



U.S. House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

1139 LONGWORTH HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING

Washington, DC 20515

May 4, 2026

Ms. Mara Verheyden-Hilliard
Co-Founder and Executive Director
Partnership for Civil Justice Fund
617 Florida Ave NW
Washington, D.C. 20001

Dear Ms. Verheyden-Hilliard:

This letter responds to the Partnership for Civil Justice Fund’s (“PCJF”) September 18, 2025, letter submitted on behalf of The People’s Forum.¹ In its September 4, 2025, letter, the Committee on Ways and Means (“Committee”) set forth in detail the basis for its inquiry. In its response, PCJF questions the legislative purpose underlying the Committee’s inquiry. As set forth below, that challenge lacks merit.

As an initial matter, the Committee’s legislative purpose is clear: pursuant to its jurisdiction over organizations exempt from taxation under the Internal Revenue Code,² the Committee is conducting oversight to examine the legal standards governing the conferral and preservation of tax-exempt status, specifically, whether those standards adequately account for an organization’s connections to foreign nationals. The Committee is further considering whether legislative reform is necessary to ensure that tax-exempt status is neither extended nor maintained in circumstances that raise significant concerns regarding foreign influence or control.

The case law PCJF invokes confirms rather than undermines the legitimacy of the Committee’s inquiry.³ The Supreme Court has long recognized that Congress possesses broad investigative authority in furtherance of its legislative functions, and that authority is at its apex within Congress’s established jurisdiction. *See McGrain v. Daugherty*, 273 U.S. 135, 161 (1927) (“The power of inquiry—with process to enforce it—is an essential and appropriate auxiliary to the legislative function.”). The Committee’s legislative jurisdiction over the Internal Revenue Code and tax-exempt organizations is well-established,⁴ and oversight of whether existing law

¹ Letter from Partnership for Civil Justice Fund, letter to The Hon. Jason Smith, Chairman, Comm. on Ways and Means (Sep. 18, 2025), Letter on file with the Committee.

² Rule X, clause 1(t), Rules of the House of Representatives, (119th Cong.).

³ Letter from Partnership for Civil Justice Fund, letter to The Hon. Jason Smith, Chairman, Comm. on Ways and Means (Sep. 18, 2025), Letter on file with the Committee.

⁴ Rule X, clause 1(t), Rules of the House of Representatives, (119th Cong.).

adequately addresses foreign influence over such organizations falls squarely within the Committee's delegated authority.⁵ See *Watkins v. United States*, 354 U.S. 178, 187 (1957) ("The power of the Congress to conduct investigations is inherent in the legislative process. That power is broad. It encompasses inquiries concerning the administration of existing laws as well as proposed or possibly needed statutes.").

PCJF further characterizes the Committee's inquiry as a broad political attack on First Amendment rights, targeting viewpoints with which its leadership disagrees.⁶ That characterization is unfounded. The Committee's initial letter expressly affirmed its commitment to First Amendment protections, recognizing that Americans retain the right to peacefully express their views, even those considered reprehensible.⁷ The First Amendment does not, however, categorically shield organizations from congressional inquiry.

When Congress investigates in furtherance of a legitimate legislative purpose, any incidental burden on First Amendment activity often yield to that purpose. PCJF argues that the Committee lacks such a purpose and that its requests impinge on the organization's First Amendment rights. Neither objection withstands scrutiny. The Supreme Court has long recognized that the First Amendment does not shield a witness from congressional inquiry where that inquiry serves a valid legislative purpose, and that the government and individual interests must be weighed accordingly. See *Barenblatt v. United States*, 360 U.S. 109, 127 (1959). Both conditions are satisfied here. The Committee's legislative purpose is well-established, and any incidental First Amendment burden is plainly outweighed by Congress's interest in ensuring that tax-exempt status is neither extended nor maintained in circumstances that raise significant concerns regarding foreign influence or control, particularly where, as here, the inquiry is directed at financing arrangements and the structure of a foreign-aligned influence network, not protected speech or association. See also *Senate Permanent Subcomm. v. Ferrer*, 199 F. Supp. 3d 125 (D.D.C. 2016).

Here, the Committee's concerns are rooted in the financing of The People's Forum and its relationship to Neville Roy Singham, a former United States technology executive now residing in Shanghai with documented CCP affiliations.⁸ The People's Forum has publicly acknowledged receiving funding from Mr. Singham, and public reporting indicates that over \$20 million flowed to the organization from Mr. Singham and his wife between 2017 and 2022 – channeled through shell companies and donor-advised funds that, by design, obscure the true source of contributions.⁹ The Committee is examining whether the current legal standards

⁵ Rule X, clause 2, Rules of the House of Representatives, (119th Cong.).

⁶ Letter from Partnership for Civil Justice Fund, letter to The Hon. Jason Smith, Chairman, Comm. on Ways and Means (Sep. 18, 2025), Letter on file with the Committee.

