

## Murphy Offers Subpoena Amendment to Ethics Bill

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WASHINGTON, D.C. - After months of prodding the House leadership to make the Congressional ethics reform bill as strong as possible, today Congressman Chris Murphy (CT-5) testified before the House Rules Committee about his amendment to the pending reform bill, which would provide the new ethics board with subpoena power on a case by case basis issued through the House Ethics Committee.

As a strong supporter and advocate of ethics reform since his election to Congress, Murphy has been one the strongest supporters of the pending ethics reform bill. The amendment which he offered today with Congressman Zach Space (OH-18) would make it even stronger by allowing the new ethics board a form of subpoena power. Murphy's amendment would supplement a provision in the underlying proposal, which would allow the ethics board the power to recommend subpoenas, which then must be made public by the Ethics Committee within a certain amount of time.

"Congress is unable to police itself any longer, and people out there know that as long as Members are investigating Members, the process will remain broken. But the new process has to have teeth. Giving the new citizen ethics panel subpoena power is the right thing to do if we really want to have an effective outside ethics panel," said Murphy.

At the beginning of the Congress, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi set up a task force to provide recommendations on what the House of Representatives should do to change the ethics enforcement process.

In May, Murphy organized 21 Members of the freshman class to join him in a press conference to call on the leadership and the task force to recommend setting up a nonpartisan, independent entity that will vet, initiate, and conduct Congressional investigations. 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 Murphy 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.

Throughout the summer, Murphy continued to exert pressure on this issue - in July, when the House took up lobbying reform, Murphy again organized a group of newly-elected Democrats to speak on the House floor in support of ethics reform.

Before the task force issued its final report, Murphy introduced, with Congressman Space, his own ethics legislation which would create a truly independent ethics commission. When the task force announced their ethics reform recommendations in December, they did recommend setting up an entity to supplement the ethics committee in the House, but they did not recommend granting that body subpoena power.

"With or without subpoena power, the establishment of the new Office of Congressional Ethics is a landmark step forward for good government. Never before has Congress authorized a group of citizens to enforce the ethics rules on Congress. While I think the new process can be stronger, I absolutely support this effort," said Murphy.

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