



May 13, 2016

Mr. Donald J. Trump
Trump Tower
725 Fifth Avenue
New York, NY 10022

Dear Mr. Trump:

As you know, presidential candidates of both political parties have a long history of making public their individual tax returns before the election. Common Cause is a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization with over 500,000 members working for open, honest and accountable government and an inclusive democracy. One of the core values we seek to uphold is transparency.

So we were puzzled when you told the Associated Press this week that “there’s nothing to learn from” your tax returns and that you are withholding their release. On Wednesday, you pledged to share them with the public upon completion of a “routine audit.”

We respectfully disagree with your decision. We write to ask that you please release at least the last five years of your returns.

First, consistent with historic practice, releasing your tax returns provides voters with a fuller picture of your background, experience, business interests and insight into potential conflicts of interest.

As Gov. Mitt Romney correctly explained, “tax returns provide the public with its sole confirmation of the veracity of a candidate’s representations regarding charities, priorities, wealth, tax conformance, and conflicts of interest. Further, while not a likely circumstance, the potential for hidden inappropriate associations with foreign entities, criminal organizations, or other unsavory groups is simply too great a risk to ignore for someone who is seeking to become commander-in-chief.”

Second, nothing prevents you from sharing your returns during a routine audit. As POLITICO reported, IRS Commissioner John Koskinen “said the IRS doesn’t care one way or another if a taxpayer releases his or her own documents. ‘We stress that we’re in tax administration, so we have no stake in any of the primaries going on. From our standpoint, if you’re being audited, and you want to do something else, share that information with your returns, you can do that.’”

In fact, you have released tax returns in the midst of audits when you handed them over to state gambling regulators in Pennsylvania and New Jersey several years ago, according to CNN. Now

that you are seeking the presidency, we hope you will hold yourself to the same standard as you did when protecting your casino interests.

Your competitors have already released their tax returns for public scrutiny. As the presumptive nominee of the Republican Party, and in the interest of transparency and a fully informed electorate, we respectfully ask that you do the same.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Karen Hobert Flynn". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Karen Hobert Flynn
Senior Vice President for Program and Strategy
Common Cause