

August 6, 2010

President Barack Obama
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue Northwest
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Obama:

We write to applaud the work of Norman L. Eisen, Special Counsel to the President for Ethics and Government Reform and his role in fulfilling your mandate of openness and accountability in the federal government. Our organizations believe that Mr. Eisen has made a very positive contribution to advancing your commitment to higher ethical standards and greater transparency and accountability in the Executive Branch and wish him great success as Ambassador to the Czech Republic.

Based on press reports, we understand that your counsel, Mr. Bob Bauer, will now handle Mr. Eisen's responsibilities and that Mr. Steven Croley will join the Domestic Policy Council to work on government reform issues. We are pleased you are taking quick action to provide senior leadership on the issues of ethics, transparency and accountability.

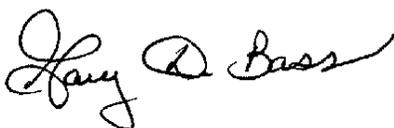
Every White House needs a conscience, a high-level official with the authority to make sure that all officials, from the President on down, are taking ethics rules seriously and are comporting themselves to avoid not only conflicts of interest but also an appearance of a conflict. And as you have noted from your earliest days in office, transparency and accountability strengthen our democracy and promote efficiency and effectiveness in government.

Mr. Eisen has served as that conscience, but he has done more than that, instituting a proactive reform agenda that has touched on everything from strong protections for federal whistleblowers to robust transparency at government agencies.

Mr. President, we commend you for elevating, as no president has before, ethics, transparency and accountability issues. But, as you know, there is still much work to be done. For this reason, we hope Mr. Bauer and Mr. Croley bring the same level of commitment to reform, an ability to promote and coordinate policy implementation, and a willingness to engage with our community as Mr. Eisen did.

We look forward to continuing to work with the White House, and the replacements for Mr. Eisen, to ensure that the Administration fulfills its reform promises.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Gary D. Bass". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Gary Bass, Executive Director
OMB Watch



Melanie Sloan, Executive Director
Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington



Sharon Bradford Franklin, Senior Counsel
The Constitution Project



Heather West, Policy Analyst
Center for Democracy and Technology



Conrad Martin, Executive Director
Fund for Constitutional Government



Patrice McDermott, Director
OpenTheGovernment.org



Mark Cohen, Executive Director
Government Accountability Project



Danielle Brian, Executive Director
Project On Government Oversight (POGO)

Ellen S. Miller

Ellen Miller, Executive Director
Sunlight Foundation

A. Ryan Alexander

Ryan Alexander, President
Taxpayers for Common Sense

Francesca Grifo

Francesca Grifo, Senior Scientist and Director, Scientific Integrity Program
Union of Concerned Scientists