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The Hon. Jeff Sessions
United States Attorney General
U.S. Department of Justice
950 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20530-0001

May 3, 2017

Julie E. Adams
Secretary of the Senate
232 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510-7116

Karen L. Haas
Clerk of the House of Representatives
U.S. Capitol, Room H154
Washington, DC 20515-6601

**RE: Absence of registration by Corey Lewandowski as a foreign agent under FARA,
and as a lobbyist under LDA**

Public Citizens submits a request for an investigation into whether Corey R. Lewandowski is in noncompliance with the Foreign Agents Registration Act of 1938 (FARA) and/or the Lobbying Disclosure Act of 1995 (LDA).

Corey Lewandowski, former campaign manager of Donald Trump's 2016 presidential campaign, has established and controls with his partners two new political consulting firms following the election: Washington East West Political Consulting, and Avenue Strategies.

According to *Politico*, Washington East West Political Consulting was co-founded by Lewandowski with fellow Trump campaign veteran Barry Bennett, along with an Azerbaijani oil executive and a consultant to Russian interests. The firm envisions itself as an international consulting firm seeking to represent Eastern European governments and other foreign interests in the United States. Washington East West Political Consulting boasts that it has the ability to leverage its "trusted relations with the U.S. Administration," as well as European governmental officials and leading Western journalists.¹ A business document provided by the firm to an Eastern European politician promises to arrange "meetings with well-established figures," including President Trump, Vice President Pence and "key members of the U.S. Administration."²

Although there is no publicly available evidence that Washington East West Political Consultants has yet signed paying clients, and the firm is not registered under the Foreign Agents Registration Act of 1938 (FARA), the firm is busily soliciting such business. Bennett acknowledged to *Politico* that it is one of

¹ Kenneth Vogel and Josh Dawsey, "Lewandowski's firm appears to offer Trump meetings," *Politico* (April 28, 2017), available at: <http://www.politico.com/story/2017/04/28/corey-lewandowski-trump-meetings-237725>

² *Id.*

several business enterprises that are seeking international clients for the second firm founded by Lewandowski and Bennett, Avenue Strategies.

Avenue Strategies was also created shortly after the 2016 election and operates as a DC-based consulting and lobbying firm. It is registered under the Lobbying Disclosure Act of 1995 (LDA) and represents several paying clients before the federal government, including Puerto Rico.³

Puerto Rico's Governor Ricardo Rossello decided to hire Avenue Strategies on the premise that Lewandowski would deliver one-on-one meetings between the governor and Trump administration officials, and possibly even Trump himself. Lewandowski's firm did set up meetings with numerous administration officials, including the White House deputy chief of staff for legislative and intergovernmental affairs. However, Rossello expressed disappointment that a meeting with the President has not yet been arranged. "I've had a chance to sit down with [Lewandowski]," said Gov. Rossello. "He's been quite knowledgeable of what we want to do in Puerto Rico so forth ... [but] the jury's still out."⁴

While both consulting firms were founded by Lewandowski and Bennett, only Bennett has registered as an active lobbyist under LDA. Lewandowski is not registered either as a foreign agent under FARA or as a lobbyist under LDA, and reportedly does not plan to register under the LDA. Yet he appears to be undertaking substantial activities that aim to influence American public policy for both international and domestic interests.

In addition to actively soliciting international governmental and business interests to represent in the United States for several months now, Lewandowski brokered a key policy meeting between President-elect Trump and Mexican telecom billionaire Carlos Slim. Lewandowski traveled to Mexico City shortly after the election to meet with Slim, and he arranged a subsequent sit-down meeting between the President-elect and Slim. The sit-down meeting between the two occurred over dinner at Trump's Mar-a-Lago resort in Palm Beach, Florida, 10 days after Lewandowski's trip to Mexico City.⁵ If Lewandowski set up this meeting in a representational capacity on behalf of Slim, that action would cross the threshold for FARA registration and disclosure, as it would constitute "political activity" on behalf of a foreign principal carried out within the United States.

