

Joint Statement by the Plaintiffs

“Americans want a more open and competitive political system: 62% of Americans say they are prepared to vote for a non-major party candidate in the 2016 U.S. presidential election. But the Commission on Presidential Debates is violating federal law by using non-objective, biased rules designed to exclude independent and third-party candidates from the fall presidential debates and perpetuate the Democratic-Republican duopoly. The Federal Election Commission, whose chief has admitted the agency is “worse than dysfunctional,” has failed to enforce the law or act on a petition for rulemaking that would reform the debate rules to ensure fair access to non-major-party candidates.

Plaintiffs are therefore bringing this legal action to reform our system to allow Americans the opportunity they deserve to hear from voices other than the two major parties in our country's fall presidential debates. Plaintiffs may not share the same political perspectives, but we are united in our belief that the American people are entitled to greater competition and choice in elections for federal office.”

About the Plaintiffs

Alexandra Shapiro, Lead Counsel – Alexandra Shapiro is the star litigator leading the effort on behalf of Level the Playing Field (LPF), the successor to Americans Elect, LPF's chairman, Peter Ackerman, the Green Party and the Libertarian Party. Shapiro, a former federal prosecutor and former U.S. Supreme Court clerk, has won a series of high-profile victories overturning convictions by New York U.S. Attorney Preet Bharara's office, including the highly-publicized reversal earlier this month due to massive juror fraud of a Deutsche Bank broker's conviction, as well as the [landmark Newman insider trading case](#), the [Ernst & Young \\$1 billion tax shelter case](#), and several other major white collar cases. She also defeated the FEC's effort to shut down the entity that became Americans Elect in a 2010 victory in the D.C. Circuit.

Level the Playing Field – LTPF is a nonpartisan, nonprofit corporation not affiliated with any candidate or candidate committee. Its purpose is to promote reforms that allow for greater competition and choice in elections for federal office, particularly for the Presidency and Vice Presidency.

The Green Party -- The Green Party of the United States (GPUS) is a confederation of state green parties that campaign to elect Green Party candidates at all levels of government to promote the party's core values of ecological wisdom, social justice, grass roots democracy and non-violence. GPUS was recognized as a political party in 2001 following Ralph Nader's presidential campaigns in 1996 and 2000. The Green Party is one of the largest independent parties in the United States, having elected hundreds of candidates to local offices and ranking fourth in terms of votes received in the 2012 presidential election. GPUS presidential candidate Jill Stein challenged her exclusion from the 2012 presidential debates and joined forces with other excluded presidential candidates to promote alternative presidential debates.

The Libertarian Party -- The Libertarian Party was founded in 1971 and is the third largest political party in the country. Libertarians believe the answer to America's political problems is

the same commitment to freedom that earned America its greatness: a free-market economy and the abundance and prosperity it brings; a dedication to civil liberties and personal freedom; and a foreign policy of non-intervention, peace, and free trade as prescribed by America's founders. The Libertarian Party has nominated presidential candidates during every presidential election since it was founded in 1971. Its nominees have systematically been excluded from the presidential debates by the CPD since it adopted its current illegal rules in 2000. Libertarian presidential candidate Gary Johnson challenged his exclusion from the 2012 presidential debates and joined forces with other excluded presidential candidates to promote alternative presidential debates.

Dr. Peter Ackerman – Peter Ackerman is the managing director of Rockport Capital Inc., a private investment firm. From 1978 to 1990, he was an investment banker at Drexel Burnham Lambert. He served for fifteen years as chairman of the board of overseers of the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy at Tufts University and was chairman of the board of Freedom House. He is the founding chair of the International Center on Nonviolent Conflict (ICNC). Dr. Ackerman is also a member of the U.S. Advisory Council of the United States Institute of Peace and the Paralympic Advisory Committee of the U.S. Olympic Committee.