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NEWS RELEASE

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Making Every Legal Vote Count, But Only Once by Senator Larry Craig

About 70 percent of America's eligible population is registered to vote. Only 50 percent of that voting age population has turned out for most modern-day presidential elections, though 56.7 percent voted in the last presidential election.

Voting is the way our democracy appoints representatives in our government, so I am all for legal grassroots activity and encouragement to increase participation and turnout. But over recent days, a number of Idahoans have contacted me to express your concern over the voting registration drives of a particular advocacy group, the Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now, otherwise known as ACORN. ACORN was founded in 1970 by two former 1960s radicals allegedly for the purpose of advocating for low and moderate income families.

While some of ACORN's current members and affiliates limit their activities to legitimate grassroots advocacy, there's a much more disturbing side to the organization, as well.

Today they are recipients of millions of federal taxpayer dollars which organization whistleblowers say have been used to lobby for bigger government and to fund their so-called environmental justice, social justice and housing programs. If you're looking for contributors to the current subprime-initiated credit crunch roiling our economy, know that ACORN for years has bullied lenders into making loans to ineligible ACORN clients by taking over targeted bank lobbies – making it impossible for business to be conducted – and even staking out the homes of bankers and threatening their families. Incredibly, ACORN even convinced their Democrat allies in the Congress to include federal dollars for them in the recent \$700 billion financial institutions rescue bill, but that funding was removed before the bill passed.

Despite receiving federal tax dollars, ACORN has endorsed Democratic presidential nominee Barack Obama, who has a close relationship with the group and whose campaign recently paid an ACORN affiliate \$832,000 in cash to get out the vote.

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You're hearing about ACORN now because they are engaged in a multi-million dollar registration drive of new Democrats, and their legally-challenged methods have prompted State and local investigations into potentially hundreds of thousands of fraudulent voter registration applications in Washington, Nevada, New Mexico, Missouri, Wisconsin, Ohio, Michigan, Pennsylvania, Connecticut, Texas, North Carolina and Florida. Twelve State investigations can't be explained away as isolated incidences of alleged voter registration fraud.

A 19-year-old Cleveland, Ohio, man told a local election board that ACORN workers urged him to sign 73 different voter registration forms. In Las Vegas, Nevada, another key battleground State, false registration forms were filed in the names of the starting line-up of the Dallas Cowboys football team. The Michigan Attorney General has charged a former ACORN worker with forging voter registration applications. The Ohio Secretary of State conceded on October 15 that the eligibility of nearly a third of its newly-registered voters is in question. In Missouri, a paid ACORN worker was found guilty of vote fraud after she hired 30 workers who sat in a St. Louis restaurant and filled out 1,500 fraudulent voter registration cards with falsified information.

The word "breathtaking" hardly begins to describe the scale of this voter registration fraud, which could undermine the election by enabling some individuals to vote multiple times, and others not eligible for the privilege, to cast illegal votes.

Law enforcement sources on October 16 confirmed that the Federal Bureau of Investigation now is investigating whether ACORN helped foster voter registration fraud around the nation before the presidential election. I support that action, and I will be vigilant in opposing any further attempts by the Congress to fund ACORN's operations on the backs of the taxpayers.