The Honorable Tom Carper Chairman Homeland Security and Government Affairs Committee 340 Dirksen Senate Office Building

The Honorable Tom Coburn
Ranking Member
Homeland Security and Government Affairs Committee
340 Dirksen Senate Office Building

July 29, 2014

BY EMAIL

Re: The Presidential Library Donation Reform Act of 2014, S. 2640

Dear Senators Carper and Coburn:

We the undersigned organizations are writing to thank you for introducing the Presidential Library Donation Reform Act (PLDRA), S. 2640. The bipartisan legislation would introduce a measure of transparency to fundraising for presidential libraries.

PLDRA requires presidential library fundraising organizations to submit quarterly reports to the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) on entities that have contributed \$200 or more towards the fundraising organization in a single quarter. Presidential library fundraising organizations must submit reports to NARA until both the president is out of office and the fundraising organization and the Archivist have reached an agreement on the use of the library. Reports must include the amount of the contribution, the address of the contributor, the date of the contribution, and the occupation of the contributor if made by an individual. In turn NARA must publish the reports online in a searchable, sortable, downloadable format within 30 days of receipt.

Under the current opaque system, presidents raise funds privately to establish their presidential libraries. These efforts, which often begin long before presidents leave office, are unregulated and undisclosed, creating opportunities for, or the appearance of, influence-peddling. In the past, donations have been connected to a series of scandals. Improved transparency would help reduce the appearance of impropriety and deter inappropriate behavior.

The House Oversight and Government Reform Committee favorably reported a companion bill, H.R. 1133, by a voice vote on March 20, 2013, and the House of Representatives favorably received similar legislation in previous years. We hope prompt action by the Senate Homeland Security and Government Affairs Committee will lead to quick action by the Senate and the opportunity for the House of Representatives to act before the end of the session.

We appreciate your efforts to shed light on the murky world of presidential library fundraising organizations. If we can be of assistance, please contact Daniel Schuman, policy director, Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington, at 202-408-5565 or dschuman@citizensforethics.org.

With best regards,

Sunlight Foundation

American Library Association
The Campaign Legal Center
Center for Effective Government
Center for Media and Democracy
Center for Responsive Politics
Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington -- CREW
Democracy 21
iSolon.org
Northern California Association of Law Libraries
OpenTheGovernment.org
Progressive Librarians Guild
Project On Government Oversight -- POGO
Public Citizen
Society of Professional Journalists