



Republican National Lawyers Association

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For Immediate Release
July 2, 2009

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RNLA Responds to House Committee on the Judiciary

Heather Heidelbaugh Provides Additional Information Concerning ACORN

WASHINGTON, DC – Republican National Lawyers Association (RNLA) Vice President and Executive Committee Member Heather Heidelbaugh today responded to a request for additional information concerning the Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now (ACORN) issued by Rep. Sheila Jackson Lee (TX-18), Member of the U.S. House Committee on the Judiciary and Subcommittee on the Constitution, Civil Rights, and Civil Liberties. Congresswoman Jackson Lee's request for additional information was forwarded by Rep. Jerrold Nadler (NY-08), Chairman of the House Committee on the Judiciary Subcommittee on the Constitution, Civil Rights, and Civil Liberties.

The request for additional information to Ms. Heidelbaugh – a Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania attorney – comes on the heels of testimony she delivered to the U.S. House Committee on the Judiciary Subcommittee on the Constitution, Civil Rights, and Civil Liberties during a “Lessons Learned from the 2008 Election” hearing on March 19, 2009.

In that hearing, Heidelbaugh's testimony generated responses from both Democrats and Republicans about ACORN's illegal and fraudulent activities. Chairman of the U.S. House Committee on the Judiciary John Conyers (D-M) stated accusations against ACORN were, “a pretty serious matter.”

Conyers also emphasized the committee would be well served to look into ACORN saying, “I think that it would be something that would be worth our time.... We've never had one person representing ACORN before the committee.... I think in all fairness we ought to really examine it.”

The request for additional information by the House committee focused on two main areas: whether ACORN staff was simply untrained and there was no systemic attempt to engage in voter fraud, and separately, whether ACORN workers received compensation based upon the registrations they completed.

Heidelbaugh wrote in response to the first question, “Based on the evidence I have seen, my opinion is that the ACORN staff were not adequately trained to conduct proper voter registration drives. Further, I question whether the system of compensation in place for the staff obtaining voter registration cards both for the worker and for ACORN encouraged voter registration fraud. It is also my opinion based on the evidence that I have seen that it was not a simple matter of poor training. Lastly, it is my opinion based on the evidence I have seen from the King County Settlement Agreement, the testimony

in the Pennsylvania case, and the news reports from other criminal investigations that ACORN as an organization has either willfully failed to properly train its workers or grossly negligently failed to train its workers. Further information is needed in order to determine which is closer to the actual scenario. In addition, since ACORN operated voter registration drives in so many states, each state or local operation may differ in its training efforts.”

In response to the second question, Heidelbaugh responded, “There have been widespread allegations from former ACORN employees that ACORN does pay its employees on a per registration basis and has imposed a quota system upon its employees. These allegations have been raised in states including Florida, Michigan, Missouri, Nevada, Ohio, Pennsylvania and Washington. These allegations have been the basis of charges brought against ACORN representatives in the state of Nevada.”

Ms. Heidelbaugh provided numerous facts and statistics concerning ACORN in her responses to the committee, including information dating back numerous years and election cycles.

Heidelbaugh stated she was grateful to have the opportunity to provide additional information to the committee about ACORN, and encouraged by the inquiry and prospect of additional investigation into the group.

“I am grateful for the opportunity to provide information to the U.S. House Committee on the Judiciary concerning ACORN and its illegal and fraudulent activities,” said Heidelbaugh. “I am committed to working with Members of Congress – irrespective of political affiliation – to conduct a thorough and complete investigation into ACORN and its affiliates.”

For a copy of the full letter go to www.rnla.org/ltrjn.pdf.

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