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Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

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September 22, 2010

The Honorable Henry A. Waxman
Chairman
Committee on Energy and Commerce
2125 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Waxman:

I write to ask that you hold a hearing—and a markup if necessary—on H.R. 6116, the Fair Elections Now Act, before any consideration of the bill on the House floor. There is no stronger bipartisan tradition in this Committee than the tenacious defense of the Committee's jurisdiction.

Regardless of who holds the majority, chairmen and ranking members of this legislative body have usually locked arms in discharging their duty to provide oversight of referred bills within this Committee's areas of expertise. That process ensures that any action on policies of import to the American people is well vetted. And it is because of that long-standing tradition that this Committee is widely recognized as one of the most important in Congress.

Last week our Committee received a referral of H.R. 6116. Section 101 of the bill would, among other things, add a section 531 to the Federal Election Campaign Act of 1971 to fund political campaigns with spectrum auction proceeds. Over the last two decades, spectrum auctions have raised billions of dollars for the American people. They have been a source of substantial deficit reduction and have helped fund important telecommunications initiatives for the good of all Americans. H.R. 6116 would now use those auction funds to bail out failing Congressional candidates. It redirects money belonging to the taxpayers to candidates for the House of Representatives. At a time of enormous and growing deficits, the billions gained from auctioning spectrum must be used for debt reduction, not for the benefit of campaigning

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politicians who are apparently incapable of gaining support without the help of the American taxpayer.

For these reasons, I ask that we exercise our jurisdiction over the bill before it moves any further.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Joe Barton". The signature is stylized and written in a cursive-like font.

Joe Barton
Ranking Member