

January 31, 2017

Congressman Thomas J. Hensarling  
Chairman of the House Financial  
Services Committee  
2228 Rayburn HOB  
Washington, DC 20515



Dear Congressman Thomas J. Hensarling,

We are writing to urge you to oppose any congressional steps to eliminate in part or in whole the legal requirement to disclose payments made to foreign governments for oil, natural gas and mining extraction as stipulated in section 1504 of U.S. Law H.R. 4173: Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act. In particular, we understand that a Congressional Review Act resolution of disapproval has been introduced, or will be introduced, in both the House and Senate. This law, also known as the bipartisan Cardin-Lugar Anti-Corruption provision, promotes a fundamental principle in development and political science: corruption is a lifeline for tyranny and a threat to peace, justice, just economic prosperity and democracy.

We are Africa Faith & Justice Network, a Catholic membership organization representing 25 religious congregations and many more supporting members with a specific focus on advocacy and education for the transformation of U.S. policy toward Africa. Our members, many of whom are working in Africa as missionaries, know firsthand that one of Africa's largest ills is corruption.

In many corrupt nations, the issue is not the lack of anti-corruption laws, but the lack of enforcement. For decades the U.S. government has been sending free money in foreign aid to foreign governments, among them oil, natural gas and mineral rich nations, to fund anti-corruption programs with the hope that they would invest the recovered money in much needed service delivery or poverty alleviation projects. The outcome has not been positive.

The disclosure requirement in Section 1504 will help to address some of the corruption risks in the concerned countries.

These are just some of the reasons why we urge you to support this law:

- Section 1504 is a relatively efficient instrument by the U.S. government to promote transparency and responsible investment.
- U.S. tax payers' money previously used for anti-corruption programs in oil, natural gas and mineral rich nations will remain here and benefit American citizens.
- By knowing how much these foreign governments receive in sales of their natural resources, citizens can then demand accountability from their governments. This law minimizes the scope of corruption and the possibility for kickbacks between companies' contract negotiators and governments, which happens in informal settings before a contract is signed.
- The disclosure empowers civil society groups as well as responsible and concerned leaders to hold their governments accountable.

- The law protects U.S. companies from harassment by corrupt governments when negotiating these contracts.
- It helps restore the fast eroding U.S. image in developing nations, some of which are covered by this law, in the areas of corporate land grabbing, corruption in natural gas exploitation, oil and mining concessions acquisition.
- In some countries, the law improves competitiveness of U.S. companies against neocolonial policies by former colonial masters who still think they deserve priority on businesses contracts in their former colonies.
- The law does not excuse corruption by some oil, gas and mining companies which want to do business as usual and contribute to lawlessness in these natural gas and mineral rich countries.

We once again urge you to lean forward and embrace truth, transparency and justice. This law is a testament that the U.S. is a forward-looking country in a community of nations where transparency is a standard.

Cc: All House Financial Services Committee Members