

A Statement from ACORN's outside Advisory Committee

Written by

Tuesday, 06 October 2009 15:18

ACORN's Advisory Committee comprised of leaders from the philanthropic, labor, government, and business sectors, issued the following statement Tuesday morning: "Yesterday, former Massachusetts Attorney General Scott Harshbarger briefed the ACORN Advisory Committee on his plans for an independent review.

This independent and thorough review, commissioned by the ACORN Board, will review a sample of ACORN service programs in several cities and create a written assessment of the program with a set of recommendations to allow the organization to run intake and service programs in an ethical, professional and effective manner.

In addition, Mr. Harshbarger will review the ongoing work that ACORN and its consultants have done since June 2008 to restructure the governance, financial, and management systems of the organization. Mr. Harshbarger's preliminary findings will be completed by the end of October.

Although the Advisory Committee has no decision making authority or role in the governance of ACORN, it will be briefed by Mr. Harshbarger on his findings and recommendations.

The Advisory Committee expresses its support for both the review and the choice of Mr. Harshbarger to conduct it. It is also appreciative of the willingness of ACORN's leadership to conduct a completely independent and thorough review.

ACORN has a proud history of working on issues critical to working families across this country and its members have been an important voice for their communities. We hope that the process led by Mr. Harshbarger is the path that will allow the organization to return its focus to that mission. The Advisory Committee looks forward to supporting the process of accountability and organizational improvement that ACORN is undertaking."

About ACORN's Outside Advisory Committee:

ACORN's Advisory Committee comprises the following individuals:

- John Banks, Vice President of Government Relations Con Ed
- Dave Beckwith, Executive Director, Needmor Fund
- Henry Cisneros, Executive Chairman, Cityview
- Eric Eve, Senior VP of Global Consumer Group, Community Relations, Citigroup
- Harvey Hirschfeld, President, Lawcash
- Kathleen Kennedy Townsend, Board Member, RFK Foundation, former MD Lt. Governor
- John Podesta, President and CEO, Center for American Progress
- Andrew Stern, International President, Service Employees International Union

About Scott Harshbarger:

Scott Harshbarger served two terms as Massachusetts Attorney General (and President of the National Association of Attorneys General) and as the Democratic candidate for Governor of Massachusetts in 1998. Thereafter, until November 2002, Mr. Harshbarger was a Visiting Professor at Harvard Law School and President and CEO of Common Cause in Washington

A Statement from ACORN's outside Advisory Committee

Written by

Tuesday, 06 October 2009 15:18

DC. He returned to private law practice in Boston in 2003 and is Senior Counsel to the Firm of Proskauer Rose LLP where he focuses his practice on strategic advice and litigation, corporate investigations and defense, corporate and nonprofit governance/ethics and government regulation. He also chairs the Firm's National Pro Bono Initiative. In addition to his many professional honors, Mr. Harshbarger has published extensively on the subjects of corporate and nonprofit governance and regulatory strategies. He regularly appears as a commentator in the national and local media.

About ACORN:

ACORN, the nation's largest grassroots organization of low- and moderate-income families has organized chapters in dozens of cities nationwide working on neighborhood improvement campaigns. ACORN's 500,000 member families are vocal advocates for health care reform and have worked for decades to promote homeownership for working families. The organization raised early alarms about predatory lending practices by financial institutions and has helped thousands of families avoid foreclosure across the country. ACORN successfully sued FEMA to extend housing benefits for hurricane Katrina survivors and recruited volunteers to gut and preserve thousands of homes in New Orleans. ACORN's large-scale voter registration drives in African-American and Latino communities drew the attention of Karl Rove, who dismissed at least one U.S. Attorney for failing to prosecute the group, and rhetorical attack from Sen. McCain and Governor Palin in 2008. ACORN has helped families prepare 150,000 free tax returns and obtain \$190 million in tax refunds in the last five years.