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## Group Seeks IRS Investigation

Last October, Democracy 21 President Fred Wertheimer called for an IRS investigation into conservative independent group Crossroads GPS. Now he's making a similar call, together with the Campaign Legal Center calling for another IRS investigation this time into Priorities USA, an independent organization that does not need to disclose its donors that will participate in the 2012 election.

Wertheimer said in a statement, Democracy 21 will call for a "similar investigation of whether Priorities USA is operating in violation of its section 501(c)(4) tax status because it has a primary purpose of participating in political campaigns in support of, or in opposition to, candidates for public office."

As an independent organization, Priorities USA is run by former White House Deputy Press Secretary Bill Burton and Sean Sweeney who is the former chief of staff to then-White House Chief of Staff, Rahm Emmanuel.

President Obama himself has also been in opposition to groups such as Crossroads GPS, saying in a speech in Delaware last year that anonymous donors to such independent groups "don't have the courage to stand up

and disclose their identities. They could be insurance companies or Wall Street banks or even foreign-owned corporations. We will not know because there's no disclosure. But this isn't just a threat to the Democrats, it's a threat to our democracy." Crossroads GPS was helped founded by former President Bush's political advisor, Karl Rove.

But American Crossroads spokesman Jonathan Collegio retaliated against President Obama's 'brazen hypocrisy' which according to him was evidenced by the formation of new Democratic independent groups. According to Collegio – although there is no evidence of this – President Obama "encourage(ed) his own operatives to start groups exactly like the ones he demagogued last year."

In defense of its organization's existence, Sweeney issued a statement saying the new groups are part of "an effort to level the playing field. Americans deserve an honest debate about job creation, the economy, national security and education. That debate will never happen if only right wing extremists are engaged on the battlefield."

Wertheimer contends that the groups founded by Burton and Sweeney "clearly have been formed to make expenditures in support of the re-election of President Obama in 2012" and therefore should not be accorded the status as 'social welfare groups' under the tax code that permits anonymous donors. The White House did not respond to requests for comments on these groups, saying through its spokesperson, "We don't control outside groups. These are not people working for the administration."