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October 24, 2014

John L. Hennessy, President
Building 10
Stanford University
Stanford, CA 94305-2061

Philip J. Hanlon, President
Dartmouth College
207 Parkhurst Hall
Hanover, NH 03755

Dear Presidents Hennessy and Hanlon:

As I am sure you are now aware, Montanans recently received a misleading campaign flier in their mailboxes that sought to inject partisanship into non-partisan Montana Supreme Court elections. The flier is apparently part of a so-called research project that uses Montana elections as a political laboratory experiment, at the expense of free and fair judicial elections in our state. Your academic institutions apparently approved and sponsored this project, which was apparently undertaken without the knowledge or consent of the people of Montana or its state and local election officials.

Montana has a long tradition of opposition to outside influence on our elections, and enacted strong limits on corporate campaign financing back in 1912. Unfortunately, those reforms were recently rolled back by the U.S. Supreme Court's *Citizens United* ruling, and Montana's voters are once again targeted by outside corporations, groups and individuals. All over the United States, wealthy donors seek to invisibly influence elections with now-unlimited amounts of "dark" money. Americans now expect this, unfortunately, from those wealthy power-players who cynically seek to influence voter opinion and elections to cement their own economic and social agendas. However, it is deeply troubling to see research institutions such as Stanford and Dartmouth engaged in the same sort of voter manipulation.

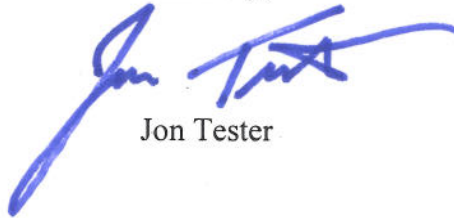
The Montana State Supreme Court rules on matters relating to every walk of life, from water rights to relations with Indian Nations to clean air and water. Your institutions may have now influenced these decisions by meddling in our elections. Perhaps that was not the intent, but nevertheless, it may well be the outcome of this endeavor. In doing so, it is also possible that your institutions have violated state and federal law, and I will ask appropriate authorities to fully investigate this possibility.

I also expect that you will promptly and publicly disclose all sources of funding for this research. If any federal funds were used to support this research, please explain which federal agency or agencies provided such support. As Election Day is quickly approaching and as Montanans are already able to vote early, I urge you to make this information available no later than noon Mountain Daylight Time on Wednesday, October 29.

While I strongly support providing necessary resources and freedom to do academic research, I have incredible concern about universities and non-candidate groups manipulating data and testing their hypotheses on the voting public. I appreciate that Stanford University has already made apologies for sponsoring the misleading flier, but this cannot repair the damage that has already been done to the non-partisan Montana Supreme Court election.

The integrity of our elections is what preserves our democracy. Efforts to undermine elections in Montana – whether by fraud or merely by poorly-designed experiments – must not be tolerated, and I will do all I can do ensure that Montana voters and their beliefs decide our elections, not outside influences.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Jon Tester", with a long, sweeping horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Jon Tester

CC: Linda McCulloch, Montana Secretary of State
Jonathan Motl, Commissioner of Political Practices