

Dec 8 2005 - ETHICS FACT CHECK

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Time for Ethics Accountability

In the People's House is Today

GOP leadership places clearing DeLay's name ahead of people's interest

Washington, DC. - 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].

The current culture of corruption staining the People's House is almost exclusively on the GOP, which has even the Republican lawmakers concerned. There is nothing "nuanced" about the total collapse about the ethical conduct in the House.

Furthermore, if the GOP leadership was serious about cleaning up the conduct of this House, they would jump start the Ethics Committee today, which has not been functioning the whole year. Instead of conducting investigations into the ethics scandals today, the GOP leadership is apparently taking a longer vacation placing the interest of clearing their indicted leader's name ahead of people's interest.

Enough is enough. Time for accountability is today.

FACT:

Speaker suggesting ethics refresher for lawmakers: House Speaker J. Dennis Hastert is suggesting "new ethics training for lawmakers," because he wants members of both parties "to 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]

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Nothing nuanced about today's culture of corruption, as former Republican Congressman Joe Scarborough implies as many as 60 congressional lawmakers may be linked to the corruption scandals engulfing the 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 current culture of corruption staining the People's House is almost exclusively on the GOP: "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 in the House are the people's business and has bipartisan 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',The Salt Lake Tribune, 12/2/05]

Despite the mount of corruption scandals, the ethics committees in Congress are still sitting on sidelines: "There is no ethics enforcement in Congress today, and it's inexcusable." [Tom Fitton, President of Judicial Watch, a conservative monitor of government ethics, Jeffrey H. Birnbaum, "In a Season of Scandals, Ethics Panels Are on Sidelines," The Washington Post, 12/5/05]