Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

May 17, 2013

The Honorable Jack Lew
Secretary of the Treasury
1500 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20220

Dear Secretary Lew:

We are deeply concerned with the recent admission by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) that it singled out conservative political groups for additional scrutiny during the 2012 election cycle. The Associated Press reported that Lois Lerner, the IRS head for tax-exempt groups, admitted that the IRS treated these groups unfairly, including targeting the 501(c)(4) applications of organizations with "tea party" or "patriot" in their names and even asking for donor lists, which is a violation of IRS policy.

Ms. Lerner's revelations are very disturbing. In March 2012, then-IRS Commissioner Douglas Shulman testified before the House Ways and Means Committee and stated that conservative political groups were not being targeted. It is hard to reconcile Commissioner Shulman's testimony with Ms. Lerner's subsequent admission of unfair and discriminatory action leveled against tea party groups. It appears that the IRS is following the familiar script of blaming "low level" officials for mistakes that may violate IRS policy at best and federal election law at worst. It is difficult for us to accept that higher-level IRS and Treasury officials were unaware of this activity.

As Members of Congress, we heard numerous complaints from conservative organizations that the IRS was singling them out. Instead of the truth, we were offered now-discredited assurances during the 2012 election cycle that no "flagging" of conservative and tea party groups was occurring.

We respectfully ask that you review and provide answers to the following questions:

- Media reports state that more than 75 organizations were targeted by this investigation. Can we have your assurance that these organizations have all been properly notified that they were subjected to this process? If not, can you commit that all of these organizations will be notified within the next 30 days?

- Reports also state that the IRS solicited donor lists from these groups, a major violation of IRS policy. Please provide a detailed account of every instance in which this information was solicited, as well as the current status and physical/electronic whereabouts of any information that was transmitted to the IRS by these groups in response. Also, please provide any memorandum or communications in which the solicitation of any donor lists was authorized by IRS supervisors.

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- It has also been reported that the key words used to flag and investigate individual organizations in this process included "tea party" and "patriot." Were similar procedures ever employed to identify organizations associated with the "Occupy Wall Street" movement?

- Last year, IRS Commissioner Douglas Shulman stated emphatically that there was "absolutely no targeting" of tea party affiliated groups during IRS investigations into the non-profit status of certain entities. What, if any, investigation did the Commissioner's office conduct prior to Commissioner Shulman making this statement?

We look forward to your prompt reply on this important matter.

Sincerely,

Rep. Jim Bridenstine (OK-1)

Rep. Walter Jones (NC-3)

Rep. Marsha Blackburn (TN-7)

Rep. Lynn Westmoreland (GA-3)

Rep. Jeff Duncan (SC-3)

Rep. Michele Bachmann (MN-6)

Rep. Stephen Fincher (TN-8)

Rep. Andy Barr (KY-6)

Rep. Michael Grimm (NY-11)

Rep. Steve Stivers (OH-15)

Rep. Matt Salmon (AZ-5)

Rep. Jon Runyan (NJ-3)

Rep. Jack Kingston (GA-1)

Rep. Paul Gosar (AZ-4)

Rep. Richard Nugent (FL-11)

Rep. Doug Lamborn (CO-5)

Rep. Gregg Harper (MS-3)

Rep. Tom Cotton (AR-4)

Rep. Dennis Ross (FL-15)

Rep. Steve Scalise (LA-1)

Rep. Phil Gingrey (GA-11)

Rep. Joe Wilson (SC-2)

Rep. Tim Huelskamp (KS-1)

Rep. Trey Radel (FL-19)

Rep. Phil Roe (TN-1)

Rep. David McKinley (WV-1)

Rep. Mark Meadows (NC-11)

Rep. Frank Wolf (VA-10)

Rep. Todd Rokita (IN-4)

Rep. Billy Long (MO-7)

Rep. Richard Hudson (NC-8)

Rep. John Culberson (TX-7)

Rep. Mick Mulvaney (SC-5)

Rep. Susan Brooks (IN-5)

Rep. Kerry Bentivolio (MI-11)

Rep. Ralph Hall (TX-4)

Rep. Tom Cole (OK-4)

Rep. Chuck Fleischmann (TN-3)

Rep. David Joyce (OH-14)

Rep. Adam Kinzinger (IL-16)

Rep. Randy Weber (TX-14)

Rep. Chris Collins (NY-27)

Rep. Steve Stockman (TX-36)

Rep. Steve King (IA-4)

Rep. Markwayne Mullin (OK-2)

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Rep. Cory Gardner (CO-4)

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Rep. Justin Amash (MI-3)

Rep. Pete Olson (TX-22)

Rep. Ron DeSantis (FL-6)

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Rep. Sam Graves (MO-6)

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Rep. Louie Gohmert (TX-1)

Rep. Tim Walberg (MI-7)

Rep. Kevin Cramer (ND)

Rep. Joe Barton (TX-6)

Rep. Bill Posey (FL-8)

Rep. James Sensenbrenner (WI-5)

Rep. Scott Perry (PA-4)

Rep. Chris Gibson (NY-19)

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Rep. Bob Latta (OH-5)