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October 22, 2010

L. Brent Bozell III
President
Media Research Center
325 S. Patrick Street
Alexandria, VA 22314

Dear Brent:

You are right about the mess at National Public Radio, which is on public display again after the discharge of liberal commentator Juan Williams as punishment for expressing an opinion that offended NPR's leadership.

I don't think Mr. Williams or any of his many views require much defense from Congress, but that's not really the issue, is it? What does demand a fair inquiry and an honest baring of the facts is the evident matter of this taxpayer-supported entity suppressing one man's free speech.

NPR calls itself a champion of the First Amendment, but it seems to be something less when it dislikes the content of the free speech. The network didn't like what Mr. Williams said, so it terminated his paycheck.

Unlike NPR's donors, the taxpayers who may or may not agree with NPR's slant on current events have no choice but to support it because Congress says so. Taxpayers don't have a say unless we step forward and assert their rights. That's why when we reconvene, I agree that Congress should take a look at how their money is being used or, as seems so likely in this case, misused.

I can't speak for the Democrats who now run the House of Representatives, but if voters decide to invest their trust in Republicans and the decision falls to me, I think that a hearing into this business would be valuable to the House Energy and Commerce Committee.

Sincerely,

Joe Barton
Ranking Member
Committee on Energy and Commerce

cc: The Honorable Henry A. Waxman, Chairman