

January 3, 2017

Dear House Speaker Ryan,

The proposal offered by House Judiciary Chairman Bob Goodlatte and adopted by the House Republican conference yesterday will eviscerate the Office of Congressional Ethics. The proposal would gut the only institution in the House that has successfully enforced the House ethics rules and, through its presence, has served to deter ethics violations by House members.

The Goodlatte proposal will serve as an open invitation to members to violate the House ethics rules without concern that they will be held accountable for their improper conduct. The fact that this irresponsible proposal has been adopted by House Republicans without public notice and by a sneak attack makes it all the more indefensible.

This is the worst possible way for you to start your first full term as speaker of the house and for new representatives to begin their service in Congress.

We strongly oppose the Goodlatte proposal and urge that it be removed from the House rules to be considered today. If it is not removed we urge that the House rules be opposed until it is removed.

If you are opposed to the Goodlatte proposal, then we call on you to exercise your powers as speaker to open the House rules today to allow a separate vote on removing the Goodlatte proposal from the rules. Otherwise, you will also be responsible for the destruction of the Office of Ethics and of ethics enforcement in the House.

Signers to this letter include:

Democracy 21
Anna Manual
Brennan Center for Justice
Center for American Progress
Center for Media and Democracy
Center for Responsive Politics
Common Cause
Communication Workers of America
CREW
Demand Progress
Demos
Free Speech For People
Gary D. Bass
Issue One
Jim Thurber
Kathleen Clark
Mayday

National Legal and Policy Center
Every Voice
Norman Eisen
Norman Orenstein
OpenTheGovernment.org
People For the American Way
Project On Government Oversight (POGO)
Public Citizen
Represent.Us
Richard Painter
Robert Reich
Sunlight Foundation
The Agenda Project
The Patriotic Millionaires
Thomas Mann
Transparency International – USA
U.S. PIRG