

ALL AMERICAN LEAGUE OF LOBBYISTS

Howard Marlowe, President

Tuesday, May 31, 2011

The President
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave. NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

On behalf of the American League of Lobbyists, I urge you to direct your staff to withdraw the draft Executive Order requiring companies and their representatives who apply for federal contracts to disclose their political contributions. Making this kind of disclosure a part of the bidding process tarnishes a competition based on qualifications, adds an unneeded level of bureaucracy, and endangers the protection of free speech afforded to all Americans by the First Amendment of the Constitution.

On Thursday, May 26th, 2011 the House voted on House Amendment No. 27 offered by Congressman Tom Cole (OK-04) to HR 1540, the FY 2012 Defense Authorization bill. While the amendment was put forward by a Republican the vote passed with bipartisan support. The Supreme Court decisions in Buckley v. Valeo and Citizens United v. FCC affirm that money does indeed 'talk'. The Cole measure reaffirms that notion in Congress. Be it a candidate, individual, or company, the ability to voice a political position using financial resources has been preserved by our nations deliberative and judicial branches, your Executive Order, if enacted, would undermine that preservation.

Since your announcement to seek the Presidency you have consistently attacked the honorable profession of lobbying. Lobbyists play an important role in the legislative process, serving as educators to elected officials. It is in the best interest to government to have informed individuals who serve as experts in every arena of public policy. Our ability to access and navigate the legislative process and push issues forward through a bureaucratic cluster is a vital service to the nation. The Draft Order would inhibit one of the most vital tools in the advocate's arsenal by creating fear of retribution for political donations.

Public servants are bound by law to keep politics out of the federal procurement process. Mr. President, we implore you to discard this ill-conceived Executive Order and seek alternative, less stifling ways, to promote transparency in government.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Howard Marlowe", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Howard Marlowe
President, ALL