



RE: Your support of a “no outside spending” pledge in the California 17<sup>th</sup> congressional district race

Dear Rep. Honda,

Across the country, our elections have become increasingly flooded with money from unaccountable, outside interests. Already this cycle, super PACs have amassed war chests totaling more than \$250 million, with multiples of that sure to come as Election Day draws closer. Nearly all of this money will be used to blanket the public airwaves with negative attack ads, and much of it will come from “dark money” groups whose true sources of funding the public will never be able to see.

California voters deserve a more accountable election than this, and today we ask that you take advantage of an opportunity to give them one. Specifically, we ask that you sign a pledge to keep super PACs and other outside spending groups out of the 17<sup>th</sup> congressional district race in 2016.

As you know, since you considered taking this action last election, the idea is simple: you and your fellow candidates would make a mutual, public agreement to reject support from super PACs and other outside groups, each promising that in the event of a violation, you would take a proportional amount of money from your own campaign account and donate it to charity. With a pledge like this in place, it would no longer be in the interest of super PACs to spend money in your race.

Four years ago, the Massachusetts Senate race between Elizabeth Warren and Scott Brown offered proof that such a pledge works. By making exactly the kind of agreement described above, the candidates disincentivized spending activity by outside groups, successfully eliminating virtually all super PAC spending from the race and cutting the volume of negative advertising in half.

In 2014, nearly \$1 million was spent by outside groups to influence the outcome of the election in the 17<sup>th</sup> congressional district. Without your action today, there is no reason to think that the same won’t happen again this year. By signing a “no outside spending” agreement, you could stop outside money from flooding the public airwaves, not only making the race more transparent and accountable to voters, but also ensuring that its dialogue is more civil and productive, as control over campaign messaging would be returned to you and your fellow candidates.

At a time when 87% of Americans believe that our campaign finance system should be reformed, the pledge that we are asking you to sign is a unique opportunity to make your candidacy for office, and the entirety of California’s 17<sup>th</sup> congressional district, a model for the nation.

We hope you will take advantage of this opportunity by agreeing to sign the pledge, of which you will find the proposed language attached here. We would welcome the opportunity to speak with you further about it and answer any questions you might have. Thank you very much for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Jim Greer  
President & Founder, CounterPAC

Ethan Beard  
Roy Bahat  
YuChiang Cheng  
John Cox  
Matt Cutts  
Emily Greer  
Jim Heerwagen  
Bob Ippolito

Daphne Keller  
Tim O’Reilly  
Jen Pahlka  
John Riccitiello  
Greg Richardson  
Craig Sherman  
Parker Thompson  
Ted Wang



## "No Outside Money" Pledge

### The Candidates reject the following expenditures by any entity:

- *independent expenditures*, that is, any independent-expenditure television, radio, cable, satellite, or online advertising by a third party in support of or in opposition to a named, referenced (including by title), or otherwise identified Candidate;
- *electioneering communications*, that is, any television, radio, cable, or satellite advertising by a third party that names, references (including by title), or otherwise identifies a Candidate; and
- *coordinated communications*, that is, any paid advertisement that a Candidate or anyone acting on his or her behalf coordinates with a third party.

**Countering Rejected Expenditures.** Any "independent expenditure" or "electioneering communication," or "coordinated communication" shall be considered a "rejected expenditure." If any rejected expenditure is made, the campaign committee of the Candidate that is advantaged by the rejected expenditure must, within three days of the expenditure, donate 50% of the cost of the rejected expenditure to a non-political, non-partisan, public charity of the opposing Candidate's choice.

**Resolution of Disputes.** If any dispute arises with regard to whether a rejected expenditure has been made, which Candidate has been advantaged by a rejected expenditure, the amount of a rejected expenditure, whether the rejected expenditure has been countered as described in this Agreement, or any other question about the terms of this Agreement, either Candidate may seek a determination from CounterPAC, an independent, nonpartisan political organization dedicated to challenging and offsetting the effects of outside organizations on congressional campaigns. CounterPAC's determination will be binding on the Candidates.

**Further Cooperation of the Candidates.** The Candidates will work together to limit the influence of third-party rejected expenditures in the campaign and to close any loopholes that may be discovered in this agreement during the course of the campaign.