

December 21, 2010

**An Open Letter to Members of the House of Representatives:
Ensure that the Bipartisan Reforms Long Supported by the House
Become Law This Year. Passing S. 372 Will Protect Both Whistleblowers
and Taxpayers**

For the past two Congresses, the House of Representatives has passed, with strong bipartisan support, reform legislation that protects federal employees who blow the whistle on waste, fraud and abuse. This year, bipartisan support for these reforms advanced in the Senate, and late last week the Senate unanimously approved S. 372, the Whistleblower Protection Enhancement Act. This legislation, which reflects a true compromise between Senate and House versions of whistleblower reform, must become law this year.

In no time in our history is whistleblower reform more crucial: This country must address our growing federal debt and cannot afford to tolerate waste, fraud and abuse in the federal government. With this crisis looming, we urge you to fulfill your commitments to taxpayers and pass S. 372.

Protecting whistleblowers is a reform that has strong support across ideological lines. The groups on this letter are united in this urgent request that federal employees, the foot soldiers in the war on waste, fraud and abuse, get the protections they deserve. They must be able to fight back when they are fired, harassed or demoted in retaliation for their efforts to protect the public health and safety and taxpayer dollars.

Unfortunately, under current law the Merit Systems Protection Board rules against 99% of whistleblowers who file suit to defend themselves against retaliation. Fear of committing career suicide leads federal workers to become silent observers when they witness fraud, waste or abuse. Congress can and must enact a whistleblower reform law that ensures that federal whistleblowers who are punished for speaking the truth have the tools they need to fight subsequent retaliation, and win. Congress must significantly strengthen these protections, but time is running short. Passage of the pending Whistleblower Protection Enhancement Act (S. 372) must be a priority for the House in the lame duck.

We know that whistleblowers save money. Each year, whistleblower lawsuits under the False Claims Act save taxpayers nearly one billion dollars. A recent PricewaterhouseCoopers study of corporations globally found that employee disclosures were responsible for detection of more fraud than auditors, internal compliance officers, and law enforcement combined.

While S. 372 does not include every reform that our community has sought, it will dramatically improve the status quo—for whistleblowers and taxpayers. Please do not delay in making this whistleblower protection legislation with strong bipartisan support law. If you are serious about responding to American voters, reducing the debt, and ensuring the integrity of government, you will do all you can to make whistleblower reform a reality this year.

Sincerely,

ACORN 8

Affiliation of Christian Engineers

AFGE Council 238 (U.S. EPA AFGE Locals)

Alliance for Sustainable Communities-Lehigh Valley

American Association of Law Libraries

American Civil Liberties Union

American Federation of Government Employees (AFGE)

American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME)

Association of American Publishers

Beyond Nuclear

Bill of Rights Defense Committee

Black Autonomy Network Community Organization (BANCO)

C-10 Research and Education Foundation

Center for Biological Diversity

Center for Lobbying in the Public Interest

CERES, the Center for Environmental Research and Education thru Synergy

Citizen Power

Citizens for Safe Water Around Badger (CSWAB)

Coalition For Change, Inc. (C4C)

Colorado Clean Water Advocates

Concerned Citizens of Petersburg

Conservation Northwest

Consumers Union

CROP PLUS (Concerned Residents of Portland, NY + People Like Us)

Custom Employees Against Discrimination Association (CEADA)

DC Employment Justice Center

Delaware Action Group

Department for Professional Employees, AFL-CIO

Disaster Accountability Project

Energy Justice Network

Environmental Working Group

FAA Whistleblowers Alliance

Federal Law Enforcement Officers Association

Federation of American Scientists

Focus on Indiana

Food Not Bombs

Fort Worth Citizens Against Neighborhood Drilling Operations (FWCANDO)
Foundation for Global Community
Fund for Constitutional Government
Global Alliance for Incinerator Alternatives
Global Warming Education Network
Government Accountability Project (GAP)
Green Party of Pennsylvania
Greenpeace
Greenwich Citizens Committee, Inc.
Hanford Challenge
Health Integrity Project
Help Abolish Legal Tyranny (HALT)
Help For Sewage Victims
Homeowners Against Deficient Dwellings
Implode-Explode Heavy Industry, Inc.
International Association of Whistleblowers
International Medical Council on Vaccinations
Media Alliance
MidlandCares
MPD PRODUCTIONS, INC.
National Coalition of Organized Women
National Family Farm Coalition
National Forum On Judicial Accountability
National Judicial Conduct and Disability Law Project, Inc.
National Religious Campaign Against Torture
National Research Center for Women & Families
National Taxpayers Union
National Treasury Employees Union (NTEU)
National Women's Health Network
New Media Rights
New Mexico Environmental Law Center
New Orleans Women's Shelter
Nuclear Watch South
OAK - Organizations Associating for the Kind of Change America Really Needs
OMB Watch
OpenTheGovernment.org
Oregon Wildlife Federation
PCP PRIDE (People Rising in Defense of Ecology)
POPULAR, Inc. - Power Over Poverty Under Laws of America Restored
Private Citizen, Inc.
Project On Government Oversight (POGO)
Public Citizen
Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility (PEER)
Reproductive Health Technologies Project
Responsible Charge
San Luis Obispo Mothers for Peace

Santa Monicans For Safe Drinking Water Coalition
Scientists for Indigenous People
Simmelweis Society International
Sustainable Energy and Economy Network
Tax Justice Network USA
Terra Foundation
Texas Campaign for the Environment
Texas Injured Workers
the Ecology Party of Florida
The Employment Law Group
The Vermont Yankee Decommissioning Alliance
Trivalley Cares
Union of Concerned Scientists
U.S. Bill of Rights Foundation
Voices for Corporate Responsibility
Workplace Fairness