

April 11, 2012

President Barack Obama  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Ave., NW  
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

Yesterday marked two months since our organizations successfully reached 25,000 signatures on our petition, calling on you to nominate new commissioners to the Federal Election Commission (FEC) who will faithfully enforce existing campaign finance laws and close existing loopholes. Our broad coalition still awaits your response as promised by the process established by the White House that clearly states there will be a response when 25,000 or more signatures are submitted on a petition.

The FEC is widely recognized as a dysfunctional agency that consistently refuses to enforce federal campaign finance laws enacted to prevent the corruption of federal officeholders and government decisions. Five of the six current commissioners are serving despite expired terms, and three openly flaunt their routine refusal to enforce existing campaign finance laws, even where the FEC's professional staff has called for an investigation. As the *New York Times* editorialized this past weekend, this is an unacceptable situation.<sup>1</sup>

During the 2008 presidential campaign you recognized the problems at the FEC and unequivocally called for new commissioners. In response to questions raised in September 2007, by the Midwest Democracy Alliance, you stated:

I believe that the FEC needs to be strengthened and that individuals named to the Commission should have a demonstrated record of fair administration of the law and an ability to overcome partisan biases. My initial goal as president will be to determine whether we can make the FEC more effective through appointments. What the FEC needs most is strong, impartial leadership that will promote integrity in our election system.

You also promised to appoint commissioners committed to enforcing our nation's election laws. With the exception of one unsuccessful attempt in 2009, however, you have failed to nominate anyone to replace any of the five lame duck commissioners.

The national scandal at the FEC is your responsibility to address; the agency will not change until you exercise your executive branch authority to nominate new commissioners. It is essential that these nominations be based on merit, skills, qualifications, experience, background and professional reputation. It is also imperative for nominee to have a basic commitment to enforcing the campaign finance laws as written by Congress and interpreted by the courts. Individuals ideologically opposed to campaign finance regulation have no place on the commission.

---

<sup>1</sup> Editorial, *That Campaign Promise About Campaigning*, April 7, 2012.

President Barack Obama

April 11, 2012

Page Two

Nominating commissioners based on merit and qualifications may well create conflict with congressional leaders accustomed to choosing commissioners themselves. Given the completely dysfunctional state of the FEC and the enormous damage that has been done to our campaign finance laws, however, we believe this is a fight worth having.

Once appropriate nominations are made, the responsibility will pass to the Senate to address the FEC scandal. Senators will face a clear choice: vote to confirm new FEC commissioners selected on the basis of merit and qualifications, or vote to perpetuate a system undermining enforcement of the nation's campaign finance law at a time when there is growing public anger over the money pouring into federal elections.

The effort to remake the FEC and restore the integrity of our campaign finance laws cannot begin until you nominate new commissioners. Our coalition and an overwhelming majority of Americans strongly support your taking this important step on the road to reforming the FEC.

Thank you for your consideration and we continue to await your response.

Sincerely,

Americans for Campaign Reform  
Campaign Legal Center  
Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington  
Common Cause  
CREDO Action Network  
Democracy 21  
League of Women Voters of the U.S.  
MapLight  
Public Campaign  
Public Citizen  
United Republic  
U.S. PIRG