

to Senator GRASSLEY and provided more than 1,300 pages of internal documents showing how the letter came to be drafted. The documents demonstrated that the staff did not intentionally mislead Congress but relied on assurances from ATF leaders and officials in Arizona who ran the operation.

Did the committee call the head of the ATF, Ken Melson, to testify as to how this happened, as Democratic members of the committee requested? The answer is no. Did the committee call former Attorney General Mukasey, who was briefed on the botched effort to coordinate arms interdiction with Mexico in 2007? The answer is no.

Instead, the majority members demanded more internal deliberative documents from the Department of Justice after the Grassley letter had been sent. Instead, the committee leadership made an ever-escalating series of allegations regarding the involvement of the White House, documented in YouTube videos and news clips viewed on the Internet, which were subsequently withdrawn. The committee leadership has refused the Attorney General's offer to resolve the conflict.

The President has now claimed executive privilege over a very narrow group of documents from the Department of Justice in response to Chairman ISSA's threat to hold the Attorney General in contempt of Congress. This is the first time the President has claimed executive privilege, in sharp contrast to recent previous Presidents who used the claim on numerous occasions in similar circumstances.

Should the House continue to pursue this irresponsible action, it is likely that it would lead to many years of judicial action and would, of course, further poison the highly charged partisan atmosphere leading up to the elections and critical decisions regarding the Federal budget and all of the other things that we really seriously need to deal with.

So I join with others who are asking the Speaker, who are imploring this House not to take such an irresponsible vote, not to take an irresponsible action, but to sit with the Attorney General, and let's resolve the conflict between the House and the executive branch. That's what reasonable people would do.

#### DARK MONEY DONORS, SHOW YOURSELVES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. GRIJALVA) for 5 minutes.

Mr. GRIJALVA. Mr. Speaker, money has taken over our political process. Big corporations and high-rolling political schemers tell us everything is still mom and apple pie, and there's nothing to worry about.

But some of us have seen the effects of these hidden million-dollar dark money donations. We've seen the ads that tell you what to think and who to vote for, without telling you who's

talking. We've seen the multimillion-dollar lawsuits that help elite corporate interests, without explaining who's paying the bill. We've seen more and more elections bought and paid for by the only people who can afford it. And those people are not us.

It's time to start naming names and asking why these people won't tell us who they are. We must start to fight back and ask them what they have to hide.

A front group called the National Federation of Independent Business is suing to block the Affordable Care Act. The president of the group says he's doing this to help small businesses. When I and my colleague Representative KEITH ELLISON wrote him a letter, asking him who his members are, he refused to answer. We asked him who gave him several recent million-dollar-plus donations that have helped fund the lawsuit; he refused to answer. We asked him why Karl Rove's Crossroads GPS political group gave him \$3.7 million just when he initiated the lawsuit; he refused to answer. And he thinks that's good enough. Well, it's not.

NFIB has never liked answering questions. In 2006, according to an article in the Nashville Scene, the organization claimed 600,000 member businesses nationwide. Today on its Web site, it claims about 300,000. But when we asked NFIB to disclose where its money comes from, instead of providing us the courtesy of a written response, the group told the press that its membership has been growing by leaps and bounds since the lawsuit began. It described shrinking by 50 percent as big, new expansion, and it said new members had made small donations that covered the cost of this complex lawsuit before the Supreme Court.

In other words, NFIB won't tell us the truth about who it represents or how big it is. What does it have to hide?

Our democracy has always been about people. It's been about individuals and families making choices about who represents their interests. It's about what kind of country we want to live in, not about what kind of country the very wealthy want to choose for us.

Today, as we prepare for the Supreme Court ruling on the Affordable Care Act, millions of Americans with pre-existing health conditions, with sick children, with long-term medical needs, and with no insurance stand together on one side. A front group with bottomless pockets that won't explain its motives sits on the other.

Mr. Speaker, this is not what our democracy is supposed to be about. Our Founding Fathers did not believe wealth makes a man more important than his neighbor. They didn't believe money is more important than the dignity of the individual. They didn't believe that any company or any organization is entitled to a special set of rules. And they certainly didn't believe that an incorporated business entity is the same thing as a human being.

There is no reason we have to accept the choices that the very, very wealthy few in this country are making for the rest of us. Today we stand up to be counted, and we demand that dark money donations come to light; that anyone who wants to influence our democracy step forward and state his name for the record and be honest and transparent with the American people.

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Democracy is not for sale, and an election should not be an auction. I'm proud to be on the floor today and say that I am on the side of people that want disclosure, want fair elections, and are tired of the influence of dark money in our collective democracy.

I challenge those front groups to "put up" or "shut up." Tell us who's funding you and what you really want. It's about 4 months and a little more time until America elects a new Congress and a President. Let the voters decide. They know where I stand. And we want these front groups to tell us where they stand, where they get their money, who they are, and who they represent.

The American people in this great democracy of ours should make the choice whether we like it or not. The influence by a very few secretive groups that are fronting for others should not be the ones that decide who represents the American people, who will run this country, and who will set the priorities for this country.

#### IN OPPOSITION TO THE HOLDER CONTEMPT RESOLUTION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from American Samoa (Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA) for 5 minutes.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong opposition to this resolution to hold in contempt Attorney General of the United States Mr. Eric Holder. This contempt resolution does no good in moving along the investigation of the gun-walking operations across our borders nor in the investigation of the death of Border Patrol Agent Brian Terry, whose killing was associated with the recovery of two firearms linked with Operation Fast and Furious.

Last year, the House Oversight Committee initiated an investigation into allegations of this operation in the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms and Explosives, or ATF, field division in Arizona. Over the past year, the committee has extended its investigation by requesting thousands of pages of documents from the Department of Justice and interviewing about two dozen officials. In response, the Department has made extraordinary attempts, in my opinion, to accommodate these requests by submitting over almost 8,000 pages of documents. Attorney General Holder has also testified before the committee about nine times on this matter.