRS conduct a careful and objective analysis of a number of issues concerning ACORN.

In particular, for the benefit of the Members of Congress and the public, we request that CRS research, analyze, and report on the following questions:

1. Investigations concerning ACORN: There have been conflicting reports about pending and proposed investigations relating to ACORN. Please research and provide a description of the status and results of: a) all pending or previous federal, state, or local criminal or agency investigations concerning ACORN; b) all pending or previous congressional investigations concerning ACORN; c) all pending or previous internal ACORN investigations; and d) all pending requests for investigation of ACORN by any Member of Congress or any committee.
2. Federal funding received by ACORN: Several proposals have been made in Congress relating to federal government funding received by ACORN. Please research and provide: a) a description of all federal funding in fact received by ACORN over the last five fiscal years, broken down by agency; b) a description of all instances, if any, where ACORN violated the terms of the federal funding.
3. Effect of alleged false voter registrations by ACORN workers: It has been alleged that some workers employed by ACORN have turned in improper voter registration forms for people not eligible to vote, including under fictitious names like "Mickey Mouse." Please research and report on the extent of any such

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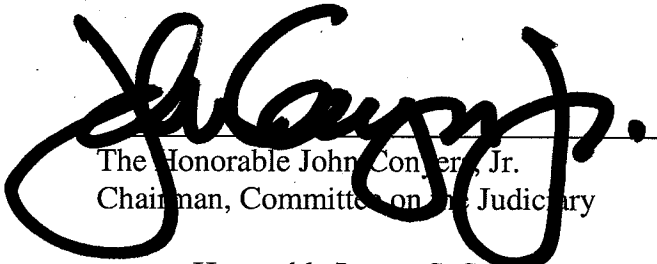
improper voter registrations that resulted in people being improperly placed on the voting rolls and actually attempting to vote improperly at the polls.

4. Recent "sting" activity concerning ACORN: Recent news reports have revealed private "sting" activity in which individuals have reportedly visited ACORN offices, misrepresented their identities and proposed activities, surreptitiously videotaped resulting conversations with ACORN workers, and widely distributed them. Conflicting allegations have been made about the propriety of these activities. Please research and report on the federal and state laws that could apply to such videotaping and distribution of conversations without the consent of all parties.
5. Effects of ACORN activity concerning housing: We understand that a significant amount of federal funding that ACORN has received has related to programs to help provide housing opportunities for the poor. With the U.S. economy facing its worst financial crisis since the Great Depression, an increasing number of people are facing the prospect of homelessness, and among those ranks are a growing number of middle class families. Please research and describe the extent to which ACORN has assisted homeless and other individuals in this area during the last five years.

We would also note that H.R. 3571, the Defund ACORN Act, passed the House as part of H.R. 3221 on September 17, 2009, and Senate Amendment 2355 to H.R. 3288, was agreed to by the Senate on September 14, 2009. As a separate matter, please provide an analysis of these measures, including their possible unconstitutionality and whether they could constitute an unlawful bill of attainder.

We request that CRS provide the results of this analysis as soon as possible. Please direct any questions to the staff at the House Judiciary Committee, 2138 Rayburn House Office Building, Washington, DC 20515 (tel: 202-225-3951; fax: 202-225-7680) or the staff at the House Financial Services Committee, 2129 Rayburn House Office Building, Washington, DC 20515 (tel: 202-225-4247; fax: 202-225-6952). Thank you for your prompt attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



The Honorable John Conyers, Jr.
Chairman, Committee on Judiciary



The Honorable Barney Frank
Chairman, Committee on Financial Services

cc: Honorable Lamar S. Smith
Honorable Spencer Bachus