

**U.S. House of Representatives**  
**Committee on the Judiciary**  
Washington, DC 20515-6216  
One Hundred Fifteenth Congress

June 12, 2017

Abigail Klem President  
IT Operations LLC  
725 Fifth Avenue, 23<sup>rd</sup> Floor  
New York, NY 10022

Dear Ms. Klem,

Thank you for your May 17, 2017 response to our inquiry.

We remain concerned that Ivanka Trump may have used and may continue to use her official position within the White House to benefit her private interests. We hope that you will provide additional clarification on this matter. We also note renewed public scrutiny of the Ivanka Trump brand's operations abroad. Recent press coverage shows that you filed 14 additional trademark applications with the Chinese government exactly one day before Ms. Trump joined the White House.<sup>1</sup> We write to ask for information about these activities as well.

When Ms. Trump accepted her position at the White House, she became subject to a federal prohibition on participation in any "decision, approval, disapproval, the rendering of advice, . . . or other particular matter" that will affect her own financial interests.<sup>2</sup> She must recuse herself from any official business that may have a direct or predictable effect on the business that still carries her name.<sup>3</sup> Each willful violation of this rule carries with it a penalty of up to five years in prison.<sup>4</sup>

In your letter, you note that Ms. Trump "resigned her positions in our business in January 2017" and that "[t]his arrangement limits her control over the business, restricts the information that can be communicated to Ms. Trump, and requires consultation with an ethics advisor prior to certain actions." Of course, resigning from day-to-day management of the Ivanka Trump Collection does not diminish Ms. Trump's private interest in her company, or in any way mitigate her obligations under federal law.

In our initial inquiry, we raised specific concerns about certain trademark applications and licensing agreements pending in overseas markets. You do not seem to dispute that Ms. Trump has a significant financial interest in her company securing agreements like these, or that federal ethics rules bar her from using her official position to influence the outcome of such negotiations.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Jackie Wattles and Jill Disis, *Ivanka Trump's firm seeks new trademarks in China, reviving ethical concerns*, CNN MONEY, June 5, 2017.

<sup>2</sup> 18 U.S.C. § 208.

<sup>3</sup> *Id.* See also 5 C.F.R. § 2635.502.

<sup>4</sup> 18 U.S.C. § 216(b).

<sup>5</sup> See 5 C.F.R. §§ 2635.401-403; 5 C.F.R. §§ 2635.501-503.

With respect to recent approval of three pending trademark applications by the Chinese government, however, you state only that Ms. Trump's brand is similar to its "peer companies" in that it "has sought to protect its international trademarks over the past several years." You cite to a news article titled *Ivanka Trump trademarks raise questions* to support the notion that "the approvals were standard." We find this explanation somewhat incomplete.

Accordingly, with respect to compliance with federal conflict-of-interest rules, we ask that you respond directly to the following questions:

- IT Operations LLC filed 14 trademark applications with the Chinese government on March 28, 2017. Ms. Trump joined the White House on March 29, 2017. Did Ms. Trump's decision to join the staff of the White House play any role in the company's decision to file those applications or the timing of that decision?
- Ms. Trump met with Chinese President Xi Jinping at Mar-a-Lago on April 6, 2017. Was that meeting known to any employee of IT Operations LLC in advance? Were you aware that the meeting might take place when the company filed the 14 additional trademark applications?
- The Chinese government granted provisional approvals of three pending trademark applications on April 6, 2017—the same day that Ms. Trump met with President Xi.<sup>6</sup> Do you have any information that would shed light on the question as to whether that timing was merely coincidental?
- Since she assumed her official role on March 29, 2017, has Ms. Trump made you aware of any incident in which she has recused herself from any meeting, negotiation, or other official matter because of a potential conflict of interest?
- Does IT Operations LLC have any policy concerning the participation of any officer, employee, or associate serving in any official or non-official capacity in the government? If so, please provide us with the written policy, or a description of it if it has not been reduced to writing.
- In February and March, after a five-year gap since its last application, IT Operations LLC applied for multiple trademarks in the Philippines.<sup>7</sup> Weeks later, President Trump invited the president of the Philippines, Rodrigo Duterte, to the White House.<sup>8</sup> Has Ms. Trump made you aware of any plan by her to meet with officials from any foreign government, if and when those officials visit the White House?
- Ms. Trump recently attended the W20 Summit in Berlin, where she shared a stage with German Chancellor Angela Merkel.<sup>9</sup> She also traveled with President Trump on his recent trip to Saudi Arabia, Israel, Italy, and Belgium—an itinerary that included official meetings with leaders from NATO, the European Union, and the Group of 7.<sup>10</sup> Does IT Collections LLC have any pending business with any government whose officials were present at any meeting she attended as part of this official travel?

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<sup>6</sup> Neil Connor, *Ivanka Trump Won China Trademarks as She Dined with President Xi Jinping*, TELEGRAPH, Apr. 19, 2017.

<sup>7</sup> World Intellectual Property Organization, *Global Brand Database*, <http://www.wipo.int/branddb/en/> (last accessed May 22, 2017)

<sup>8</sup> Mark Landler, *Trump Invites Rodrigo Duterte to White House*, N.Y. TIMES, Apr. 30, 2017.

<sup>9</sup> Annie Karni, *Ivanka Trump faces tough audience in European Women*, POLITICO, Apr. 25, 2017.

<sup>10</sup> Michael D. Shear, *Unusual Place for a President's Family on a Foreign Trip: Center Stage*, N.Y. TIMES, May 22, 2017.

- Since President Trump's inauguration and Ms. Trump's appointment as a White House official, has Ms. Trump participated in any way in the management or business development of IT Collections LLC? Has she participated in any decision to expand the presence of her brand in any foreign market?

We request your response to these questions no later than June 21, 2017. Thank you again for your prompt attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

John Longenecker

Jessie Naellen

Red Deutch

Pramila Jayast

Henry Jones

Zoe Lot

Jim Swalmell

Karen Bass

Steve Cohen

Heidi Johnson Lee

Tom V. Caty

David N. Ciilline

  
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cc: Robert Goodlatte, Chairman, House Committee on the Judiciary