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April 30, 2019

The Honorable Steven Mnuchin
Secretary
U.S. Department of the Treasury
1500 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20220

The Honorable Charles P. Rettig
Commissioner
Internal Revenue Service
1111 Constitution Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20224

Dear Secretary Mnuchin and Commissioner Rettig:

I write to inquire about steps the Treasury Department and the Internal Revenue Service (“IRS”) have taken to prevent foreign donors from illegally contributing to 501(c)(4) social welfare organizations since July of 2018.

On July 16, 2018, the Treasury Department and the IRS announced that it would no longer require certain non-profits entities, such as 501(c)(4) tax-exempt organizations, to provide the names and addresses of their donors to the Service. Over the last several election cycles, these so-called “social welfare” organizations spent hundreds of millions of dollars to influence the outcome of U.S. elections.

The Treasury Department claimed this step was needed to protect the personal information of individual donors. However, this step also deprived the Department of critical information to combat fraud and prevent illegal contributions from foreign donors. The Treasury Department’s decision to hamstring its own enforcement efforts is even more concerning given the Special Counsel’s recent conclusion that “[t]he Russian government interfered in the 2016 presidential election in *sweeping and systematic* fashion” (emphasis added).

At a time when our government should be doing more to protect our elections from foreign interference, the Department has puzzlingly deprived itself of vital information needed to do so.

In light of this, it is incumbent on the Treasury and the Service to demonstrate how they are vigorously enforcing our laws. Specifically, I write to inquire:

- How does the IRS identify possible foreign donations now that it lacks donor information?
- Has the IRS or Treasury increased their audits of 501(c)(4) social welfare organizations to identify foreign donors since the July 2018 change in policy?

- How many audits have the IRS and Treasury conducted of 501(c)(4) social welfare organizations since the 2018 policy change?
- Has Treasury or the IRS dedicated more enforcement and investigations staff given the higher chance of foreign donations or fraud?

Please do not hesitate to follow up with any questions. We look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Michael F. Bennet". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Michael" being the most prominent part.

Michael F. Bennet
United States Senator