

**Campaign Legal Center • Common Cause • CREW
Democracy 21 • League of Women Voters • Public Citizen
Sunlight Foundation • U.S. PIRG**

The Hon. John Boehner
Speaker of the House
U.S. Capitol, H-232
Washington, D.C. 20515

September 27, 2012

The Hon. Nancy Pelosi
House Minority Leader
235 Cannon House Office Bldg.
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Speaker Boehner and Minority Leader Pelosi:

Our organizations are writing to express our gratitude for the work done by the Office of Congressional Ethics (OCE) and to encourage both of your offices to ensure its uninterrupted operations in the 113th Congress by reactivating the agency and appointing the necessary board members.

The organizations include Campaign Legal Center, Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington, Common Cause, Democracy 21, League of Women Voters, Public Citizen, Sunlight Foundation and U.S. PIRG.

OCE is one of the stellar ethics accomplishments of the House of Representatives, first promoted by then-Speaker Pelosi and subsequently reaffirmed by Speaker Boehner. By providing limited oversight over the ethics process by a qualified and neutral agency, OCE has helped change a secretive and oft-perceived moribund ethics enforcement process into a reasonably more accountable and active system. To the credit of both of you, the congressional ethics process is no longer viewed as merely a means to sweep problems under the rug.

OCE cannot make recommendations about whether an ethics violation has occurred, cannot judge a case, and cannot sanction a member for ethics violations. But the agency can conduct investigations and compile useful evidence and reports for further consideration by the House Ethics Committee. The agency provides a critical means for oversight and accountability, which had previously been lacking.

At the end of this year, the terms of four members of OCE's board will expire, leaving just the two chairmen – Porter Goss and David Skaggs – as sitting board members. It is the responsibility of solely your two offices to agree upon and appoint board members for the expired four positions to begin serving in the 113th Congress. Two of the current alternate members of the board – Bill Frenzel and Abner Mikva – may be appointed as regular board members (although Mikva has expressed interest in retiring); and any of the currently expiring board members may be appointed to the two alternate positions. Otherwise there is a wide selection of other qualified persons, many of whom have had previous congressional experience, who may be interested in appointment to the board as well.

Whatever your choices, we urge your offices to begin considering potential replacements for the four expiring positions on the board at your earliest convenience so that the important work of ethics monitoring and accountability will not be neglected as the new Congress convenes.

Your leadership in the establishment and maintenance of the OCE has resulted in a marked improvement in the House ethics enforcement process. We urge you to continue this leadership in the next Congress.

Respectfully Submitted,

Campaign Legal Center
Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington
Common Cause
Democracy 21
League of Women Voters
Public Citizen
Sunlight Foundation
U.S. PIRG.