



601 13th Street N.W. • Suite 1120N • Washington, DC 20005 • Tel (202) 466-2221 • Fax (202) 466-4455

July 25, 2006

Member  
Committee on Ways and Means  
1102 Longworth House Office Bldg.  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Member, Committee on Ways and Means:

The undersigned professional appraisal organizations are writing Ways and Means Committee members to respectfully urge their support for including with the Pension bill conference report (H.R. 2830) the package of charitable enhancement and reform tax provisions proposed by the Chairman and Ranking Member of the Senate Finance Committee. The Senate Committee's charity reforms include several critical and long-overdue provisions designed to ensure the integrity and reliability of tax-related appraisals.

Dozens of Internal Revenue Code provisions require taxpayers to determine and report the fair market value of tangible and intangible property for a wide variety of tax purposes, including billions of dollars in deductions claimed each year for non-cash charitable contributions. Hearings by the Congressional tax writing committees over many years have demonstrated that tax-related appraisals are too often improperly performed by individuals with little or no valuation training and in a way which undermines public confidence in important tax policies dependent on reliable valuations. Regrettably, neither Congress nor the IRS has addressed this lingering problem—until now.

Based on extensive communications with Members of the Ways and Means Committee and their tax staffs, we believe there is strong bipartisan support for the appraisal reforms included in the Senate charity reform proposals. We understand, of course, that these appraisal provisions represent only a small part of a much larger charity reform package; and that some portions of that package are controversial. Nevertheless, we believe that now is the time for Congressional action to enhance charitable giving and ensure the transparency and accountability of charitable organization governance.

If you have any questions, please contact our government relations representatives in Washington, D.C., Peter Barash (202) 466-2221; [peter@barashassociates.com](mailto:peter@barashassociates.com) or Bill Garber (202) 298-5586; [BGarber@appraisalinstitute.org](mailto:BGarber@appraisalinstitute.org).

Sincerely,

Donna Walker, ASA  
President, American Society of Appraisers

Richard D. Powers, MAI, SRA  
President, Appraisal Institute

Paul E. Bierschwale, ARA  
President, American Society of Farm Managers  
and Rural Appraisers