

**Statement by Rep. Michele Bachmann
House Financial Services Committee
Hearing on the TARP for Main Street Act**

July 9, 2009

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

When Congress passed the \$700-billion bailout, the American people were outraged. They were furious that Wall Street was getting bailed for its mistakes, many of which were encouraged by government policies, and that they were the ones who were footing the bill. Worse yet, they were worried sick that they would never see a cent of their money again.

I can only imagine what my constituents would have said had they been told back then that Congress would later seek to recycle their money into new bailouts instead of repaying the original bailout loan. What could possibly take priority over repaying the taxpayers and reducing the debt for future generations that the bailout created? Congress can use every budget gimmick at its disposal and try to claim that we're only using TARP "profits," but the fact remains that more than \$643 billion of the \$700 billion TARP funds remain outstanding.

But wait, there's more. Congress is actually proposing to recycle the TARP money in order to subsidize billion-dollar housing slush funds – slush funds that would be accessible to ACORN. This organization that has been officially linked to voter registration fraud and similar crimes in more than a dozen states already has access to \$8.5 billion in taxpayer funds, thanks to this Congress. This bill would add billions more to the funds that ACORN could access.

As I have said on multiple occasions before this committee and this House: Any group that has a track record of violating the public trust, as ACORN does, shouldn't be eligible for a cent of taxpayer money. We should expect more from the groups that want to use our constituents' hard-earned money. This bill once again takes money from the taxpayers and allows it to be dished out to organizations that have failed to meet even minimal standards.

Mr. Chairman, many institutions are still not even paying the government dividends, much less repaying their actual TARP money. According to GAO's June report, 17 troubled institutions have not paid their dividends. Even if this legislation wasn't just plain bad policy, how could we realistically be positioned to spend the funds?

Any TARP funds that do return to the taxpayers should really return to the taxpayers and pay down the debt burden that Congress created and laid on their shoulders. Two of our colleagues have introduced legislation to do just that -- Mr. McCarthy's H.R. 2119 and Mr. Hensarling's H.R. 2745 -- both of which I have cosponsored.

Mr. Chairman, I would urge you to hold a hearing to discuss these far more meaningful proposals so that we may fully hear all the options.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I yield back the balance of my time.