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JAN 28 2016
FCC Mail Room

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

57

January 20, 2016

The Honorable Tom Wheeler, Chairman
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20554

Dear Chairman Wheeler,

We write to respectfully request that you ensure the full disclosure of the sponsors of political advertisements, as required by Section 317 of the Communications Act of 1934. In today's political reality of non-stop campaigning, our system continues to fail the American people by allowing special interests and shadow groups to flood our airwaves with anonymous ads, with no disclosure whatsoever. We believe the Federal Communications Commission has the responsibility and legal authority to require disclosure of the actual donors behind these ads.

Section 317 and the associated FCC regulations require broadcasters to ensure that the "true identity" of the sponsors of political advertisements be disclosed on the air during the ad. However, for decades the FCC has failed to engage in any meaningful enforcement of Section 317. This is because the FCC currently enforces these regulations under a staff interpretation from 1979 which deems the organization that claims "editorial control" over the ad to be the true sponsor. In the new era of non-disclosing political organizations with intentionally opaque names, this interpretation is woefully out of date. While a non-disclosing organization may in fact have had editorial control over the advertisement, the true sponsors of the advertisement are those who contributed the money to pay for it.

An overwhelming majority of the American public believe that groups spending money to influence our elections should be required to publically release their donors. The Supreme Court has repeatedly upheld disclosure requirements. In fact, the *Citizens United* and *McCutcheon* decisions both discuss the importance of disclosure to protect the public from corruption, real or perceived. Strong enforcement of Section 317 will ensure a level of honesty currently missing from campaign discourse and improve transparency in our political system.

We therefore urge you to use the statutory authority granted to you in the Communications Act to require disclosure of the *true* sponsors of political advertisements so that the American public knows exactly who is trying to influence them over the public airwaves.

We thank you in advance for your cooperation and we look forward to your timely response.

Sincerely,

John Yarmuth
Member of Congress

Anna G. Eshoo
Member of Congress

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Dina Titus

K. Ve Le HI-01

Mike Doyle PA-14

Katherine Clark MA5

Niki Espo MA7

Jerry Bowman CA-26

Diana DeGette CO-1

Ann McLane Kuster NH-2

Chris Pappas NH-1

Jim Langevin RI

Anna Eshoo

Chris Bustos - IL-17

MD-4

Donna F. Edwards MD-4

John Carney DE-AL

Elizabeth A. Esty CT-5

Gerry Connolly VA-11th

Ann Kirkpatrick AZ-1

Adam B. Schiff

[illegible] CA 11

Pam Lan CA-28th

Ted Deutch FL-21

Louise Slaughter NY 25

Paul D. Tonko NY-20

Nita Lowey

Doris Matsui

Mike Thompson

[illegible]

Ben R. Luján NM-3

Susan Davis CA 53

Lloyd Doggett TX-29

Michael M. Honda CA 17

Jerry McNerney CA 3

Lois Capps

Jim McDermott

David Price

Tony Cárdenas CA-29

CA-34

Mary Kaptur

Deborah L. Dingell

Michael A. Capuano MA-17

Eliot L. Hastings

NY-14

Joe Courtney CT-02

Keith Ellison MN-5

Ami Bera CA-07

CA-02

Nick Zeppos

Gregory Meeks

Chris Collins

Peter King NY-8

Lloyd Doggett

Spencer Bachus OR-1

Alan Grayson, M.C.

Bonnie Watson Coleman NJ 12

Joaquin Castro

Karen Bass CA 37

Steve Israel

Grace Napolitano

Luis V. Gutierrez

Marcia L. Fudge

Steny Hoyer

Yvette D. Clarke

Eliot L. Engel

Joyce Beatty

Daniel Lipinski

Kurt Schrader

NC-1

WA-06

Ruben Hinojosa

TX-28

Pete Aguilar CA-31

Hank Johnson

John Conyers Jr.

David Scott

Tammy Duckworth IL-08

FLA-22

Denny Heck WA-10

Ron Kind

J. Cooper TN-5

Eric Swalwell

Juan Vargas (CA-51)

TJ33

NJ-18

Trent Kelly

MA-08

Dave Loebsack (IA-02)

Dan Kildee MI-5

NY 14

Frederica Wilson FL-24

Raúl M. Grijalva

Jerry McNerney

Tulsi Gabbard

Tim Ryan

Betty McCollum

Bill Pascrell Jr

Richard E. Neal

Linda T. Sánchez

John P. Sarbanes

Jerrold Nadler

Niki Tsongas

Beto O'Rourke

Ed Perlmutter
Colo #7

Debbie Wasserman Schultz

C.A. Dutch Ruppersberger

Norma J. Torres

Peter Welch

Ted W. Lieu

Suzanne Bonamici

Grace F. Napolitano
Ca 32

Lucille Roybal-Allard

CA36

NY-24

MA 9

Mark Takano CA-41

Steve Cohen TN 9

WI-02

Julia Brownley CA-14

CA 19

Jackie Speier

Suzanne DelBene

Jan Schakowsky

Patrick Murphy

PA-08

Kathy Castor

Danny K. Davis

N.J. 8th

CA-46

IL-9

CA-47

NY06

IL-5

CA-52

Michelle Lujan Grisham

170
Janice Hahn
signed twice

Page 1 Dina Titus
Mike Doyle
Michael E. Capuano
Diana DeGette
Robert A. Brady
Janice Hahn
John Delaney
John C. Carney, Jr.
Gerald Connolly
Mark Takai
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Cheri Bustos
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Elizabeth H. Esty
Ann Kirkpatrick

Page 2 Adam B. Schiff
Mark DeSaulnier
Sam Farr
Ted Deutch
Louise M. Slaughter
Paul D. Tonko
Nita Lowey
Doris Matsui
Mike Thompson
Joseph P. Kennedy, III
Ben Ray Luján
Susan Davis
Gene Green
Michael M. Honda
John Garamendi
Lois Capps
James P. McGovern
David Price

Page 3 Tony Cárdenas
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Richard M. Nolan
Marcy Kaptur
Debbie Dingell
Alcee Hastings
Jim Himes
André Carson
Ami Bera
Al Green
Peter DeFazio
Xavier Becerra
Donald S. Beyer, Jr.
Matt Cartwright
Joseph Crowley
Joe Courtney
Keith Ellison
Jared Huffman

Page 4 Rick Larsen
Chaka Fattah
Lloyd Doggett
Alan Grayson
Joaquin Castro
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Hakeem Jeffries
Suzanne Bonamici
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Janice Hahn
Marcia L. Fudge
Yvette D. Clarke
Joyce Beatty

Page 5	Daniel Lipinski	Kurt Schrader
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	Henry Cuellar	Pete Aguilar
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Page 6	Denny Heck	Donald Norcross
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	Sanford Bishop	Patrick Murphy
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	Barbara Lee	Ron Kind
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