



U.S. House of Representatives

Washington, DC 20515

COMMITTEE ON THE BUDGET

February 9, 2021

The Honorable Chuck Schumer
Majority Leader
U.S. Senate
S-221, The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Republican Leader
U.S. Senate
S-230, The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Bernie Sanders
Chairman
Committee on the Budget
U.S. Senate
624 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Lindsey Graham
Ranking Member
Committee on the Budget
U.S. Senate
624 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Majority Leader Schumer, Republican Leader McConnell, Chairman Sanders, and Ranking Member Graham:

It is critical that a transparent, productive relationship with respect and understanding continues between Congress and the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) under President Biden's Administration. As the Republican Leader of the U.S. House Committee on the Budget with jurisdiction over OMB, I have serious concerns that Neera Tanden would not bring the appropriate leadership and judgement as Director of OMB necessary to best serve the American people.

OMB assists the President of the United States in implementing the Administration's vision across the Executive Branch; it is the largest component of the Executive Office of the President with almost 500 employees. It is important that the OMB Director can lead this large office with sound judgment and bipartisan civility. Unfortunately, Ms. Tanden's past conduct, as I noted in a letter dated December 18, 2020 to Ron Klain of the Biden-Harris Transition Team, raises questions about whether she would be able to provide such leadership. For example:

- In 2008, as a senior aide to Hillary Clinton's presidential campaign, Ms. Tanden allegedly pushed and/or hit a reporter when the reporter asked Clinton about her support for the Iraq War.¹

¹ Elizabeth Williamson and Kenneth Vogel, *The Rematch: Bernie Sanders vs a Clinton Loyalist*, New York Times, Apr. 15, 2019, <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/04/15/us/politics/tanden-sanders-.html>.

- A 2018 report found that Ms. Tanden named the anonymous victim at the center of sexual-harassment allegations between two employees at an organization she led.² Employees at the organization who witnessed Ms. Tanden’s transgression responded to the event by saying:
 - “Neera lost the organization today.”³
 - “As a manager I don’t know how I can tell staff to trust the system when the head of the organization just outed the victim in front of the entire organization. It is impossible to trust her.”⁴
- A former employee has said that Ms. Tanden is a “very bad organizational leader” who lacked “leadership and moral courage.”⁵

I have yet to receive a response from Mr. Klain, or anyone else in the Biden Administration, on these serious concerns, particularly her role in neglectfully disclosing the name of one of her own employees who was at the center of a sexual-harassment allegation dispute with another employee. It would be the height of irresponsibility to put someone with this documented managerial record in the top leadership role at a major federal agency, responsible for hundreds of civil servants, putting at risk the rights and protections guaranteed to the employees of OMB.

I am additionally concerned about the level of partisanship that Ms. Tanden has demonstrated. She has repeatedly attacked Republican members of the United States Senatorial body on social media outlets, particularly on Twitter.⁶ Ms. Tanden has since deleted over 1,000 tweets.⁷ Rather than forming coalitions with lawmakers across the aisle, Ms. Tanden has continually put politics first.

Further, I am concerned about the access the financial backers of her former employer would now have to the highest levels of the federal government. In her nine years as President of the Center for American Progress (CAP), Ms. Tanden cultivated relationships with Wall Street financiers, big banks, Silicon Valley titans, foreign

² Sarah Mimms, *The Center for American Progress Staff was Shocked After Neera Tanden Named the Anonymous Harassment Victim in an All-Staff Meeting*, BuzzFeed News, Apr 25, 2018, <https://www.buzzfeednews.com/article/sarahmimms/center-for-american-progress-staff-shocked-after-neera>.

³ Id.

⁴ Katie Duffy, *Why Neera Tanden, Biden’s New Pick for a Top Economic Role, Has Been Called a Terrible Leader and ‘Impossible to Trust’ by Some of her Former Colleagues*, Business Insider, Nov 30, 2020, <https://www.businessinsider.com/biden-neera-tanden-omb-cap-sexual-harassment-punched-reporter-2020-11>.

⁵ Id.

⁶ Em Steck, *Neera Tanden deleted tweets slamming GOP senators ahead of nomination to become OMB director*, CNN, Dec. 2, 2020, <https://www.cnn.com/2020/12/02/politics/kfile-neera-tanden-deleted-tweets-slamming-gop/index.html>.