The meeting appears to have paid off for Slim. During the 2016 presidential campaign, Trump ridiculed Slim as part of the global media conspiracy working to elect Hillary Clinton. But after their Mar-a-Lago meeting, Trump tweeted: "Yes, it's true – Carlos Slim, the great businessman from Mexico, called me about getting together for a meeting. We met, HE IS A GREAT GUY!"⁶

Lewandowski insists that neither Carlos Slim nor his company, Telmex, provided compensation to Lewandowski or any of his consulting firms for arranging the meeting or for other services. "Carlos Slim is not a client. I have never received a dime from him," said Lewandowski.⁷

³ LDA disclosure report, <https://soprweb.senate.gov/index.cfm?event=getFilingDetails&filingID=3197B231-084C-409E-B05F-E27DADF1AB2A&filingTypeID=1>

⁴ Anna Giaritelli, "Puerto Rico's middleman to the White House, Corey Lewandowski, may not be delivering results," Washington Examiner (April 29, 2017), available at: <http://www.washingtonexaminer.com/puerto-ricos-middleman-to-the-white-house-corey-lewandowski-may-not-be-delivering-results/article/2621675>

⁵ Kenneth Vogel, Josh Dawsey and Isaac Arnsdorf, "Lewandowski brokered Trump-Slim meeting," Politico (Dec. 21, 2016), available at: <http://www.politico.com/story/2016/12/lewandowski-trump-carlos-slim-232905>

⁶ Id.

⁷ Id.

Payment is not a relevant factor. Mandatory registration under FARA does not require compensation. An “agent of a foreign principal” or “foreign agent” under FARA is anyone who, on behalf of a “foreign principal,” engages in political activities, acts in a public relations capacity, solicits or dispenses anything of value within the United States, or provides representation before any agency or official of the U.S. government. A foreign principal includes foreign governments, political parties and foreign business interests. One need not be compensated for these services to meet the threshold for FARA registration and reporting.⁸ Yet, Lewandowski neither registered nor disclosed his activities on behalf of Slim and Telmex under FARA or, alternatively, under LDA.

Lewandowski created and controls both the international consulting firm and the domestic lobbying firm, which advertise and seek business based on intimate connectivity and immediate access to President Trump and high-ranking officials in the Trump administration. Indeed, Lewandowski makes full use of that access. He has the ability to get the President on the phone without going through gatekeepers and is a frequent visitor to the West Wing. Lewandowski’s access to the President is a sore subject for some senior officials, who have asked: “Why is Corey in the West Wing?”⁹

The greater question is why is Corey not registered as a foreign agent under FARA or as a lobbyist under LDA?

There is not enough information in the public domain to know whether Lewandowski crossed the LDA threshold that would mandate registration as a lobbyist, and his colleagues deny that he is engaged in lobbying.

Yet the indications are strong that Corey Lewandowski may well have crossed the threshold for registration under either one of the two lobby disclosure laws. Lewandowski used to be a registered lobbyist under LDA up until 2011. He developed very close ties to President Trump and leading officials in the Trump administration. His consulting firms are using that access as a selling point for soliciting and generating international and domestic business. And Lewandowski makes full use of that access to this day, even to the point of arranging an official meeting between President-elect Trump and a foreign businessman at Mar-a-Lago.

Given the extensive access to the Trump administration afforded to Lewandowski, and the fact that his firms are using this access to solicit clients, strongly suggests that many of Lewandowski’s visits with White House officials are for the business purposes Lewandowski’s firms claim they are – in other words, lobbying.

Public Citizen requests that the Department of Justice, the Secretary of the Senate and the Clerk of the House investigate the influence-peddling activities of Corey Lewandowski and determine whether he is in noncompliance with FARA and/or LDA.

Sincerely,

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⁸ Holland & Knight, “What is the Foreign Agents Registration Act?” (June 1, 2016), available at: <https://www.hklaw.com/PoliticalLawBlog/What-is-the-Foreign-Agents-Registration-Act-FARA-06-01-2016/>

⁹ Kenneth Vogel and Josh Dawsey, “Lewandowski’s firm appears to offer Trump meetings,” Politico (April 28, 2017), available at: <http://www.politico.com/story/2017/04/28/corey-lewandowski-trump-meetings-237725>

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