

February 14, 2018

Oversight and Government Reform Committee  
2157 Raymond House Office Building  
Judiciary Committee  
2138 Rayburn House Office Building  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

**RE: Support Transparency and Accountability by Presidential Inaugural Committees**

Dear Members of the Oversight and Judiciary Committees:

We are writing to encourage all Members of the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee and the House Judiciary Committee to support and co-sponsor the “Presidential Inaugural Committee Oversight Act,” sponsored by Rep. Kurt Schrader (D-Ore.).

The legislation would fill in the current disclosure gap by requiring that inaugural committee expenditures as well as contributions be disclosed to the public, including the distribution of any surplus funds. It would also require that expenditures be made to finance inaugural activities and reasonable operating expenses of the committee, and that any surplus funds be returned to donors or distributed to the General Treasury or bona fide charities.

Our organizations and academics include: American Oversight, American Family Voices, Brennan Center for Justice at NYU, Campaign for Accountability, Campaign Legal Center, Center for Media and Democracy, Center for Responsive Politics, Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington (CREW), Common Cause, Democracy 21, Ambassador (ret.) Norman L. Eisen, Every Voice, Government Accountability Project, OpenTheGovernment.org, Norman J. Ornstein, Public Citizen, Sunlight Foundation, Prof. James A. Thurber, Wisconsin Democracy Campaign

Currently, there are very few rules governing the use of inaugural funds by a Presidential Inaugural Committee. Donations of \$200 or more must be disclosed 90 days after the inauguration, and foreign nationals are prohibited from contributing to the inauguration. Beyond that, there are no disclosure requirements for expenditures, no guidelines for operating expenses and salaries paid by the inaugural committee, and no set rules on how surplus funds may be spent.

The absence of transparency and accountability of the financing of inaugural committees has become a potential source of fiscal mismanagement and even corruption as these committees are now raising record amounts of funds from special interests in amounts that appear to far exceed the actual costs of inaugural activities.

We urge Congress to recognize the emerging problems of undisclosed and unaccountable financing of presidential inaugurations and get these problems under control by passing the “Presidential Inaugural Committee Oversight Act.”

Sincerely,

American Oversight  
American Family Voices  
Brennan Center for Justice at NYU  
Campaign for Accountability  
Campaign Legal Center  
Center for Media and Democracy  
Center for Responsive Politics  
Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington (CREW)  
Common Cause  
Democracy 21  
Ambassador (ret.) Norman L. Eisen  
Every Voice  
Government Accountability Project  
OpenTheGovernment.org  
Norman J. Ornstein  
Public Citizen  
Sunlight Foundation  
Prof. James A. Thurber  
Wisconsin Democracy Campaign