⁷ Hanna Trudo and Adam Rawnsley, *Neera Tanden Mean-Tweeted GOP Lawmakers- Until She Needed Their Votes*, The Daily Beast, Nov. 30, 2020, <https://www.thedailybeast.com/neera-tanden-mean-tweeted-gop-lawmakersuntil-she-needed-their-votes?ref=wrap>.

governments, defense contractors, and the health care industry. CAP received at least \$33 million in donations from these firms, including Walmart, Amazon, Facebook, Google, J.P. Morgan, and Bank of America among many others. Foreign funding included \$2.5 million from the United Arab Emirates and additional money from the Japanese Embassy and the Korea Foundation.⁸ Ms. Tanden was paid \$732,000 over two years at CAP, along with receiving over \$30,000 in speaking fees, and \$70,000 from the Center for American Progress Action Fund.

It should also be noted that CAP has a history of going to great lengths to appease its donors, from censoring its own researchers' reports to pushing policies that directly benefit its benefactors. Some examples include:

- In 2015, CAP removed an entire chapter, over 4,000 words, from a lengthy report on anti-Muslim bias. The censored portion was on police surveillance of Muslims by the New York City police under former Mayor Michael Bloomberg. In addition to the chapter, any mention of Bloomberg, who at the time of the report had already donated almost \$1.5 million to CAP, was also removed.⁹
- In 2020, CAP released a comprehensive COVID-19 plan that proposed Congress should appropriate \$7.2 billion for the Access to COVID-19 Tools (ACT) Accelerator. Among the organizations that collaborated on this project was a CAP donor, the Gates Foundation.¹⁰
- CAP has also published several articles in support of pro-union policies such as sectoral bargaining¹¹ and a tax deduction for union dues.¹² These are positions that directly benefit at least two of CAP's donors: the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees and the American Federation of Teachers.

Any consideration of Ms. Tanden for OMB Director should include a thorough review of the powerful ties she established and cemented with various industries and foreign governments as they do not disappear with a political appointment. Unfortunately, we have so far heard nothing on whether these same entities who have financed her day-to-

⁸ Id.

⁹ Amy Goodman, Yasmine Taeb, and Blake Zeff, *How Bloomberg-Funded Center for American Progress Censored a Report on NYPD Surveillance of Muslims*, Democracy Now, Feb. 17, 2020, https://www.democracynow.org/2020/2/17/michael_bloomberg_philanthropic_spending_muting_critics.

¹⁰ Topher Spiro and Zeke Emanuel, *A Comprehensive COVID-19 Vaccine Plan*, Center for American Progress, Jul. 28, 2020, <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/healthcare/reports/2020/07/28/488196/comprehensive-covid-19-vaccine-plan/>.

¹¹ David Madland and Malkie Wall, *What is Sectoral Bargaining?*, Center for American Progress, Mar. 2, 2020, <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/ext/2020/03/02/485080/what-is-sectoral-bargaining/>.

¹² Alexandra Thornton, *Why All Workers Should Be Able To Deduct Union Dues*, Center for American Progress, Dec. 19, 2019, <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/economy/reports/2019/12/19/478894/workers-able-deduct-union-dues/>.

day operations will continue to have influence over Ms. Tanden and the agency she would run.

Additionally, Ms. Tanden and CAP have supported numerous destructive and expensive policies, some of which would particularly harm middle- and low- income families while others would weaken the American economy as a whole. I am concerned that as OMB Director, Ms. Tanden would continue pushing these unpopular, damaging policies including:

- A soda tax which, according to a Tax Foundation study, two-thirds of the tax collections would come from households with incomes between \$20,000 and \$100,000.¹³ This is a stark contrast from President's Biden's promise not to raise taxes on anyone earning less than \$400,000.
- In 2018, CAP released a plan entitled "Medicare Extra for All" that would transition health care to a government-controlled system. Their own estimates concluded it would raise federal spending by \$4.5 trillion over 10 years. Not only would this plan push us towards a complete government takeover of health care, but the policy would result in an acceleration of the shrinkage of the medical workforce and worse care for patients.
- In 2019, John Podesta and Ms. Tanden released statements of "Praise" for the Green New Deal, which would cost the government \$93 trillion over 10 years. The Green New Deal would affect every sector of the American economy, from energy, agriculture, and manufacturing to transportation, housing and health care. Even proponents of the proposal describe it as "a massive transformation of our society."¹⁴ The estimated cost per household could be over \$60,000 per year.

As President Biden speaks of unity and bipartisanship, his OMB nominee has repeatedly demonstrated extreme partisanship, even alienating members of the President's own party.¹⁵ Ms. Tanden does not appear to have the leadership qualities needed to represent such an important agency, and her divisive history will likely only further divide Americans, rather than unite.

