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**From:** Hurwitz, Evelyn S on behalf of Public Info  
**Sent:** Friday, July 21, 2000 9:35 AM  
**To:** Gottlieb, Mary H  
**Subject:** FW: Comment Letter on 2000-44

-----Original Message-----

**From:** Mary Hull Caballero [mailto:mhcaba@elp.rr.com]  
**Sent:** Thursday, July 20, 2000 8:17 PM  
**To:** public.info@ots.treas.gov  
**Subject:** Comment Letter on 2000-44

## Community Scholars

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El Paso, TX 79902  
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July 20, 2000

Manager  
Dissemination Branch  
Office of Thrift Supervision  
1700 G Street NW  
Washington, DC 20552

In Re: Docket No. 2000-44

Dear Sir or Madam:

I am writing to add my voice to the concerns already expressed to you by the National Community Reinvestment Coalition about the sunshine statute of the Community Reinvestment Act.

Last year, nine high school students worked for my organization, which is a youth leadership program that offers paid summer internships, and studied the role that banks play in El Paso, Texas. Ninety percent of our local economy is made up of small businesses, and the students set about to determine whether our four largest banks were responsive to their credit needs. The students issued a report with information obtained from the FDIC website that showed that almost \$1 billion annually is exported out of El Paso by our banks while small business owners go without the capital they need to expand.

That report brought significant community awareness to a critical problem in this community, which has a poverty rate higher than 30 percent, 9 percent unemployment, and 20,000 workers certified as having lost their jobs because of NAFTA – the most of any city

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in the nation. El Paso has become almost totally dependent on government jobs and those that our small businesses can provide. It is at times like these that we need more dialogue with our local financial institutions about strategic community reinvestment, not less. I fear that the proposed sunshine statute will dampen the information-gathering process and collaboration that my community is striving toward with the banks.

It has been a long road. Last summer when the students issued their report, officials from Chase, Norwest, and Bank of America tried to put the program out of business – all because the students had the temerity to announce publicly what was readily available on the Internet. Since that inappropriate reaction on the bank officials' part, the El Paso Hispanic Chamber of Commerce has come forward at great financial

threat to its membership, to try to lead the banks to commit more resources locally. Would you have these efforts cease to appease some politicians? Are you willing to threaten the economic viability of my community over something so trivial?

I certainly hope not. Please adopt the recommendations of the National Community Reinvestment Coalition to streamline the sunshine regulation.

Sincerely,

Mary Hull Caballero  
Executive Director