



October 7, 2008

The Hon. Robert Schaffer  
Bob Schaffer for U.S. Senate  
P.O Box 102135  
Denver, CO 80250

Dear Rep. Schaffer,

I am writing to ask you about recent statements you made regarding your 1999 trip to the Northern Mariana Islands, which has become a source of controversy in your candidacy. As such, your answers to questions about the trip should illuminate and not obscure the facts.

As you know and have acknowledged, garment manufacturers operated sweatshops on the islands. A Department of the Interior report documented horrific conditions on the islands for female immigrant workers. When you returned from your trip in 1999, which was partly arranged by convicted lobbyist Jack Abramoff's law firm, you defended the factories and thought the claims of poor conditions were unfounded.

In April this year, you told reporters that upon arriving in the Marianas in September 1999, though, you immediately went to tour a sweatshop:

Former congressman Bob Schaffer says the night he landed in Saipan to review working conditions in the U.S. territory, he demanded an immediate tour of a garment factory he heard had an unsavory reputation.

A welcoming committee wanted to take Schaffer to his hotel, he said, but he prevailed. He said he found women working in a "sweatshop," and demanded leaders of the Northern Mariana Islands investigate.

"I was told that **shortly after I left** (the Marianas) that the factory was shut down," he said Friday, **stressing he never verified the information.**<sup>1</sup>

Yet last week, in an editorial board visit at the *Denver Post*, you made a bolder claim than what you had said back in April. According to the *Post*, you said, "I'm sure [Abramoff's] probably not pleased with the sweatshop I helped shut down."<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Lynn Bartels, "Schaffer Says Islands Trip Was Fact-Finding Tour of Sweatshops," *The Rocky Mountain News*, April 11, 2008. Emphasis added.

<sup>2</sup> Michael Riley, "Old Charges Resurface in Senate Race," *The Denver Post*, September 30, 2008.

My question to you is this: To which sweatshop are you referring, and what evidence do you have that it was shut down?

You admitted earlier this year that you neither sought nor received confirmation that the sweatshop you reportedly visited on your first night in the Northern Mariana Islands was shut down. Can you recall the name of this sweatshop, its location, or its owner? How did you receive the information that it was shut down? How soon after you returned to Washington did you receive this information?

Political campaigns are notorious for being loose with the truth. Without evidence to back up this claim, your campaign risks abandoning it altogether. On behalf of Campaign Money Watch, I urge you to provide answers to these questions as well as any evidence that documents your answers. For our part, we have not been able to find evidence that you – or any other member of Congress – had any involvement in helping to shut down any sweatshop on the Northern Mariana Islands.

On the contrary, too many members of Congress, you among them, helped convicted lobbyist Jack Abramoff pursue his agenda to protect an economic system on the island that was dependent upon abusing and exploiting immigrant workers. Your statement that you helped to shut down a sweatshop runs completely contrary to everything known about your legislative record.

If you are able to provide evidence, we would like to see it. If you cannot, you should immediately withdraw your false claim.

Sincerely,

/s/

David Donnelly  
Director