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# Congress of the United States

## House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND GOVERNMENT REFORM

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April 26, 2012

The Honorable Elijah E. Cummings  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Oversight and Government Reform  
2471 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Gerald E. Connolly  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Technology, Information Policy,  
Intergovernmental Relations and Procurement Reform  
424 Cannon Building  
Washington D.C. 20515

Dear Mr. Cummings and Mr. Connolly:

I have received your letter of March 29, 2012, requesting a field hearing on priorities of the technology community to take place in Fairfax County, Virginia, on May 11.<sup>1</sup> In considering this request for a field hearing in Rep. Connolly's Congressional district, I am struck by the fact that Rep. Connolly has not attended a single field hearing convened by this Committee in the 112<sup>th</sup> Congress including one held last year in Silicon Valley on "Policies Affecting High Tech Growth."<sup>2</sup> Rep. Connolly's perfect record of non-attendance at field hearings includes missing all four hearings held in the Congressional districts of Democratic Members.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Letter from Elijah E. Cummings, Ranking Member, H. Comm. on Oversight and Gov't Reform, and Rep. Gerald Connolly to Darrell Issa, Chairman, H. Comm. on Oversight and Gov't Reform (Mar. 29, 2012).

<sup>2</sup> *Policies Affecting High-Tech Growth and Federal Adoption of Industry Best Practices: Hearing Before the H. Comm. on Oversight and Gov't Reform*, 112th Cong. 1 (2011).

<sup>3</sup> See *id.* (held in the 16<sup>th</sup> Congressional District of California on Apr. 18, 2011); *The Foreclosure Crisis: Hearing Before the H. Comm. on Oversight and Gov't Reform*, 112th Cong. 1 (2011) (held in the 7<sup>th</sup> Congressional District of Maryland on Mar. 8, 2011); *Regulatory Impediments to Job Creation: Assessing the Cumulative Impact of EPA Regulation on Farmers: Forum Before the H. Comm. on Oversight and Gov't Reform*, 112th Cong. (2011) (held in the 17<sup>th</sup> Congressional District of California on Apr. 19, 2011); *Federal Policies Affecting Innovation and Job Growth in the Biotech and Pharmaceutical Industries: Hearing Before the H. Comm. on Oversight and Gov't Reform*, 112th Cong. (2011) (held in the 53<sup>rd</sup> Congressional District of California on Apr. 21, 2011).

The Honorable Elijah E. Cummings  
The Honorable Gerald E. Connolly  
April 26, 2012  
Page 2

I would also note that the last time the Committee held a field hearing in the district of a Democratic Member of this Committee in Brooklyn, New York, the proceeding was interrupted by an election season-style protest from a rebranded ACORN group protesting my decision to call the hearing.<sup>4</sup> I hope you can appreciate and agree that while field hearings can play an important role in explaining Congress' work to communities throughout the year, they are not intended to be used as venues for election season gimmicks.

To this end, and per an agreement made in 2010 under the chairmanship of our colleague Rep. Edolphus Towns, holding a field hearing in a state within 45 days of an election in which a current Member of Congress' name appears on the ballot could have the appearance of inappropriately using taxpayer funds to further a campaign interest. Absent a compelling reason to waive this restriction, as the names of several current Members of Congress appear on the ballot of the June 12 Virginia primary, I must decline your request.<sup>5</sup>

If you intend to move forward with this as a minority event, I urge you to proceed cautiously and avoid any appearance that official funds are being used in conjunction with an upcoming election as committee rules and agreements have sought to prohibit. While the Committee's current policy does not preclude holding certain events in the Washington area, any use of Committee funds must be used in a manner consistent with all existing rules and practices of the House and this Committee.

Sincerely,



Darrell Issa  
Chairman

cc: The Honorable James Lankford, Chairman  
Subcommittee on Technology, Information Policy, Intergovernmental Relations  
and Procurement Reform

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<sup>4</sup> Paul Tharp, *Bklyn protesters rip foreclosure hearing*, N.Y. POST, Mar. 19, 2012.

<sup>5</sup> Incumbent Members of Congress will appear on the June 12, 2012 primary ballot in the 4<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, and 8<sup>th</sup> congressional districts of the Commonwealth of Virginia.