

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

March 11 in the Year of our Lord 2011

The Honorable Eric Holder
United States Attorney General
U.S. Department of Justice
950 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20530-0111

Dear Attorney General Holder:

Any threats made against a sitting judge must be taken seriously and must be thoroughly investigated. Accordingly, we write to bring to your attention a recent event at which violent threats were made against multiple Supreme Court Justices. In recent news stories, it appears that Common Cause, a non-profit, nonpartisan organization, is sponsoring programs and public protests that incite violence and encourage racial slurs against several Justices of the Supreme Court and their families. Common Cause's actions appear to be part of a well-orchestrated effort to smear certain Justices in order to achieve a political goal, all of which is particularly disconcerting given that this organization claims to be a watchdog group with no one watching it.

On Sunday, January 30th, Common Cause organized a lecture program and protest in California at which participants went on record with racist remarks that advocated for violence against sitting Supreme Court Justices and their families. On February 3rd, the Wall Street Journal reported that participants at Common Cause's program called upon attendees to "[s]tring [Justice Clarence Thomas] up. And his wife, too. Let's get rid of Ginny" and later made threats against Justice Scalia, as well. The Wall Street Journal transcribed the threats, which were all captured on videotape, and noted that another participant said that after impeaching Clarence Thomas, they should "put him back in the fields!" It certainly seems that these partisan racial slurs and calls for violence were facilitated by the purported nonpartisan, non-profit organization at an event that was sponsored and organized by this non-profit.

Based upon a review of Common Cause's recent emails and fundraising efforts, we must question whether Common Cause intended to inspire this type of hatred toward and calls for violence against Supreme Court Justices. It appears that Common Cause's fundraising aims to promote programs like the recent one in California. As the Washington Post reports, "suddenly Common Cause is manning the barricades, leading a rowdy campaign."

Although Common Cause recently filed a complaint with the Department of Justice regarding these Supreme Court Justices, it seems that this may be just a fundraising ploy designed to replenish Common Cause's coffers. The indications seem that Common Cause's funding is used to finance partisan attacks, which are then used to raise partisan funding. As the

attached fundraising e-mails demonstrate, this attack on Justices Scalia and Thomas is part of a sustained effort to promote anger against these Justices. Although Common Cause calls for these

Justices' recusal in certain cases before the Court, a review of the organization's past history shows no such outrage toward more liberal Justices of the Court, such as Ruth Bader Ginsburg, a former leader of the ACLU who sits on cases involving the ACLU. For a purported nonpartisan non-profit organization, it is focusing all of its efforts on members of one ideology.

It is perhaps ironic that Common Cause has launched this smear campaign at a time when President Obama has called upon all Americans to tone down personal attacks that could lead to violent acts like the Arizona shooting of our colleague Gabrielle Giffords and her constituents. As the President said in his speech in Tucson: "At a time when our discourse has become so sharply polarized -- at a time when we are far too eager to lay the blame for all that ails the world at the feet of those who happen to think differently than we do -- it's important for us to pause for a moment and make sure that we're talking with each other in a way that heals, not in a way that wounds."

We request that the Justice Department investigate whether these activities sponsored by Common Cause pose a threat to government officials and their families. In addition, the Department should determine whether these activities are consistent with Common Cause's tax exemption under the Internal Revenue Code. Thank you for investigating this matter.

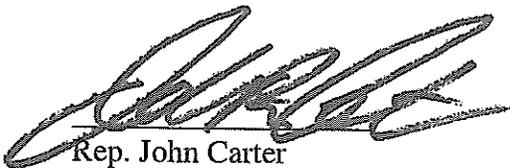
Sincerely,



Rep. Louie Gohmert



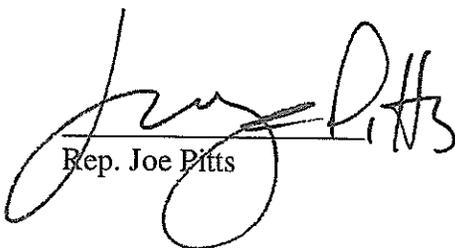
Rep. Lamar Smith



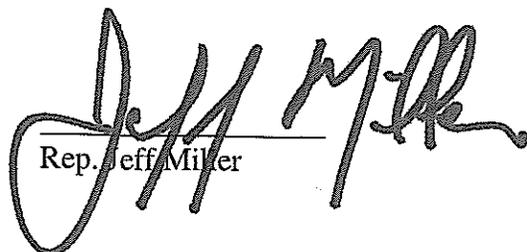
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