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Acorn Sues U.S. to End Funding Ban

Nomaan Merchant reports on Acorn.

Acorn is suing the federal government to end the ban on any federal funds for the embattled group.

Acorn, the Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now, filed suit in federal district court in Brooklyn today, claiming Congress violated the Constitution in three ways. First, the center's brief claims Congress passed a "bill of attainder," unfairly targeting Acorn without a trial, something prohibited by Article I of the Constitution. A separate [Congressional Research Service paper](#) backs up this argument by looking at how courts have previously interpreted bills of attainder.

Acorn's complaint also says Congress, by extending the ban to "allied organizations," violated Acorn's First Amendment rights of free speech and association. This stops groups from working with Acorn, they said. And finally, it says Congress violated Acorn's due process rights.

The Center for Constitutional Rights, a legal advocacy group based in New York City, is representing Acorn, whose complaint also names White House Budget Director **Peter Orszag** and Treasury Secretary **Timothy Geithner** as defendants.

Acorn, one of the nation's largest community organizing groups, had been receiving \$2 million to \$3 million yearly in federal funds. Legislators from both parties enacted the funding ban soon after a series of hidden-camera videos showed Acorn employees telling two activists posing as a prostitute and pimp how to skirt taxes.

Since then, the complaint says, Acorn has been forced to lay off workers and end much of its organizing activity.

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