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9TH DISTRICT, ILLINOIS

COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND COMMERCE

HOUSE PERMANENT SELECT
COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE

CHIEF DEPUTY WHIP

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-1309

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July 31, 2008

The Honorable George W. Bush
President
The White House
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President,

In anticipation of your term in office coming to an end, we are writing to insist that you to maintain all White House records that could have administrative, historical, or evidentiary value. Congress has an oversight role that does not end at the end of an administration, and it is therefore critical that your Administration's documents are preserved.

The Presidential Records Act (PRA) requires the President to "take all such steps as may be necessary to assure that the activities, deliberations, decisions, and policies that reflect the performance of his constitutional, statutory, or other official or ceremonial duties are adequately documented ... and maintained as Presidential records." Complying with the PRA is critical to allow Congress to properly and thoroughly review and assess the actions of your Administration.

However, there is clear evidence that your Administration has undermined the PRA. For example, the Republican National Committee has identified 88 current and former White House officials who held RNC e-mail accounts while on staff at the White House, including former Deputy Chief of Staff and Senior Advisor Karl Rove, former White House Chief of Staff Andrew Card, and Counselor to the President Dan Bartlett. Those RNC email addresses were, in fact, used to conduct government business. An alarming number of these emails have been destroyed, including almost every email sent to Mr. Rove during the first term of your administration.

We would like to make it very clear that when government emails are sent, regardless of their origin, we expect you to save them. We intend to exercise our Constitutional right to conduct oversight over the Executive Branch, including former Administrations. Further, any attempt to argue that emails involving government business not sent from White House e-mail accounts should be exempt from the Presidential Records Act will be met with stiff resistance.

We would also like to remind you that the PRA gives important powers and responsibilities to the National Archives and Records Administration and the Archivist

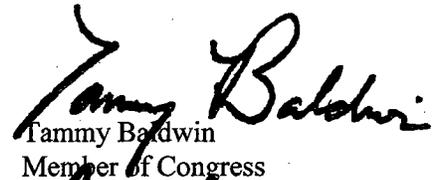
specifically. The Archivist's responsibility at the end of a president's term in office, to "assume responsibility for the custody, control, and preservation of, and access to, the Presidential records of that President" must be fully complied with.

Again, we would respectfully request that you take into account the right of the Congress to access your Administration's materials. In the interest of maintaining that right, you must comply with the law and preserve all official documents and emails in the remaining days of your Administration.

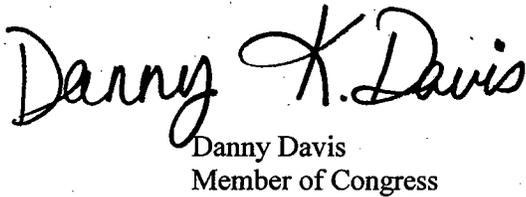
Sincerely,



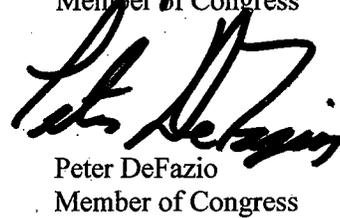
Jan Schakowsky
Member of Congress



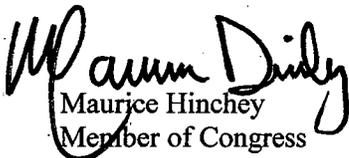
Tammy Baldwin
Member of Congress



Danny Davis
Member of Congress



Peter DeFazio
Member of Congress



Maurice Hinchey
Member of Congress



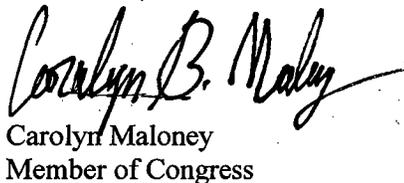
Hank Johnson
Member of Congress



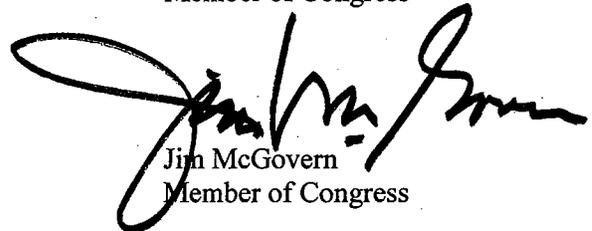
Dennis Kucinich
Member of Congress



Barbara Lee
Member of Congress



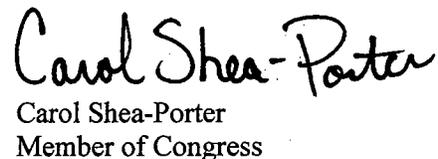
Carolyn Maloney
Member of Congress



Jim McGovern
Member of Congress



Steve Rothman
Member of Congress



Carol Shea-Porter
Member of Congress

Betty Sutton

Betty Sutton
Member of Congress

Robert Wexler

Robert Wexler
Member of Congress

Lynn Woolsey

Lynn Woolsey
Member of Congress

Jerrold Nadler

Jerrold Nadler
Member of Congress