

Received & Inspected

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 12<sup>th</sup> 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the new era of non-disclosing political organizations with intentionally opaque names, this interpretation is woefully out of date.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

Anna Teter

K. re se HI-01

Mike Dyer PA-14

Katherine Clark MA5

Val Ego MA7

Joni Brown CA-26

Fiona DeLette CO-1

Anna May Fane-Fuentes NH-3

Pho A Reed PA 1

H. M. ... RI

Anna Hal  
MD-4

Chai Busto - IL-17

Draka F. Ekins MD-4

John Casey DE-01

Elizabeth A Esty CT-5

Mark ... VA-11/14

Yukind pall  
AZ-1

Adam B. Schiff

Boyer

Walt Dill

Bert. G. NM.3

Jim Lan

Aaron Davis CA 53

Red Hatcher FL-21

Bob Ken TX-29

Louise Slaughter NY 25

Wickham CA 17

Paul Tonko NY-20

John M. CA 3

Pat Lowery

raig Cuppa

OMB Matsui

Jim McDowney

Mike Shroy

David Price

Tony Cardenas CA-29



James A. McQuinn

Pete A. DeFazio

Richard M. Nolan

James M. CA-34

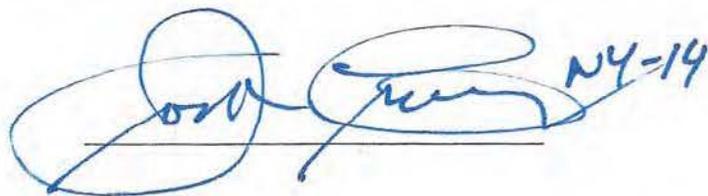
Marcy Kaptein

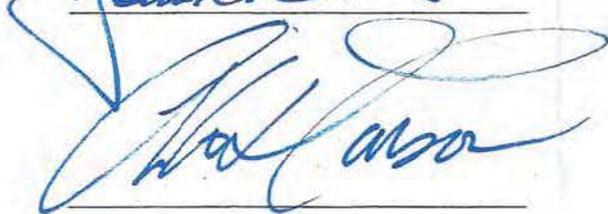


Deborah I. Dwyer

Matthew CA-17

Alice D. Hastings

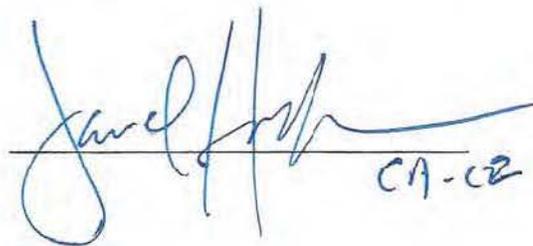
 NY-14

James L. ...  


Joe Courtney CT-02

Keith Ellison MD-5

Ami B. CA-07

 CA-02

Rich Zane

~~Gregory White~~

Cher Falls

John G. <sup>NS-8</sup>

Hayd Doyel

Spencer Branic OR-1

Allen Grayson, NC

Bonnie Watson Dement NJ-2

JORDAN LASTMO

Karen Bran CA 37

Steve Israel

June Hill

David Cutler

Marcia L. Judge

Stacy Sawyer

Yvette W. Cook

Ernie L. Engel

John Beatty

Daniel Lipinaki

Kurt Schneider

Mc Kelly

Jim [unclear]

Gilbert [unclear] NC-1

[unclear] WA-06

[unclear]

Ruben Hinojosa

Hy [unclear] TX-28<sup>th</sup>

Pete Aguilar CA-31

Frank Johnson

John Conyers Jr.

David Scott

Blairford

Tony Rodditt IL-08

[unclear] FLA-22

Gene [unclear]

[unclear]

Denny Hoke WA-10

Donald W. ...

Thomas - TN-5

Ernest ...

Juan Vargas (45)

W. W.

M. V. 4733

John B. ...

Samuel ... NS-18

Frank ...

Arthur ... MA-08

Gene ... (IT-02)

Dan Kida MI-5

Robert ... MI 14

Frank ... FL-24

Paul ...

Jimmy ...

