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UNITED STATES  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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March 26, 2018

The Honorable Trey Gowdy  
Chairman  
House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform  
2157 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Gowdy:

Last night, the American people heard directly from adult film actress Stephanie Clifford, known professionally as Stormy Daniels, about a payment she received in October 2016 from a representative of then-presidential candidate Donald Trump in exchange for her silence about a sexual encounter she had with Mr. Trump in 2006.

According to Ms. Clifford, Michael Cohen — then Executive Vice President of The Trump Organization, Mr. Trump's business — arranged for a payment of \$130,000 from Essential Consultants LLC, a Delaware corporation Mr. Cohen formed in October 2016, to Ms. Clifford in exchange for a so-called "hush agreement" with Mr. Trump.

Under the Federal Election Campaign Act, campaigns must report in-kind contributions and coordinated expenditures. They are also prohibited from accepting contributions from individuals in excess of \$2,700 per election and from accepting any corporate contributions.

Contributions are defined as "any gift, subscription, loan, advance, or deposit of money or anything of value made by any person *for the purpose of influencing any election for federal office*" (emphasis added).

The timing of the payment from Mr. Cohen and Ms. Clifford, coming just 12 days before the 2016 presidential election, and the nature of the agreement, limiting Ms. Clifford's ability to share derogatory information about Mr. Trump, make it obvious that the purpose of the agreement was to influence the 2016 election for President of the United States.

However, Mr. Trump's campaign — Donald J. Trump for President — did not report the payment to Ms. Clifford to the Federal Election Commission. The Trump campaign also did not report the source of the money to make the payment to Ms. Clifford.

Moreover, if the money paid to Ms. Clifford came from The Trump Organization or Mr. Cohen's personal funds, either the prohibition on corporate contributions or the legal limit on individual contributions may have been violated.

Taken together, there appears to be substantial reason to believe that the payment to Ms. Clifford violated the Federal Election Campaign Act and Federal Election Commission regulations.

As you know, the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform has authority to conduct oversight on behalf of the House of Representatives, including the power to conduct investigations of "any matter." This broad jurisdiction includes oversight of a likely improper payoff of an adult film actress to prevent an explosive sex scandal from consuming the Trump campaign just days before being the 2016 presidential election.

There are few matters as consequential to the health of our democracy as upholding campaign finance laws that protect the integrity of our elections. The American people deserve to know if the President of the United States violated federal campaign finance law in order to silence an adult film actress with whom he had an extramarital affair.

I respectfully request that the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee immediately open an investigation into the payment to Ms. Clifford, the source of the funds for the payment, and the Trump campaign's failure to properly account for or disclose the payment.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,



Betty McCollum  
Member of Congress

cc:

The Honorable Elijah Cummings  
Ranking Member  
House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform