

TALKING POINTS ON AMENDED U.S. CHAMBER/STARR FOUNDATION IRS COMPLAINT

Background

- Last month, US Chamber Watch filed an IRS complaint alleging that the US Chamber had misused more than \$18 million in charitable funds for political purposes. Today, U.S. Chamber Watch and three other public interest advocacy organizations—CREW, Corporate Ethics International, and Main Street Alliance-- filed an amended complaint with the IRS based on new information.
- There is now a real and growing coalition of organizations demanding accountability from the secret money groups who are funding our elections and who reject transparency at every turn.

What's New About The New Complaint

- The new complaint raises for the first time the issue of whether the Chamber knowingly misreported its financial transactions—which could be a criminal offense.
- The amended complaint also raises the question of whether Chamber CEO Tom Donohue's compensation, which last year topped \$3 million, is so excessive as to itself be a tax violation by the Chamber.

Why It Matters

- One thing is clear: The U.S. Chamber of Commerce operates under a veil of secrecy, refusing to disclose its massive sources of income or anything about the organization's finances. But what little the U.S. Chamber does reveal raises questions about whether the Chamber's operations are legal or ethical.
- The U.S. Chamber is the nation's single largest private interest lobby, spending more than \$144 million to push its corporate-friendly agenda last year, and promising to unleash \$75 million in this season's elections. Yet the Chamber faces very few disclosure requirements, and it repeatedly refuses to voluntarily disclose any details – even when it is being called to account for possible criminal violations of tax law.
- The Chamber wants to raise and spend millions of dollars to influence our democracy, without making any real assurances that it's doing so legally and ethically.
- The U.S. Chamber claims to be the voice of American business. But it refuses to shed light on just who in the business community the Chamber is actually representing. And American voters deserve to know that, whether the business calling the shots is AIG or a foreign-owned conglomerate.