I strongly urge you to reject President Biden's nomination of Neera Tanden as Director of OMB and request that the President nominate a qualified leader and less divisive

¹³ Justin Ross and Felipe Lozano-Rojas, *Are Sugar-Sweetened Beverage Taxes Regressive? Evidence from Household Retail Purchases*, Tax Foundation, Jun. 19, 2018, <https://taxfoundation.org/soda-taxes-regressive/>.

¹⁴ Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, *Green New Deal: Fact Sheet and FAQ From Rep. Alexandria Ocasio Cortez and Sen. Edward Markey*, The Heartland Institute, Feb. 8, 2019, <https://www.heartland.org/publications-resources/publications/green-new-deal-fact-sheet-and-faq-from-rep-alexandria-ocasio-cortez-and-sen-edward-markey>.

¹⁵ Shane Devine, *Democratic Infighting over Biden's Nomination of Neera Tanden*, The Daily Beast, Jan. 21, 2021, <https://www.thedailybeast.com/neera-tanden-mean-tweeted-gop-lawmakersuntil-she-needed-their-votes?ref=wrap>.

individual to head this important office which serves as an indispensable bridge between the Executive and Legislative branches.

Sincerely,



Jason Smith
Republican Leader
Committee on the Budget



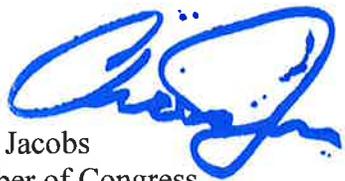
Tom McClintock
Member of Congress
Committee on the Budget



Glenn Grothman
Member of Congress
Committee on the Budget



Lloyd Smucker
Member of Congress
Committee on the Budget



Chris Jacobs
Member of Congress
Committee on the Budget



Michael C. Burgess, M.D.
Member of Congress
Committee on the Budget



Earl L. "Buddy" Carter
Member of Congress
Committee on the Budget



Ben Cline
Member of Congress
Committee on the Budget



Lauren Boebert
Member of Congress
Committee on the Budget



Byron Donalds
Member of Congress
Committee on the Budget



Randy Feenstra
Member of Congress
Committee on the Budget



Bob Good
Member of Congress
Committee on the Budget



Ashley Hinson
Member of Congress
Committee on the Budget



Jay Obernolte
Member of Congress
Committee on the Budget

cc: Mr. Robert Fairweather
Acting Director
Office of Management and Budget

Ms. Kathleen McGettigan
Acting Director
Office of Personnel Management

Ms. Sarah Spooner
Assistant Director for Management and Operations
Office of Management and Budget

The Honorable Tammy Baldwin, U.S. Senate, Wisconsin
The Honorable John Barrasso, U.S. Senate, Wyoming
The Honorable Michael F. Bennet, U.S. Senate, Colorado
The Honorable Marsha Blackburn, U.S. Senate, Tennessee
The Honorable Richard Blumenthal, U.S. Senate, Connecticut
The Honorable Roy Blunt, U.S. Senate, Missouri
The Honorable Cory A. Booker, U.S. Senate, New Jersey
The Honorable John Boozman, U.S. Senate, Arkansas
The Honorable Mike Braun, U.S. Senate, Indiana
The Honorable Sherrod Brown, U.S. Senate, Ohio
The Honorable Richard Burr, U.S. Senate, North Carolina
The Honorable Maria Cantwell, U.S. Senate, Washington
The Honorable Shelley Moore Capito, U.S. Senate, West Virginia
The Honorable Benjamin L. Cardin, U.S. Senate, Maryland
The Honorable Thomas R. Carper, U.S. Senate, Delaware
The Honorable Robert P. Casey, Jr. U.S. Senate, Pennsylvania
The Honorable Bill Cassidy, U.S. Senate, Louisiana
The Honorable Mike Crapo, U.S. Senate, Idaho
The Honorable Susan M. Collins, U.S. Senate, Maine
The Honorable Christopher A. Coons, U.S. Senate, Louisiana
The Honorable John Cornyn, U.S. Senate, Texas
The Honorable Tom Cotton, U.S. Senate, Arkansas
The Honorable Kevin Cramer, U.S. Senate, North Dakota
The Honorable Ted Cruz, U.S. Senate, Texas
The Honorable Steve Daines, U.S. Senate, Montana
The Honorable Tammy Duckworth, U.S. Senate, Illinois
The Honorable Richard J. Durbin, U.S. Senate, Illinois
The Honorable Joni Ernst, U.S. Senate, Iowa
The Honorable Deb Fischer, U.S. Senate, Nebraska
The Honorable Dianne Feinstein, U.S. Senate, California
The Honorable Kirsten E. Gillibrand, U.S. Senate, New York
The Honorable Chuck Grassley, U.S. Senate, Iowa
The Honorable Bill Hagerty, U.S. Senate, Tennessee
The Honorable Margaret Wood Hassan, U.S. Senate, New Hampshire
The Honorable Josh Hawley, U.S. Senate, Missouri
The Honorable Martin Heinrich, U.S. Senate, New Mexico
The Honorable John Hickenlooper, U.S. Senate, Colorado
The Honorable Mazie Hirono, U.S. Senate, Hawaii
The Honorable John Hoeven, U.S. Senate, North Dakota
The Honorable Cindy Hyde-Smith, U.S. Senate, Mississippi

