Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

January 13, 2005

The Honorable Tom Ridge
Secretary of Homeland Security
Department of Homeland Security
Washington, DC 20528

Dear Mr. Secretary:

According to yesterday's Associated Press article "Ridge Spent Time with Lobbyist," two of your former homeland security aides left government shortly after the creation of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) in late 2002 to work for Blank Rome, where they "started signing up new homeland security clients" and lobbying the Department on these clients' behalf.[1] One of these staffers has been described as "the closest governmental and political advisor to Secretary Tom Ridge for over 18 years." The article also reports that you and David Girard-diCarlo, the chairman of Blank Rome, are "close personal friends" and that you stayed overnight for two or three days at his Arizona home in November 2002, immediately after the establishment of the DHS.

These relationships raise questions about potential conflicts of interest and preferential treatment. Blank Rome has lobbied the Department on behalf of 29 firms, three nonprofit groups, and a trade association. While you were visiting Mr. Girard-diCarlo in November 2002 and on another occasion in April 2003, Blank Rome was representing Raytheon, which is working on a $10 billion border protection contract with DHS. The Associated Press reported that you personally attended two meetings with Raytheon in 2002, which were arranged by Blank Rome. Two other Blank Rome clients have large DHS contracts: BearingPoint was awarded a $229 million contract in September 2004, and Boeing has over $1 billion worth of work with the Department.

In order to clarify the relationships between Blank Rome and top DHS political appointees and staff, we ask that you provide copies of all communications (whether written or electronic) between representatives of Blank Rome and (1) you, (2) other officials in the Office of the Secretary, (3) other political appointees at DHS, and (4) the immediate staffs of political appointees at DHS. We also request summaries of any oral communications between representatives of Blank Rome and these DHS officials.

Regardless of whether ethical or contracting rules were actually violated, the appearance of impropriety can have a damaging effect on public confidence in the Department and must be

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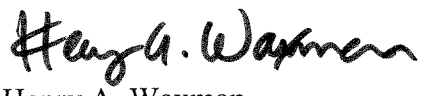
[1] *Ridge Spent Time With Lobbyist*, Associated Press (Jan. 12, 2005).

mitigated through full disclosure. Please provide the requested information before February 1, 2005.

Sincerely,



Henry A. Waxman
Ranking Minority Member
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Ranking Minority Member
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