

Murphy Leads Freshman Class to Call on House Leadership to Clean Up Congress

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WASHINGTON, D.C. - Today Congressman Chris Murphy (CT-5) organized and led 20 Members of the freshman class in urging the leadership of the House of Representatives to move forward with comprehensive ethics reform by calling for a nonpartisan, independent entity that will vet, initiate, and conduct Congressional investigations.

"People are tired of the scandalous headlines coming out of Washington, and Congress should move forward soon to clean up its act. Too often the ethics process has been used by Congress to protect its own. It's time for a strong, independent watchdog," said Murphy, at a press conference spearheaded by him in Washington, D.C.

Currently, Members of Congress can bring ethics complaints to the Ethics Committee, comprised of sitting Members, who then decide if the complaint warrants an investigation. If an investigation is considered necessary, then the Committee does the digging, and determines whether punishment is needed.

Unfortunately, Congress has been plagued by scandals in recent years, and the freshman class wants to address the structural flaws in the current process. However, many Members of Congress are hesitant to support comprehensive reform to the ethics process. In an effort organized by Murphy, he and his fellow freshman colleagues hope to push the debate in the direction of real reform.

Today, Murphy and his colleagues called on the House leadership to appoint a nonpartisan, independent entity that will have the ability to vet, initiate, and conduct Congressional investigations. Under a revamped ethics process, final determination of any alleged ethical misconduct would remain the responsibility of Congress, as is constitutionally required.

"Our current ethics process has a number of shortcomings. Tacit agreements in past

Congresses have resulted in an enforcement process that is stuck in place - and often sluggish when an investigation is initiated. Members of the Ethics Committee are placed in the untenable position of having to initiate complaints against and investigate friends and colleagues. We need to revamp the system, for the good of this institution and for the good of democracy," said Murphy.

In the coming weeks, the Special Task Force on Ethics Enforcement will release a report with recommendations on whether to appoint an outside investigator. Then the leadership of the House of Representatives will determine what, if any, legislation will be brought up to address the need for ethics reform.

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