

# Congress of the United States

## House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON HOUSE ADMINISTRATION

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October 16, 2008

The Honorable Zoe Lofgren  
Chairwoman, Elections Subcommittee  
Committee on House Administration  
1310 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington D.C. 20515

Dear Chairwoman Lofgren:

In light of recent and numerous allegations and media reports of nationwide voter registration fraud, we request that the Subcommittee hold a hearing on this important and timely issue as soon as possible. We have no doubt that we all share concerns about the detrimental consequences of voter registration fraud to the electoral process, and further hope that you share our desire that the Subcommittee act to investigate these allegations, which threaten the public's faith and confidence in the integrity of the voting process in Federal elections.

Every day, we read and hear new accounts of fraudulent voter registration practices by employees of third party voter groups which operate in a number of states. For example, on October 8, 2008, the Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now (ACORN) admitted submitting fraudulent voter registrations among the 65,000 forms it submitted in Cuyahoga County, Ohio. Earlier in the week, election officials in Lake County, Indiana, reported that nearly half of the 2,040 registrations submitted by ACORN on the county's final day of registration were deemed "suspicious" because of missing or incorrect information or other irregularities. And on October 7, authorities in Nevada executed a search warrant at ACORN's office, as part of an investigation into reports of fake or duplicate voter registrations submitted by ACORN (including some using the names of Dallas Cowboys football players). In Wisconsin, an investigation of 42 ACORN employees has led to the indictment of two individuals on charges of election fraud. In North Carolina, Durham County Elections Director Mike Ashe has turned over to the State Board of Elections over 80 ACORN registrations for "investigation and prosecution" (including one submitted by a 14-year old girl). These allegations against ACORN are all the more disconcerting given that this organization is subsidized with Federal taxpayer dollars. Unfortunately these examples are not isolated events.

Currently, ACORN is under investigation for suspect election-related activities in more than a dozen states, including the battleground states of Minnesota, Missouri, New Mexico, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin. Clearly these allegations merit congressional examination on the question of whether systematic interference with the electoral process is taking place in the run-up to the November 2008 election.

While third party voter registration groups can play a role in promoting participation in the democratic process, we cannot tolerate bad actors and nefarious practices among them that undermine electoral integrity and confidence. Voter registration fraud endangers the security of our elections and puts legitimate voters at risk of having their ballots devalued or stolen, which, in turn, erodes public confidence in the electoral process. For example, in El Paso County, Colorado, where authorities have begun investigating about a dozen cases of voter registration fraud, County Clerk and Recorder Bob Balnik stated that his office has received complaints from citizens whose completed registration cards were not submitted to the proper authorities.

In addition, fraudulent voter registration activities place additional burdens on state and local election officials, who are struggling to cope with unprecedented participation in this year's election, thereby potentially disenfranchising legitimate voters whose registrations cannot be processed in time for their names to correctly appear on the voter rolls before election day, and creating additional confusion and long lines on Election Day (as you yourself have said on several occasions, long lines on Election Day may disenfranchise voters). Accordingly, we would be negligent in our duties if we failed to look into fraudulent voter registration practices by some groups, especially when the evidence suggests it may be so widespread.

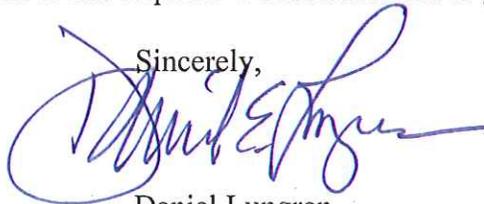
Given the gravity of this issue, we urge that the Committee exercise its authority to hold a hearing to gather additional information about the nature and scope of the problem, and whether federal legislative action is warranted. We recommend that the Committee seek testimony from election officials in jurisdictions where there have been allegations or investigations of voter registration fraud, from the Department of Justice or other law enforcement personnel, and from third party voter registration groups who are engaging in practices that have prompted investigations by state and local authorities. Moreover, the Committee should investigate to what level ACORN and other third party voter registration groups are engaged in coordinating or promoting these election fraud activities across the country. In addition, we should seek testimony about how to assure the public that steps are being taken by state election officials to identify and combat fraudulent voter registrations, so that confidence in the electoral process is not further damaged.

At this critical moment in our democracy, on the eve of one of the most important elections in our nation's history, it is essential that together, in a bipartisan manner, we investigate what appear to be systematic fraudulent voter registration activities.

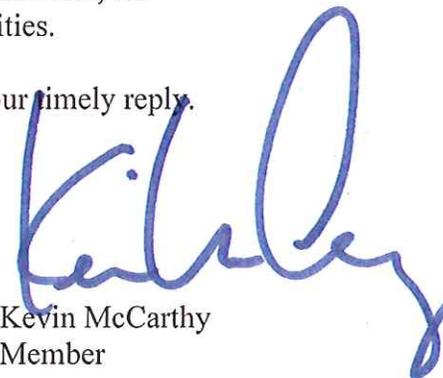
Thank you for your attention to this request. We look forward to your timely reply.



Vernon J. Ehlers  
Ranking Republican Member

Sincerely,  


Daniel Lungren  
Member



Kevin McCarthy  
Member

cc: The Honorable Robert Brady  
Chairman, Committee on House Administration