

January 16, 2014 - Watchdogs to Sue FEC for Dismissal of Crossroads GPS Complaint Republican Commissioners Ignored FEC General Counsel's Clear-Cut Case Against 501(c)(4)

WASHINGTON, D.C. – The Campaign Legal Center and Public Citizen today announced plans to file suit against the Federal Election Commission (FEC) for its dismissal of a complaint against Crossroads GPS. The complaint stemmed from the group's failure to register as a political committee and disclose its donors despite huge expenditures on political advertising in the 2010 election cycle.

Public Citizen, ProtectOurDemocracy.org and others filed a complaint with the FEC in October 2010 alleging that the group's campaign expenditures and organizational objectives made it a political committee that must disclose its donors under federal campaign laws. Despite the strong case made by the FEC's General Counsel that the 501(c)(4) group violated federal law, the Commission deadlocked along party lines over whether to investigate further, preventing any action. While the Democratic commissioners agreed there was enough evidence to proceed, the three Republican commissioners voted against looking into the case further.

The suit will argue that the FEC's dismissal of the case following the 3-3 deadlock was arbitrary, capricious, an abuse of discretion and contrary to the law.

"The nonpartisan General Counsel's office recognized Crossroad GPS's failure to register as a political committee as a clear-cut violation of the law and strongly recommended a full investigation but once again the Republican Commissioners blocked enforcement of the laws on the books," said Paul S. Ryan, Senior Counsel at the Campaign Legal Center. "Despite the Supreme Court's assurances in Citizens United that voters would have full disclosure by groups like Crossroads GPS, the group has spent nearly \$100 million on election ads since 2010 without disclosing its donors. A ruling by the FEC that Crossroads GPS is a political committee would result in this disclosure for past and future elections."

Legal Center Executive Director J. Gerald Hebert said, "This case will test whether the courts will hold groups that spend tens of millions of dollars to influence federal elections accountable when they try to claim their purpose is not to influence federal elections."

"The rationale of the Republican bloc of commissioners is tortured and obstructionist," said Craig Holman, co-signer of the complaint. "They refused to follow the FEC's own policies in

determining political committee status.”

Attorneys at the Campaign Legal Center and Scott Nelson of Public Citizen will be representing the complainants who filed the 2010 FEC complaint, including Public Citizen, ProtectOurElections.org, Kevin Zeese and Craig Holman. The suit will be filed in federal district court within 60 days of the complaint’s dismissal by the FEC, as required by law.

To read the original complaint, [click here](#) .

To read the statement by the Democratic Commissioners of the FEC, [click here](#) .

To read the FEC General Counsel’s recommendation, [click here](#) .