Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

May 17, 2013

Attorney General Eric Holder
Office of the Attorney General
The United States Department of Justice
950 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20530

Dear Attorney General Eric Holder:

It is with great concern that we learned the conclusions reached by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) Inspector General's May 14, 2013 report, "*Inappropriate Criteria Were Used to Identify Tax-Exempt Applications for Review*".

Like millions of Americans across the country, we are outraged to learn that IRS employees, while carrying out official duties, were discriminating against those organizations that they perceived to be conservative leaning. In some cases, these conservative groups, many of which self-identified as "Tea Party" organizations, were asked to divulge the names of their donors, postings from their organizational Facebook and Web pages, the political aspirations of their members, reading lists of the organizations and minutes from all board meetings.

As if these abuses were not egregious enough, these groups were forced to endure massive delays in their application process, sometimes not receiving their tax designation for nearly two years. Such political targeting is simply unacceptable and likely even criminal.

Freedom of speech and the freedom to assemble are two of the most basic rights that comprise the foundation of our democracy. This revelation that the IRS was targeting individuals and groups based on a political bias shakes that very foundation and is a flagrant violation of the constitutional protections promised to our citizens.

Your recent announcement that the investigation of this despicable conduct would be handled by your office and the FBI is unacceptable and absolutely insufficient. The trust of the American people has been severely damaged. As a political appointee yourself, the conclusions of any investigation spearheaded by your office would immediately raise conflict of interest concerns. The first step in restoring this trust is to appoint an unbiased Special Counsel to fully investigate this practice of targeting individuals and groups based on their political persuasion and prosecuting the perpetrators to the fullest extent of the law. The person appointed to be special counsel must have a reputation for impartiality with impeccable credentials for following the facts wherever they lead without concern for politics.

We strongly urge you to do your duty in helping to restore the trust and confidence of the American people by appointing expeditiously an unbiased Special Counsel to investigate this extremely troubling practice. We eagerly look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

Matt Salmon (AZ-5)

Duncan Hunter (CA-50)

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