

ONE HUNDRED ELEVENTH CONGRESS  
**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**

COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND GOVERNMENT REFORM  
2157 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING  
WASHINGTON, DC 20515-6143

Majority (202) 225-5051  
Minority (202) 225-5074

August 4, 2009

The Honorable Rahm Emanuel  
White House Chief of Staff  
The White House  
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. Emanuel:

As you know, Senator Jon Kyl (R-AZ) recently raised questions about the failure of the stimulus and suggested on a national television show that stimulus money scheduled to be spent in future years ought to be returned to the American taxpayers.<sup>1</sup> Following Senator Kyl's remarks, according to *Politico*, you coordinated an "assault" on Senator Kyl and other critics of your policies by directing four cabinet secretaries to write to Jan Brewer, the Governor of Arizona, asking pointedly if, in light of Senator Kyl's remarks, Governor Brewer wished to forfeit taxpayer money directed to Arizona by the stimulus.<sup>2</sup> These tactics have been characterized as "a fist to the nose" and a message to "Back off."<sup>3</sup> While this type of scare tactic may work in Chicago, it will not work to intimidate me or other Members of the United States Congress.

At the risk of adding to the "weeks of frustration" you've reportedly felt in response to criticism of the Administration's ineffective and wasteful policies,<sup>4</sup> please allow me to bring the facts about the stimulus to your attention. In selling the stimulus package, the Administration promised the Congress and the American people that the legislation would create or save 3.5 million jobs and prevent the U.S. unemployment rate from rising above 8%.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> See Transcript, *This Week with George Stephanopoulos*, ABC News, July 12, 2009. Available at <http://abcnews.go.com/print?id=8063029>.

<sup>2</sup> See Jonathan Martin, "The White House strikes back," *Politico*, July 16, 2009. Available at <http://www.politico.com/news/stories/0709/25003.html>.

<sup>3</sup> *Id.*

<sup>4</sup> *Id.* ("The coordinated assault against Kyl came after weeks of frustration in watching GOP members of Congress trash the stimulus as ineffective ...")

<sup>5</sup> See Christina Romer and Jared Bernstein, "The Job Impact of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Plan," (January 9, 2009), available at [http://otrans.3cdn.net/ee40602f9a7d8172b8\\_ozm6bt5oi.pdf](http://otrans.3cdn.net/ee40602f9a7d8172b8_ozm6bt5oi.pdf).

I thought the outdated and discredited Keynesian economic theory behind your effort was misguided and I opposed the stimulus. Unfortunately, recent economic data has validated my opposition. The U.S. economy lost 433,000 jobs in June, bringing the unemployment rate to 9.5%.<sup>6</sup> These job losses come on the heels of other declining economic indicators, and bring the total number of American jobs lost since President Obama took office to over 2.6 million.<sup>7</sup>

I and others have dared to bring these facts to the attention of President Obama,<sup>8</sup> the Congress and the American people. You've unfortunately reacted by once again resorting to the playbook of the Chicago political machine. As *Politico* reports, you "launched a coordinated effort to jam" Senator Kyl and other Administration critics:

... [A]fter seeing Kyl and House Minority Whip Eric Cantor (R-VA) again paint the legislation as a failure on Sunday talk shows, White House chief of staff Rahm Emanuel directed that the letters from the Cabinet secretaries be sent to [Governor] Brewer, according to two administration officials.<sup>9</sup>

The fact that the letters were coordinated by you to maximize the level of intimidation is supported by the timing, structure, and content of each letter. Not only were the four letters all sent the day following Senator Kyl's remarks, but they were also remarkably similar in tone and sentence structure. For example, consider the following comparison:

Letter from Ray LaHood, Secretary of Transportation:

On Sunday, Arizona Senator Jon Kyl publicly questioned whether the stimulus is working and stated that he wants to cancel projects that aren't presently underway. I believe the stimulus has been very effective in creating job opportunities throughout the country. *However, if you prefer to forfeit the money we are making available to your state, as Senator Kyl suggests, please let me know [emphasis added].*<sup>10</sup>

Letter from Ken Salazar, Secretary of the Interior:

Some key Republican leaders in Congress have publicly questioned whether the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act is working and suggested cancelling all projects that are not currently in progress. I believe they are wrong. The

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<sup>6</sup> See Employment Situation Summary, U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, available at <http://www.bls.gov/news.release/empsit.nr0.htm>.

<sup>7</sup> See Employment Data, U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, available at <http://www.bls.gov/bls/proghome.htm#employment>.

<sup>8</sup> See e.g. Letter from Ranking Member Darrell E. Issa, et. al, to President Barack Obama, June 13, 2009 (which has gone unanswered as of the writing of this letter).

<sup>9</sup> See note 2, *supra*.

