

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

April 26, 2010

John E. Potter
Postmaster General
475 L'Enfant Plaza SW
Washington, D.C. 20260

Dear Mr. Potter,

We write to request that you conduct an investigation of the attached mailing that was sent to a resident of California by the Republican National Committee (RNC). Based on recent press reports, similar mailings have been received by individuals in Washington State, Nevada, Utah, and Nebraska.

On February 9, 2010, in response to virtually identical RNC mailings, we introduced legislation, the Prevent Deceptive Census Look-Alike Mailings Act (H.R. 4621), that passed the House and Senate unanimously, which President Obama signed into law on April 7, 2010 (P.L. 111-155) in an amazingly quick 57 days from introduction to the President's desk. The attached letter sent to a California resident in apparent violation of the law is dated April 12, less than a week after H.R. 4621 became law.

The new law requires any mailing with an envelope marked "Census" to clearly indicate the sender and return address. It also triggers an existing requirement in federal law to include a disclaimer that the mailing is not from, or affiliated with, the federal government.

As you can see, the enclosed mailing is nearly identical to mailings we brought to your attention in December 2009 that prompted congressional action, which the Postal Service decided were not in violation of federal law at that time. On the new mailing, there does not appear to be a return address identifying the RNC as the sender, in clear violation of the new law. Bold lettering saying "Do Not Destroy" and "Official Document" remains on the exterior envelope with, in much smaller print, a disclaimer that the mailing "is not a U.S. Government document." This is, at best, highly confusing to recipients of the mailing and subject to review by postal authorities.

Once again, it appears the RNC is attempting to mislead recipients with fundraising mailings designed to look like census documents, despite bipartisan congressional action to stop just this type of mailing. As the 2010 Census is currently ongoing, we hope that the United States Postal Inspection Service will consider a prompt investigation into this matter and to make a ruling as soon as possible. We fear that intentionally misleading mailings like these once again threaten to undermine the accuracy of the 2010 count.

We look forward to your prompt reply.

Sincerely,

Wm. Lacy Clay

WM. LACY CLAY

Chair

Subcommittee on
Information Policy, Census
and National Archives

Carolyn B. Maloney

CAROLYN B. MALONEY

Member of Congress