

November 18, 2010

Dear Mr. President, Speaker Pelosi, Leader Reid, Leader McConnell, and Leader Boehner:

We have heard that you all agree on at least one issue: This country must address our growing federal debt and cannot afford to tolerate waste, fraud and abuse in the federal government. With this crisis looming, you must fulfill your commitments to taxpayers and enact strong legislation protecting federal whistleblowers in this lame duck session of Congress.

Protecting whistleblowers is a reform that has strong support across ideological lines. The groups on this letter are united in this urgent request that federal employees, the foot soldiers in the war on waste, fraud and abuse, get the protections they deserve. They must be able to fight back when they are fired, harassed or demoted in retaliation for their efforts to protect the public health and safety and taxpayer dollars.

Unfortunately, under current law the Merit Systems Protection Board rules against 99% of whistleblowers who file suit to defend themselves against retaliation. Fear of committing career suicide leads federal workers to become silent observers when they witness fraud, waste or abuse. Congress can and must enact a whistleblower reform law that ensures that federal whistleblowers who are punished for speaking the truth have the tools they need to fight that retaliation, and win. Congress must significantly strengthen these protections, but time is running short. Passage of the Whistleblower Protection Enhancement Act must be a priority for the lame duck.

We know that whistleblowers save money. Each year, whistleblower lawsuits under the False Claims Act save taxpayers nearly one billion dollars. A recent PricewaterhouseCoopers study of corporations globally found that employee disclosures were responsible for detection of more fraud than auditors, internal compliance officers and law enforcement combined.

There is no reason for inaction on noncontroversial, bipartisan whistleblower protection legislation. If you are serious about responding to American voters, reducing the debt, and ensuring the integrity of government, you will do all you can to make “best-practices” whistleblower reform a reality this year.

Sincerely,

Affiliation of Christian Engineers  
American Association of Law Libraries  
American Civil Liberties Union  
American Federation of Government Employees  
AFGE Council 238  
Association of American Publishers  
Bill of Rights Defense Committee  
Californians Aware  
Center for Biological Diversity  
Center for Financial Privacy and Human Rights  
Center for Lobbying in the Public Interest  
Citizens for Safe Water Around Badger  
Coalition For Change, Inc.  
Concerned Citizens of Petersburg  
Congress Against Racism And Corruption in Law Enforcement  
Conservation Northwest  
D.C. Employment Justice Center  
Department for Professional Employees, AFL-CIO  
Disaster Accountability Project  
Energy Justice Network  
Ethics in Government Group  
FAA Whistleblowers Alliance  
Federal Law Enforcement Officers Association  
Focus On Indiana - Legal Reform Campaign  
Foundation for Global Community/Atlanta  
Fund for Constitutional Government  
Government Accountability Project  
Help Abolish Legal Tyranny (HALT)  
Homeowners Against Deficient Dwellings  
Implode-Explode Heavy Industry, Inc.  
International Association of Whistleblowers  
Liberty Coalition  
MPD Productions, Inc.  
National Coalition of Organized Women  
National Family Farm Coalition  
National Forum On Judicial Accountability (NFOJA)  
National Judicial Conduct and Disability Law Project, Inc.  
National Religious Campaign Against Torture  
National Taxpayers Union  
National Treasury Employees Union  
New Media Rights  
New Mexico Environmental Law Center  
New Orleans Women's Shelter  
Northwest Environmental Advocates

OAK - Organizations Associating for the Kind of Change America Really Needs  
OMB Watch  
OpenTheGovernment.org  
Oregon Wildlife Federation  
POPULAR, Inc- Power Over Poverty Under Laws of America Restored  
Private Citizen, Inc.  
Project On Government Oversight  
Public Citizen  
Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility (PEER)  
Simmelweis Society International  
Sustainable Energy and Economy Network  
Texas State Community Council - Abilene Division  
The Employment Law Group  
U.S. Bill of Rights Foundation  
U.S. Justice Watch  
Union of Concerned Scientists  
Voices for Corporate Responsibility