

June 1, 2016

Kent Lassman
President
Competitive Enterprise Institute
1899 L Street, NW
12th Floor
Washington, D.C. 20036

Dear Kent,

On behalf of the undersigned groups, and the millions of Americans we represent, we write to you today to show our support for the Competitive Enterprise Institute (CEI). Last month, CEI received a subpoena from U.S. Virgin Islands Attorney General (AG) Claude Walker. AG Walker is part of a group called "AG's United for Clean Power." The group is made up of 15 state AGs and the AG of the District of Columbia. The subpoena tried to force CEI to hand over all communications between 1997 and 2007 on climate change. AG Walker eventually withdrew his subpoena, but this type of heavy-handed tactic is an affront to free speech.

Throughout the years, CEI has been a leader in many issues, including having the courage to stand up to its adversaries and take on those that want to impose new onerous regulations on businesses and consumers. For example, in 2012 CEI sued the EPA when they challenged EPA's "refusal to disclose information discussing the creation and use of 'secondary' email accounts created for top level officials by EPA's Office of Electronic Information." CEI also sought emails from former Administrator Lisa Jackson's account. CEI should be applauded for seeking this transparency.

This subpoena was an all-out assault on free speech. Forcing CEI to hand over private information to government officials is an affront to the First Amendment rights of all Americans. This is also a clear violation of *NAACP v. Alabama* in which the Supreme Court asserted that the State couldn't compel the disclosure of the NAACP's membership list. Disclosing membership lists could lead to government intimidation and weaken the guaranteed First Amendment rights and freedoms for all Americans.

We are also concerned that confidential e-mail exchanges between CEI and other groups would be subject to discovery by the AGs. Free market and taxpayer groups have been under assault by government officials including the Internal Revenue Service (IRS). This is just another example of how the government is engaging in selective targeting based on a political agenda that is meant to intimidate others from participating and engaging in any debate that may run contrast to the position of the current administration. Even though the subpoena was withdrawn, this is dangerous precedent and the ramifications moving forward should concern organizations from all sides of the political and philosophical spectrum.

Sincerely,

David Williams, President
Taxpayers Protection Alliance

Matthew Kandrach, Executive Vice President
60 Plus Association

Dan Greenberg, President
Advance Arkansas Institute

Phil Kerpen, President
American Commitment

Dan Schneider, Executive Director
American Conservative Union

Lisa B. Nelson, CEO
American Legislative Exchange Council

Brent Wm. Gardner, Vice President of Government Affairs
Americans for Prosperity

Grover Norquist, President
Americans for Tax Reform

Justin Owen, President & CEO
Beacon Center of Tennessee

Mark Bucher, CEO
California Policy Center

Garrett Ballengee, Executive Director
Cardinal Institute for West Virginia Policy

John Hinderaker, President
Center of the American Experiment

Norm Singleton, President
Campaign for Liberty

Andrew F. Quinlan, President
Center for Freedom and Prosperity

Jeffrey Mazzella, President
Center for Individual Freedom

Alvin Quiñones, President
Center for Integrity and Public Policy

Tom Schatz, President
Citizens Against Government Waste

Col Francis X. De Luca USMCR (Ret.), President
Civitas Institute

Robert Roper, President
Ethan Allen Institute

Tarren Bragdon, CEO
Foundation for Government Accountability

Tom McCabe, CEO
Freedom Foundation

Annette Meeks, CEO
Freedom Foundation of Minnesota

Adam Brandon, CEO and President
FreedomWorks

George Landrith, President
Frontiers of Freedom

Randy Hicks, Chief Executive Officer & President
Georgia Center for Opportunity

Kelly McCutchen, President and CEO
Georgia Public Policy Foundation

Andresen Blom, Executive Director
Grassroot Hawaii Action, Inc.

Joseph Bast, President
Heartland Institute

Mario Lopez, President
Hispanic Leadership Fund

Sabrina Schaeffer, Executive Director
Independent Women's Forum

Heather Higgins, President & CEO
Independent Women's Voice

Andrew Langer, President
Institute for Liberty

Bob McClure, President and CEO
The James Madison Institute

Brett Healy, President
The John K. MacIver Institute for Public Policy

Kory Swanson, President & CEO
John Locke Foundation

Seton Motley, President
Less Government

Trent England, Vice President
Liberty Foundation of America

Forest Thigpen, President
Mississippi Center for Public Policy

Brent Mead, CEO
Montana Policy Institute

Brandon Arnold, Vice President
National Taxpayers Union

Sharon J. Rossie, President
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Jonathan Small, President
Oklahoma Council of Public Affairs

Kevin P. Kane, President
Pelican Institute for Public Policy

Andrew Moylan, Executive Director and Senior Fellow
R Street Institute

Mike Stenhouse, CEO
Rhode Island Center for Freedom and Prosperity

Paul J. Gessing, President
Rio Grande Foundation

Berin Szoka, President
TechFreedom

Rick Esenberg, President and General Counsel
Wisconsin Institute for Law & Liberty