The Honorable James M. Inhofe, U.S. Senate, Oklahoma
The Honorable Ron Johnson, U.S. Senate, Wisconsin
The Honorable Tim Kaine, U.S. Senate, Virginia
The Honorable Mark Kelly, U.S. Senate, Arizona
The Honorable John Kennedy, U.S. Senate, Louisiana
The Honorable Angus S. King Jr., U.S. Senate, Maine
The Honorable Amy Klobuchar, U.S. Senate, Minnesota
The Honorable James Lankford, U.S. Senate, Oklahoma
The Honorable Patrick J. Leahy, U.S. Senate, Vermont
The Honorable Mike Lee, U.S. Senate, Utah
The Honorable Ben Ray Luján, U.S. Senate, New Mexico
The Honorable Cynthia M. Lummis, U.S. Senate, Wyoming
The Honorable Joe Manchin, III U.S. Senate, West Virginia
The Honorable Edward J. Markey, U.S. Senate, Massachusetts
The Honorable Roger Marshall, M.D., U.S. Senate, Kansas
The Honorable Catherine Cortez Masto, U.S. Senate, Nevada
The Honorable Robert Menendez, U.S. Senate, New Jersey
The Honorable Jeff Merkley, U.S. Senate, Oregon
The Honorable Jerry Moran, U.S. Senate, Kansas
The Honorable Lisa Murkowski, U.S. Senate, Alaska
The Honorable Christopher Murphy, U.S. Senate, Connecticut
The Honorable Patty Murray, U.S. Senate, Washington
The Honorable Jon Ossoff, U.S. Senate, Georgia
The Honorable Alex Padilla, U.S. Senate, California
The Honorable Rand Paul, U.S. Senate, Kentucky
The Honorable Gary C. Peters, U.S. Senate, Michigan
The Honorable Rob Portman, U.S. Senate, Ohio
The Honorable Jack Reed, U.S. Senate, Rhode Island
The Honorable James E. Risch, U.S. Senate, Idaho
The Honorable Mitt Romney, U.S. Senate, Utah
The Honorable Jacky Rosen, U.S. Senate, Nevada
The Honorable Mike Rounds, U.S. Senate, South Dakota
The Honorable Marco Rubio, U.S. Senate, Florida
The Honorable Ben Sasse, U.S. Senate, Nebraska
The Honorable Rick Scott, U.S. Senate, Florida
The Honorable Tim Scott, U.S. Senate, South Carolina
The Honorable Brian Schatz, U.S. Senate, Hawaii
The Honorable Jeanne Shaheen, U.S. Senate, New Hampshire
The Honorable Richard C. Shelby, U.S. Senate, Alabama
The Honorable Kyrsten Sinema, U.S. Senate, Arizona
The Honorable Tina Smith, U.S. Senate, New Mexico
The Honorable Debbie Stabenow, U.S. Senate, Michigan
The Honorable Dan Sullivan, U.S. Senate, Alaska
The Honorable Jon Tester, U.S. Senate, Montana
The Honorable John Thune, U.S. Senate, South Dakota
The Honorable Thom Tillis, U.S. Senate, North Carolina
The Honorable Patrick J. Toomey, U.S. Senate, Pennsylvania
The Honorable Tommy Tuberville, U.S. Senate, Alabama
The Honorable Chris Van Hollen, U.S. Senate, Maryland
The Honorable Mark R. Warner, U.S. Senate, Virginia
The Honorable Raphael G. Warnock, U.S. Senate, Georgia
The Honorable Elizabeth Warren, U.S. Senate, Maryland
The Honorable Sheldon Whitehouse, U.S. Senate, Rhode Island
The Honorable Roger F. Wicker, U.S. Senate, Mississippi

The Honorable Ron Wyden, U.S. Senate, Oregon
The Honorable Todd Young, U.S. Senate, Indiana