

Dec 8 2005 - Slaughter to Hastert: GOP Needs an 'Extreme Ethics Makeover'...Not Ethics Class

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Bribery, Money Laundering & Corruption Are Not 'Nuances'

Washington, DC. - Rep. Louise M. Slaughter, Ranking Member of the House Rules Committee, responded to reports that the Office of Speaker Hastert is suggesting "new ethics training for lawmakers," so that members of both parties can better "understand the nuances of House rules." [Carl Hulse, "House Speaker Suggests Ethics Refresher," The New York Times, 12/8/05].

"These Republicans don't need an ethics class; they need an Extreme Ethics Makeover...Congressional Edition."

"There is nothing 'nuanced' about money laundering, bribery, corruption and the total collapse of ethical conduct in the House. The Speaker should know that we need a working Ethics Committee, we need radical Ethics Reform and we need accountability in this Congress. These Republicans don't need an ethics class; they need an Extreme Ethics Makeover...Congressional Edition."

"If my colleagues haven't learned how to behave ethically before coming to the United States Congress, then there isn't much hope for them now."

"Instead of conducting investigations into the shocking ethics scandals we have before us, Mr. Hastert is planning to postpone the start of Congress next year while Tom DeLay tries to wiggle his way out of trouble. As a result, the people's business will again be neglected as a result of scandal."

"The fact that Republicans place Tom DeLay's political hide ahead of the people's interest is yet another indication that this leadership is out of touch with American values. America can do better."

- Louise Slaughter

BACKGROUND/ FACT CHECK:

Speaker suggesting ethics refresher for lawmakers: The Office of House Speaker J. Dennis Hastert is suggesting "new ethics training for lawmakers," so that members of both parties can better "understand the nuances of House rules." [Carl Hulse, "House Speakers Suggests Ethics Refresher," The New York Times, 12/8/05].

GOP leadership scheduling longer recess to buy DeLay valuable time: Reports indicate that the GOP leadership is going to schedule the second House session of the 109th Congress to begin on Jan. 31 - after a holiday break of more than a month, and two weeks after Senators are due to return to Washington. The late start buys indicted former Majority Leader Tom Delay valuable time during which his money laundering case in Texas can be resolved, as new leadership elections could not occur until the House is back in session. [Ben Pershing, "House Plants to Sit Out January, Roll Call, 12/7/05, Rick Klein, "House Republicans quietly pushing for new leadership," the Boston Globe, 12/7/05]

Conservative Pundits Agree: There is Nothing "Nuanced" about the Total Collapse of Ethical Conduct in the House:

Former Republican Congressman Joe Scarborough implies as many as 60 congressional lawmakers may be linked to the corruption scandals engulfing Capitol Hill: "You know, Duke Cunningham got caught, but the question many Americans are asking is, how deep is the congressional cesspool? Six members are currently under investigation for possible crimes and ethics violations. And some reports say the number could go as high as 60. What in the heck is going on in the nation's capital?" [Joe Scarborough on "Scarborough Country," 11/29/05].

The Washington Times Concerned about GOP's Culture of Corruption: "I believe the root of the current Republican scandal wave is that the party's governing element in Washington has completely forgotten why they were elected in the first place." [Bruce Bartlett, "Corruption Creep in GOP," The Washington Times, 11/30/05]

Calls for Reform of the House Ethics Process, the House Ethics Committee and Demands for Ethical Accountability has Bi-partisan Support:

Republican Senator John McCain expressed his concern about the ethics scandals within his own party on NBC's Meet the Press: "I don't think the Ethics Committees are working very well. The latest Cunningham scandal was uncovered by the San Diego newspaper, not by anyone here...." [Senator John McCain on NBC's "Meet the Press," 12/4/05]

Even former Speaker Newt Gingrich is tired of the Republican Culture of Corruption epitomized by Abramoff and Cunningham: "Gingrich said he was deeply troubled by the resignation Monday of Rep. Randy "Duke" Cunningham, R-Calif., and by the widening bribery and ethics investigation into the activities of lobbyist Jack Abramoff. "Frankly, it sickens me," Gingrich said. He called on Republicans to lead on ethics reform." [Glen Warchol, "Gingrich implores GOP to 'clean it up', Salt Lake Tribune, 12/2/05]

Conservative Judicial Watch laments lack of ethics enforcement: "There is no ethics enforcement in Congress today, and it's inexcusable." [Tom Fitton, President of Judicial Watch, a conservative monitor of government ethics, cited in Jeffrey H. Birnbaum, "In a Season of Scandals, Ethics Panels Are on Sidelines," Washington Post, 12/5/05]