

(Appendix Attached)
20th, April, 2015

To,
Shri Narendra Modi
Prime Minister's Office
152, South Block,
Raisina Hill,
New Delhi-110001

Subject: Introduction of Register of Members' Interest of Lok Sabha MPs

Honourable Prime Minister,

Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR) is part of a nationwide campaign called National Election Watch (NEW) which comprises of more than 1200 NGOs and other citizen led organizations working on electoral reforms, improving democracy and governance in India.

We bring before you a matter that has remained unresolved with the previous Lok Sabha i.e. instating a Register of Members' Interest in the Lok Sabha. The Ethics Committee of the 15th Lok Sabha, submitted its Second Report ('Maintenance of Register of interests of Members of Lok Sabha and declaration of interests in the House or a Committee thereof) to the Speaker on 13th of December 2013. It recommended that a Register of Members' Interest be instated in the Lok Sabha along the lines of the Rajya Sabha.

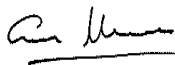
With respect to recent media reports on the issue of conflict of interest (find links to media reports below), we appeal to you, in public interest, to set a precedent by instating required procedures in the Lok Sabha. Required disclosures by the MPs will pre-empt scenarios where conflict of interest may impede the process of policy making. This will result in strengthening peoples' faith in the legislative process.

As regards to the Register of Members' Interest currently being maintained in the Rajya Sabha, upon analysis of the details of 211 MPs it was found that 124 MPs (59%) had not declared any pecuniary interest/financial interest.

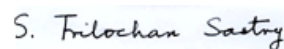
The issue of having private financial interests which come in conflict with the public interest must come out in the public domain and the issue of conflict of interest must be comprehensively addressed at the highest priority.

Yours faithfully,

National Election Watch/Association for Democratic Reforms:



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Links to Media Reports:

Indian Express: <http://indianexpress.com/article/india/india-others/tobacco-warnings-conflict-of-interest-must-be-declared-says-venkaiah/>

Times of India: <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/Members-of-tobacco-panel-must-declare-conflict-of-interest-Naidu/articleshow/46829371.cms>

DNA: <http://www.dnaindia.com/india/report-mps-having-conflict-of-interest-should-declare-it-union-minister-venkaiah-naidu-2075139>

Annexure – 1

ADR/ NEW's RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE REGISTER OF INTEREST IN LOK SABHA

Details in Register of Interest in Lok Sabha

-Along the lines of Register of Rajya Sabha Members' Interest, the Lok Sabha Register of Interest to include all the details regarding Remunerative Directorship, Regular Remunerated Activities, Shareholding of controlling nature, Paid consultancy and Professional engagement of the Lok Sabha MPs

-Details of members of Lok Sabha pertaining to Directorship, Chairmanship or position as a Board Member of any trust/ NGO/ Companies covered u/s 25 of Companies Act, 1956, to be included in the Lok Sabha Register of Interest

Inclusion of financial details of spouse and dependents in the 'form'

-Details of financial and business interests of spouse and dependents of the MPs should be made part of the 'form' of pecuniary interest of members, similar to the affidavit declarations of asset details which is made by candidates contesting elections.

Scrutiny of declarations

-There should be a mechanism for thorough scrutiny and verification of the authenticity of the declarations of financial interest made by members on the 'form' of pecuniary interest.

Issue of conflict of interest

-The mechanism of the Register of Interest should also address the issue of conflict of interest comprehensively in terms of ministry/panel/committee that the MPs are part of and related financial interests that they possess. There should be a bar on members to be part of committees which deal with subjects related to their business interest.

Non-submission of Register of Interest

-Registration of pecuniary interests to be made compulsory for all Lok Sabha MPs

-Strict penalty should be imposed upon members of Lok Sabha for non-declaration of pecuniary interests within the stipulated time period.

Correlation of data provided

-The pecuniary details provided in the Register of Interest should be provided to the Income Tax authorities or other appropriate body for cross-checking with the Income Tax Returns filed by the MPs.