

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

August 9, 2019

The Honorable Ted Deutch
Chairman
House Committee on Ethics
1015 Longworth HOB
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Kenny Marchant
Ranking Member
House Committee on Ethics
1015 Longworth HOB
Washington, D.C. 20515

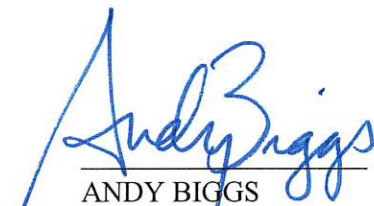
Dear Chairman Deutch and Ranking Member Marchant:

We are writing to respectfully request that the Ethics Committee look into Representative Joaquin Castro for violating Rule XXIII of the Code of Official Conduct for publicly posting the names and workplaces of individual donors to President Trump. Posting a target list of private citizens simply for supporting his political opponent is antithetical to our principles and serves to suppress the free speech and free association rights of Americans. Rule XXIII of the Code of Official Conduct states, "A Member, Delegate, Resident Commissioner, officer, or employee of the House shall behave at all times in a manner that shall reflect creditably on the House." These acts must immediately be investigated to determine if Rep. Castro has violated the ethical rules of this institution.

The indisputable fact that publishing donor lists acts to suppress free speech and the right of Americans to freely associate under the First Amendment is not a new concept. In 1958 Justice Harlan wrote in *NAACP v. Alabama*, "It is hardly a novel perception that compelled disclosure of affiliation with groups engaged in advocacy may constitute as effective a restraint on freedom of association as the forms of governmental action in the cases above... This Court has recognized the vital relationship between freedom to associate and privacy in one's associations."

By publishing a list of private citizens who donated to his political opponent, Rep. Castro sought to encourage harassment against those citizens simply on the basis of their political beliefs. It cannot be fairly argued that Rep. Castro had any other purpose in posting that list and telling his activist followers that those individuals were inciting hate. Whether he intended to provoke physical violence or merely verbal harassment, his intent was to chill the free speech and free association rights of Americans. This behavior cannot be tolerated by a member of this institution. Rep. Castro took an oath to support and defend the Constitution of the United States, yet his actions serve to diminish the constitutional rights of American citizens. The defeat of a political opponent can never justify sacrificing our values as a free nation. We must clearly state that this behavior will not be tolerated from our members.

For the integrity of our institution and the values that we hold dear, we urge that you give this matter your immediate attention.


ANDY BIGGS
Member of Congress

Sincerely,


MATT GAETZ
Member of Congress



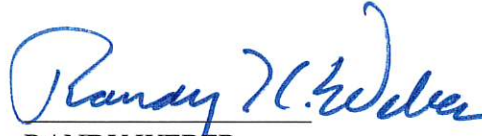
JODY HICE
Member of Congress



DEBBIE LESKO
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JEFF DUNCAN
Member of Congress



RANDY WEBER
Member of Congress



TED BUDD
Member of Congress