⁷ Letter from Jason Smith, Chairman, H. Comm. On Ways and Means, letter to Manolo De Los Santos, Executive Director, The People's Forum, (Sep. 4, 2025), <https://waysandmeans.house.gov/wp-content/uploads/2025/09/9.4.25-The-Peoples-Forum-Letter.pdf>

⁸ Mara Hvistendahl, David A. Fahrenthold, et. al., A Global Web of Chinese Propaganda Leads to a U.S. Tech Mogul, NEW YORK TIMES (Aug. 10, 2023), <https://www.nytimes.com/2023/08/05/world/europe/neville-roy-singham-china-propaganda.html>.

⁹ @PeoplesForumNYC, X (Dec. 21, 2021),

<https://x.com/PeoplesForumNYC/status/1473312812944531457?lang=en>; Francesca Block, Meet the American

governing tax-exempt status adequately account for this type of foreign-aligned funding arrangement and whether such funding arrangements align with Congress' intent when tax-exempt status was created originally.

The structural concerns extend beyond financing alone. The People's Forum functions as a fiscal sponsor for a range of affiliated entities, providing fiduciary oversight, financial management, and administrative services, an arrangement that may allow foreign-influenced funds to flow to downstream organizations.¹⁰ The People's Forum is further embedded within a wider network that includes Tricontinental: Institute for Social Research and several affiliated media organizations, each identified in public reporting as part of Mr. Singham's influence apparatus.¹¹ The Committee is considering whether legislative or regulatory reform is necessary to ensure that tax-exempt status is not used to facilitate or obscure foreign influence across an interconnected network of organizations.

The Committee's authority to conduct this inquiry is well-established. Pursuant to Rule X, clause 1(t) of the Rules of the House of Representatives, the Committee has jurisdiction over matters related to tax-exempt organizations.¹² Oversight authority of this jurisdiction is delegated to the Committee under Rule X clause 2.¹³ As the Committee's investigation continues its informational needs have become more focused and narrowed. Accordingly, please provide the following documents no later than May 18, 2026.

1. All documents and communications sufficient to identify the following:
 - a. Any organization since 2017 for which The People's Forum has provided fiduciary oversight, financial management, or other administrative services and that has received or transmitted funds connected to foreign nationals or foreign entities;
 - b. The years during which The People's Forum acted as a fiscal sponsor for each such organization; and
 - c. The type of support provided to each such organization.
2. All contracts, from 2017 to present, between The People's Forum and fiscally sponsored projects that involve foreign nationals or foreign entities.

millionaire Marxists funding anti-Israel rallies, NEW YORK POST (Nov. 16, 2023),

<https://nypost.com/2023/11/16/opinion/meet-the-american-millionaire-marxists-funding-anti-israel-rallies/>.

¹⁰ Ryan Mauro, March Toward Violence: The Domestic Anti-Israeli Protest Movement, Capital Research Center (Oct. 9, 2024), <https://capitalresearch.org/article/marching-toward-violence-the-domestic-anti-israeli-protest-movement/>.

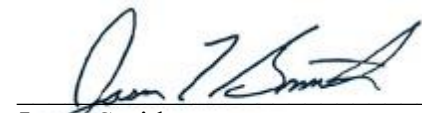
¹¹ Mara Hvistendahl, David A. Fahrenthold, et. al., A Global Web of Chinese Propaganda Leads to a U.S. Tech Mogul, NEW YORK TIMES (Aug. 10, 2023), <https://www.nytimes.com/2023/08/05/world/europe/neville-roy-singham-china-propaganda.html>; Alexander Reid Ross and Courtney Dobson, The Big Business of Uyghur Genocide Denial (Jan. 18, 2022), <https://newlinesmag.com/reportage/the-big-business-of-uyghur-genocide-denial/>; Micah Reddy and Sam Sole, Who Killed New Frame? AMABHUGANE (July 27, 2022), <https://amabhugane.org/220727-who-killed-new-frame/>; Staff, The People's Forum (last accessed July 8, 2025), <https://peoplesforum.org/about/staff/>.

¹² Rule X, clause 1(t), Rules of the House of Representatives, (119th Cong.).

¹³ Rule X, clause 2, Rules of the House of Representatives, (119th Cong.).

3. All documents and communications, from 2017 to present, between any employee of The People's Forum and Neville Roy Singham, referring or relating to the finances, governance, or organizational structure of The People's Forum.
4. All documents and communications, from 2017 to present, between any employee of The People's Forum and foreign principals referring or relating to the finances, governance, or organizational structure of The People's Forum, including communications with:
 - a. A government of a foreign country or a foreign political party;
 - b. A partnership, association, corporation, organization, or other combination of persons organized under the laws of or having its principal place of business in a foreign country.
5. A list of foreign nationals and foreign organizations that have donated, either directly or indirectly through other foreign nationals, foreign entities, shell companies, or donor-advised funds, more than \$5,000 to The People's Forum, from 2017 to present.
6. A list of all grant recipients of The People's Forum located outside of the United States, from 2017 to present.

Sincerely,



Jason Smith
Chairman
Committee on Ways and Means