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October 5, 2009

Attorney General Eric Holder
Department of Justice
1201 Pennsylvania Ave., NW
Washington, DC 20004

Re: Investigate The Chamber Of Commerce

I am writing on behalf of the StopTheChamber campaign, a network of organizations representing over a million members, to ask that you open a criminal investigation into the illegal and unethical activities of the United States Chamber of Commerce ("COC"). Specifically, according to new reports, court filings and NGO investigations, COC, under the leadership of Tom Donahue, has gone from a well respected trade organization to an extremist political organization dedicated to corrupting American democracy by elevating the profits of big corporations over the well being of the citizens they serve. The most recent example of this corrupt behavior is the Chamber's announcement that it will spend more than \$100 million to defeat initiatives to protect the environment and provide affordable health care to everyone.

COC is the biggest lobbying operation in the United States, spending billions of dollars on behalf of big business over the past decade to corrupt the political system. Polluters like Big Coal, Big Asbestos, and Big Oil only need call the Chamber to stop any accountability for their toxic destruction. Wall Street banks and CEOs need only make sure that they have paid their Chamber dues to ensure that they can continue to rip off the taxpayers. And killers like Big Tobacco need only form a partnership with the Chamber to ensure that they will be given immunity from lawsuits that seek accountability for the death and sickness of millions of Americans. As former New York Attorney General Eliot Spitzer put it, "Tom Donohue has never once found a crime that he couldn't justify, as long as it was committed by one of his dues-paying members."

Not only is the Chamber lobbying and advertising against the interests of Americans, it is also committing fraud and violating campaign finance laws by creating fake astroturfing front groups, with patriotic names like Citizens for a Strong Ohio, and then illegally funneling millions of anonymous dollars into those groups to attack candidates and judges who won't do their bidding, thereby undermining our elections. For example, in the Ohio case, it was successfully sued after attempting to

defeat Supreme Court Justice Alice Resnick, who would not do the Chamber's bidding. This Chamber practice is widespread and has also been used against Mississippi Justice Oliver Diaz, and in Indiana, Pennsylvania, Alabama, Texas, Louisiana, Michigan, West Virginia, and Arkansas.

<http://www.citizen.org/pressroom/release.cfm?ID=2062> The COC is tied directly to the activities of Karl Rove with regard to political prosecutions. Public Citizen has outlined some of this criminal activity here.

http://www.citizen.org/congress/special_intr/articles.cfm?ID=15871

<http://www.citizen.org/pressroom/release.cfm?ID=2305>

The COC is now a PAC and a lobbying powerhouse engaged in the same arrogant "pay to play" activity that sent Jack Abramoff to prison. The American people have had enough and want the Chamber to be held accountable. In the past week, five major companies have abandoned the Chamber because of its radical policies, including Apple, Exelon Energy, Pacific Gas & Electric, Nike, and Public Service Company of New Mexico. Now the Department of Justice must step in and expose the Chamber's illegal and unethical conduct. Therefore I urge you to launch a full investigation of the Chamber using the full array of criminal statutes including RICO.

We have spent years investigating the Chamber and offer the cooperation of our investigators and work product. Please let me know if I can be of further assistance.

Thank you,

Sincerely,



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