<sup>10</sup> See letter from Ray LaHood, Secretary of Transportation, to Jan Brewer, Governor of Arizona, July 13, 2009.

stimulus funds provided through the Recovery Act are a very effective way to create job opportunities throughout the Country. *However, if you prefer to forfeit the money we are making available to Arizona, please let me know* [emphasis added].<sup>11</sup>

*Politico* reports that in response to these letters, Governor Brewer “knew she’d been thrown a high, hard one.”<sup>12</sup> The president of the Arizona Chamber of Commerce and Industry felt the need to respond to these tactics by penning a column under the headline: “Mr. President: Don’t Bully Arizona.”<sup>13</sup> At what point do you believe your practice of Chicago-style politics violates a public official’s right to speak out in favor of alternative policies? The American people have a right to know what role you played in developing the threatening letters to Governor Brewer and whether you intend to continue to engage in these tactics in the future.

Since I represent a district in the great state of California, I hope that you will not take this letter as an indication of Governor Schwarzenegger’s position on stimulus funds dedicated to California nor his position on any other public policy issue. I can assure you that any attempt to intimidate me or silence my criticism of the stimulus through such Chicago-style tactics will be futile.

In order to assist the Committee with its investigation of this issue, please provide the following information by close of business on Tuesday, August 11, 2009:

1. Your response to *Politico*’s report that “White House chief of staff Rahm Emanuel directed that the letters from the Cabinet secretaries be sent to [Governor] Brewer, according to two administration officials.”<sup>14</sup>
2. A full and complete explanation of the development of the four July 13 letters from the cabinet secretaries to Governor Brewer, including but not limited to the role you or any other White House official played in writing the letters or encouraging the writing of the letters.
3. All records and communications between you and Secretary LaHood, Secretary Salazar, Secretary Donovan, and Secretary Vilsack referring or relating to the decision to send the July 13 letters to Governor Brewer.
4. A full and complete explanation of the role of the Democratic National Committee and the White House Office of Political Affairs in authoring, encouraging, facilitating, or directing the four July 13 letters from the cabinet secretaries to Governor Brewer.

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<sup>11</sup> See letter from Ken Salazar, Secretary of the Interior, to Jan Brewer, Governor of Arizona, July 13, 2009.

<sup>12</sup> See note 2, *supra*.

<sup>13</sup> See Glenn Hamer, “Mr. President: Don’t Bully Arizona,” *East Valley Tribune*, July 15, 2009. Available at <http://www.eastvalleytribune.com/story/141701>.

<sup>14</sup> See note 2, *supra*.

The Honorable Rahm Emanuel

August 4, 2009

Page 4

Please note that, for purposes of responding to this request, the terms “records,” “communications,” and “referring or relating” should be interpreted consistently with the attached Definitions of Terms.

If you have any questions regarding this request, please contact Christopher Hixon or Brien Beattie of the Committee staff at (202) 225-5074.

Sincerely,



Darrell E. Issa  
Ranking Member

cc: The Honorable Edolphus Towns, Chairman

Attachment

## Definition of Terms

1. The term "record" means any written, recorded, or graphic matter of any nature whatsoever, regardless of how recorded, and whether original or copy, including, but not limited to, the following: memoranda, reports, expense reports, books, manuals, instructions, financial reports, working papers, records notes, letters, notices, confirmations, telegrams, receipts, appraisals, pamphlets, magazines, newspapers, prospectuses, interoffice and intra office communications, electronic mail (e-mail), contracts, cables, notations of any type of conversation, telephone call, meeting or other communication, bulletins, printed matter, computer printouts, teletypes, invoices, transcripts, diaries, analyses, returns, summaries, minutes, bills, accounts, estimates, projections, comparisons, messages, correspondence, press releases, circulars, financial statements, reviews, opinions, offers, studies and investigations, questionnaires and surveys, and work sheets (and all drafts, preliminary versions, alterations, modifications, revisions, changes, and amendments of any of the foregoing, as well as any attachments or appendices thereto), and graphic or oral records or representations of any kind (including without limitation, photographs, charts, graphs, microfiche, microfilm, videotape, recordings and motion pictures), and electronic, mechanical, and electric records or representations of any kind (including, without limitation, tapes, cassettes, disks, and recordings) and other written, printed, typed, or other graphic or recorded matter of any kind or nature, however produced or reproduced, and whether preserved in writing, film, tape, disk, videotape or otherwise. A record bearing any notation not a part of the original text is to be considered a separate record. A draft or non-identical copy is a separate record within the meaning of this term.
2. The term "communication" means each manner or means of disclosure or exchange of information, regardless of means utilized, whether oral, electronic, by document or otherwise, and whether face-to-face, in a meeting, by telephone, mail, telexes, discussions, releases, personal delivery, or otherwise.
3. The terms "referring or relating," with respect to any given subject, means anything that constitutes, contains, embodies, reflects, identifies, states, refers to, deals with or is in any manner whatsoever pertinent to that subject.