John ...

Tim Ryan

Bobby McCall

Bill Pasarell Jr

Chuck

John S. Lee

Archie J. King

John Baker

Jerold Nadler

Weki Wongas

Beto O'Rourke

Ed J. J. J.  
Colo #

Debra Wass

C. A. Dutch Ruppberg

Norman

Bob Rangel

Ter M. Lee

David Lee

Gene F. Rapoport  
Ca 32

Lucille Royal-Allard

Paul J. Case  
CA-36

AP [Signature] NY-24

Frank L. Kelly MA 9

Wm. J. Baker CA-41

Steve Cohen TN 9

mm [Signature] WI-02

Julie Speer CA-14

John [Signature] Cal 19

John Lewis

John [Signature] DE

Frank [Signature] PA

Patrick [Signature] MD

[Signature] TX-00

Kathy [Signature] CA

[Signature]

Danny H. Davis

Jennifer N.J. 8th

John Savely CA-46  
Alan Swartz CA-47

John Schabong IL-9

~~Capt M. J.~~

John Wang NY-06

Lydia V. J.

Samuel T. Levin

Robert

Michael

Robert Lee

Ron Kind

Jim Pangerin RI-2

Katharine

Mo Ray IL-5

[Signature]

[Signature] CA-52

Paul J. J.

Sat. Hill

Allen Smith

Michelle Lujan Grisham

Judy Chen

Bob Lujan

Brenda F. Kyle

Tom J. Walsh

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  
Katherine Clark  
Julia Brownley  
Ann M. Kuster  
David N. Cicilline  
Cheri Bustos  
Donna F. Edwards  
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  
Jim McDermott  
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  
Steve Israel  
Luis V. Gutiérrez  
Steny Hoyer  
Eliot Engel

Gregory W. Meeks  
Hakeem Jeffries  
Suzanne Bonamici  
Bonnie Watson Coleman  
Karen Bass  
Janice Hahn  
Marcia L. Fudge  
Yvette D. Clarke  
Joyce Beatty

1970  
Janice Hahn  
signed twice

Page 5 Daniel Lipinski  
Robin L. Kelly  
G.K. Butterfield  
Elijah E. Cummings  
Henry Cuellar  
Hank Johnson  
David Scott  
Tammy Duckworth  
Earl Blumenauer

Kurt Schrader  
Jim Costa  
Derek Kilmer  
Rubén Hinojosa  
Pete Aguilar  
John Conyers, Jr.  
Brad Ashford  
Lois Frankel  
Sheila Jackson Lee

Page 6 Denny Heck  
Jim Cooper  
Juan Vargas  
Marc Veasey  
Donald M. Payne Jr.  
Stephen F. Lynch  
Dan Kildee  
Frederica S. Wilson  
Jerry McNerney

Donald Norcross  
Eric Swalwell  
Filemon Vela  
John B. Larson  
Frank Pallone  
Dave Loebsack  
Brenda L. Lawrence  
Raúl M. Grijalva  
Peter Welch

Page 7 Tim Ryan  
Bill Pascrell Jr.  
Richard E. Neal  
John P. Sarbanes  
Niki Tsongas  
Ed Perlmutter  
C.A. Dutch Ruppersberger  
Charles B. Rangel  
Gwen S. Moore

Betty McCollum  
Chellie Pingree  
Linda T. Sánchez  
Jerrold Nadler  
Beto O'Rourke  
Debbie Wasserman Schultz  
Norma J. Torres  
Ted W. Lieu  
Grace F. Napolitano

Page 8 Lucille Roybal-Allard  
Brian Higgins  
William R. Keating  
Steve Cohen  
Jackie Speier  
John Lewis  
Sanford Bishop  
Cedric Richmond  
Chris Van Hollen

Raul Ruiz  
Collin C. Peterson  
Mark Takano  
Mark Pocan  
Zoe Lofgren  
Suzan K. DelBene  
Patrick Murphy  
Kathy Castor  
Danny K. Davis

