

Campaign Legal Center - Common Cause - CREW - Democracy 21  
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## **Citizen and Reform Groups Call on Speaker-designee Boehner and Majority Leader-designee Cantor to Announce Their Support for Office Of Congressional Ethics and Their Opposition to any Efforts to Weaken or Undermine the Office**

### **Joint Statement of Groups**

December 2, 2010

Our organizations today call on House Speaker-designee John Boehner and House Majority Leader-designee Eric Cantor to announce their support for continuing the Office of Congressional Ethics (OCE) and their opposition to any efforts to weaken or undermine the Office in the next Congress.

We also urge House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, who provided the leadership in the last Congress to establish the OCE, and House Majority Leader Steny Hoyer to continue their support for the Office.

The organizations include the Campaign Legal Center, Common Cause, CREW, Democracy 21, Judicial Watch, League of Women Voters, Public Citizen, Taxpayers for Common Sense and U.S.PIRG

The creation of the Office of Congressional Ethics in 2008 was the most important improvement in the House ethics enforcement process since the House Ethics Committee was established in 1966. The independent OCE has done precisely what it was set up to do: help ensure that potential ethics violations are reviewed by the House Ethics Committee and provide transparency for the House ethics enforcement process. The OCE has performed its job credibly and effectively.

Congressional ethics is not a partisan issue. Over the years, individual House Democrats and Republicans alike have been involved in serious ethics problems.

The OCE was established following the complete breakdown of ethics enforcement in the House in 2005 and 2006, symbolized by the failure of the House Ethics Committee to take any action regarding the Jack Abramoff scandals, the worst House lobbying and ethics scandals in decades. The OCE also followed the 10 year ethics truce between House Democrats and Republicans that all but eliminated effective enforcement of the House ethics rules during that period.

There is nothing in the recent election to indicate that citizens have any interest in going back to this failed ethics enforcement process.

The OCE must continue with its authority and powers intact and without any weakening or undermining changes. The House resolution introduced by Representative Marcia Fudge (D-OH) in this Congress, for example, would for all practical purposes put the OCE out of business and must be rejected.

The OCE must be able to function independently and effectively in the next Congress as it has been able to do in this Congress.

The OCE has served citizens, the country and the House as an institution well and it is an essential element of the House ethics enforcement process. It would be a grave mistake for the new House, with more than 100 new members, to backtrack on congressional ethics.

We urge the House Republican leadership to make publicly clear that they will continue the Office of Congressional Ethics in the next Congress and will oppose any efforts to weaken or undermine the Office.