



SPLC
Southern Poverty
Law Center



April 1, 2009

The Honorable John Conyers
Chairman, House Committee on the Judiciary
2138 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Conyers:

It has come to our attention that Kris Kobach has been invited to participate as a panel witness for the Joint Hearing on the Local Enforcement of Immigration Laws scheduled for 10 a.m. Thursday, April 2, in the Rayburn Building, Room 2141, in Washington D.C. We respectfully request that the committee reconsider the invitation.

While Mr. Kobach is listed as a law professor at the University of Missouri, Kansas City, School of Law, we believe members also should be aware that he is the senior counsel for the Immigration Reform Law Institute (IRLI), the legal arm of the Federation for American Immigration Reform (FAIR). To date, FAIR and IRLI have paid Mr. Kobach \$125,000 to serve as IRLI legal counsel.

FAIR is listed as a hate group by the Southern Poverty Law Center, which publishes annual listings of such organizations. Among the reasons are its acceptance of \$1.2 million from the Pioneer Fund, a group founded to promote the genes of white colonials that funds studies of race, intelligence and genetics. FAIR has hired as key officials men who also joined white supremacist groups. It has board members who write regularly for hate publications. It promotes racist conspiracy theories about Latino immigrants. It has produced television programming featuring white nationalists. And John Tanton, the man who founded the group in 1979, has a long personal history of associating with white nationalists. In a 1993 letter to Garret Hardin, a committed eugenicist who promoted pseudo-scientific ideas of racial purity, Tanton wrote candidly: "I've come to the point of view that for European-American society and culture to persist requires a European-American majority, and a clear one at that."

In 2004, FAIR donated \$10,000 to Kris Kobach's congressional campaign in Kansas. When Mr. Kobach lost the race due in large part to his widely publicized ties to white nationalists, a supporter told a reporter, "It doesn't help matters that Kobach was hired by FAIR, widely perceived as a racist anti-immigrant group during the campaign." (Kansas City Star, June 8, 2004).

For all of these reasons, the Center for New Community and the Southern Poverty Law Center are deeply disappointed that the committee is seeking the testimony of Mr. Kobach, and urge that the invitation be rescinded.

Sincerely,

Mark Potok
Southern Poverty Law Center

The Reverend David L. Ostendorf
Executive Director
Center for New Community

cc: The Honorable Zoe Lofgren
The Honorable Jerrold Nadler
The Honorable Lamar Smith
The Honorable Steve King
The Honorable James Sensenbrenner, Jr.