



October 7, 2010

Candidate
Address
City, State

Dear Candidate,

Recent news coverage surfaced significant and serious questions about the U.S. Chamber of Commerce use of foreign corporate funding for electoral activities. We are also troubled that evidence suggests that the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, in raising money overseas, has promised to represent the business interests of foreign corporations in Washington, D.C.

Since the Chamber has spent money in your election, we urge you to join us in demanding that the Chamber answer these important questions about their foreign funding and their representation of those overseas corporations. If they cannot or will not provide evidence to back up their claims, we urge you to join us in demanding that the Chamber remove all advertising or other electoral activities from your race.

A report released by Think Progress, a website of the Center for American Progress Action Fund, earlier this week provided evidence that the Chamber has received foreign corporate funding – a finding that the Chamber acknowledges. The Chamber claims that they have not spent these resources on their \$75 million national electoral campaign, but has offered no tangible evidence or documentation to back up this claim.

This recent revelation goes beyond simple disclosure of campaign spending. The Chamber's acceptance of foreign corporate money into the same account from which it is funding attack ads crosses the line of democratic decency. But the Chamber's response to this question of mingling foreign and domestic dues has been inadequate. A spokeswoman told a *Washington Post* reporter, "We don't feel obligated to answer that question."

This is a dangerous precedent to let stand. Unfortunately, the Chamber's response so far has been to attempt to dismiss the allegations as if no principles were involved, and to loudly criticize those posing questions as political partisans. The Chamber diminishes the criticism by claiming that very little money has been received from overseas affiliates

and dues-paying corporations. But it is not partisan politics that is at stake; rather, serious democratic principles and laws are potentially being violated. The law does not distinguish between small and large amounts of foreign corporate money influencing American elections. All foreign corporate money is prohibited.

Moreover, by accepting the dues of foreign corporations, the Chamber is operating as the political outpost for those interests in Washington by pledging to mold public opinion to benefit their members. The method the Chamber is employing today to shape public opinion is electoral advertising in your race and others around the country.

It is troubling that the Chamber does not recognize these principles. More broadly speaking, regardless of party, all Americans want elections free of the influence of special interest money. I would hope, at a minimum, we could agree that no *foreign* corporate money ought to be involved, even in the slightest, in funding attack ads.

Even as you yourself as a candidate have personally benefited from the Chamber's spending, everyday voters' faith in American democracy is damaged. That's why we urge you to stand with us to ask that the Chamber provide evidence that it has not used foreign corporate money, or that it will cease its electoral activities until such time that proof is offered.

We are not asking you to criticize the Chamber. We are simply asking you to join with us to "trust, but verify." It is the very least that you, as a candidate for high office seeking the public's trust, can do.

I look forward to your immediate response.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David Donnelly". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

David Donnelly
Director, Campaign Money Watch