Page 9 Albio Sires  
Jan Schakowsky  
Carolyn B. Maloney  
Nydia Velázquez  
Robert C. "Bobby" Scott  
Barbara Lee  
Jim Langevin  
Mike Quigley  
Scott Peters

Loretta Sanchez  
Alan Lowenthal  
Grace Meng  
Sander M. Levin  
Terri Sewell  
Ron Kind  
Kathleen Rice  
Sean Patrick Maloney  
Jared Polis

Page 10 Seth Moulton  
Michelle Lujan Grisham  
Brad Sherman  
Timothy J. Walz

Adam Smith  
Judy Chu  
Brendan F. Boyle



OFFICE OF  
THE CHAIRMAN

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON

March 10, 2016

The Honorable Steny H. Hoyer  
U.S. House of Representatives  
1705 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Hoyer:

Thank you for your letter urging the Commission to ensure the full disclosure of sponsors of political advertisements. Your views are very important, and I appreciate your sharing them with me.

As your letter indicates, the current definition of “editorial control” is the sponsoring organization. The Commission has yet to conduct a proceeding to review the definition. I understand you believe we should conduct such a proceeding, and I respect your suggestion.

Since becoming Chairman of the Commission, I have focused on expanding the public’s access to information about political advertising. For example, by broadening the universe of entities required to disclose the sponsoring organization of political advertising in the Commission’s online public inspection file database. As of July 2014, television broadcasters are required to identify an advertisement’s sponsor. Further, on January 28, 2016, the Commission adopted rules to expand the online file requirements to include cable operators, satellite TV providers, broadcast radio licensees, and satellite radio licensees.

These new rules expand the reporting under the current “editorial control” definition and will shine more sunlight on political and issue advertising. I appreciate fully that you believe the Commission should go farther.

Thank you for sharing your views with us. The fact that 170 members of congress is a significant statement, the significance of which is not lost.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tom Wheeler".

Tom Wheeler



OFFICE OF  
THE CHAIRMAN

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON

March 10, 2016

The Honorable Jared Huffman  
U.S. House of Representatives  
1630 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Huffman:

Thank you for your letter urging the Commission to ensure the full disclosure of sponsors of political advertisements. Your views are very important, and I appreciate your sharing them with me.

As your letter indicates, the current definition of "editorial control" is the sponsoring organization. The Commission has yet to conduct a proceeding to review the definition. I understand you believe we should conduct such a proceeding, and I respect your suggestion.

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OFFICE OF  
THE CHAIRMAN

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON

March 10, 2016

The Honorable Steve Israel  
U.S. House of Representatives  
2457 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Israel:

Thank you for your letter urging the Commission to ensure the full disclosure of sponsors of political advertisements. Your views are very important, and I appreciate your sharing them with me.

As your letter indicates, the current definition of "editorial control" is the sponsoring organization. The Commission has yet to conduct a proceeding to review the definition. I understand you believe we should conduct such a proceeding, and I respect your suggestion.

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Tom Wheeler



OFFICE OF  
THE CHAIRMAN

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON

March 10, 2016

The Honorable Sheila Jackson Lee  
U.S. House of Representatives  
2252 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congresswoman Jackson Lee:

Thank you for your letter urging the Commission to ensure the full disclosure of sponsors of political advertisements. Your views are very important, and I appreciate your sharing them with me.

As your letter indicates, the current definition of "editorial control" is the sponsoring organization. The Commission has yet to conduct a proceeding to review the definition. I understand you believe we should conduct such a proceeding, and I respect your suggestion.

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FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON

March 10, 2016

The Honorable Hakeem Jeffries  
U.S. House of Representatives  
1607 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Jeffries:

Thank you for your letter urging the Commission to ensure the full disclosure of sponsors of political advertisements. Your views are very important, and I appreciate your sharing them with me.

As your letter indicates, the current definition of "editorial control" is the sponsoring organization. The Commission has yet to conduct a proceeding to review the definition. I understand you believe we should conduct such a proceeding, and I respect your suggestion.

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OFFICE OF  
THE CHAIRMAN

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON

March 10, 2016

The Honorable Hank Johnson  
U.S. House of Representatives  
2240 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Johnson:

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