



Chris Bell  
Congress of the United States  
House of Representatives  
25th District, Texas

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Statement from Congressman Chris Bell

The United States House of Representatives is one of the greatest institutions in human history. This House of Representatives belongs to all the people of America - past and future included. It is appropriately called "the People's House" - and as the People's House, it is a testament to the universal value of making life better during the time we're allotted here on earth.

But the credibility of this great institution is being called into question.

These questions have been raised as a result of multiple reports in the media and the forum of public opinion of activities by a member of the House of Representatives. These alleged activities include bribery, extortion, fraud, money laundering and abuse of power.

I believe that if these allegations should prove true, in whole or in part, we will have found our nation in a situation harmful to all Americans. Serious damage will have been done to the credibility of our laws and the legislative process by which we seek national consensus.

All Americans should be alarmed by this situation. Whether we are Democrats or Republicans, we must stand together and act to protect the People's House.

I am a relative newcomer to Washington. But I have come to love the People's House and to have an even greater respect for the wisdom of those individuals who founded our nation and wrote the United States Constitution. That is why I will not stand idly by and do nothing in light of the potentially serious harm to the credibility of this institution.

It is also why I have requested that the House Committee on Standards of Official Conduct immediately investigate the alleged activities of House Majority Leader Tom DeLay.

My complaint alleges that Representative DeLay may have committed serious criminal acts including breaking federal law, Texas state law and rules of the House Standards of Official Conduct.

Republicans, Democrats and Independents alike, upon reviewing my complaint against Representative DeLay, will find documentation supporting my allegations that he has “engaged in a concerted and relentless effort to use the official resources of office to advance and underwrite a program of blatantly partisan political activities in violation of rules, statutes and standards of conduct applicable to Members.”

The request for an investigation that I have submitted to the House Committee on Standards of Official Conduct includes counts:

1. Rep. DeLay illegally solicited and accepted political contributions in return for official action.
2. Rep. DeLay’s TRMPAC laundered illegal corporate contributions for the purpose of influencing Texas legislative races and failed to properly disclose its financial activity.
3. Rep. DeLay improperly used his office to importune federal agencies for a partisan objective wholly unrelated to his official duties.

There are two attachments in the complaint of news articles supporting the allegations regarding the House Majority Leader’s activities. Just one example among many articles on the topic is from last year in *The Texas Observer* titled “Rise of the Machine.” It is no wonder that editorial boards, from the *Houston Chronicle* to *The New York Times*, as well as independent ethics groups have spoken out in favor of an investigation by the House Ethics Committee into the activities and behavior of Representative Delay.

But news organizations and independent ethics groups do not have the authority to launch a formal investigation of a Member of Congress. According to House Rules, only a Member of Congress can request an Ethics investigation.

And in a joint statement released earlier this year in March, Chairman Joel Hefley and Ranking Member Allen Mollohan stated that the Committee is absolutely committed to “pursuing any credible claim that a Member or staff person has violated any provision of the House rules.” The Chair and Ranking Member said in that same statement that they will investigate wrongdoing in a nonpartisan manner.

That is the right thing to say...it is the right thing to do...and let us hope on behalf of the American people and this great institution that the alleged offenses

committed by Representative Tom DeLay and his associates are investigated in a nonpartisan manner.

Throughout my public service career, I have attempted to foster a more ethical, open and accountable process by which we govern ourselves. Back in Houston, I served as the Chairman of the City Council Ethics Committee and, during my time here in Congress, I was honored to serve on the Government Reform Committee.

Battles for greater ethics in government are never easy. They are not won in a day. But this is one ethics battle that none of us can afford to lose - a battle for the dignity and credibility of the House of Representatives.

Last week we honored the life of Ronald Reagan - a great American who could disagree with political opponents during the day, yet be a wonderful companion and friend after hours.

Last week we also heard a lot of talk about restoring the House to a more civil and collegial state of affairs. I couldn't agree more - which is why I urge the House Ethics Committee to handle this request to investigate Congressman DeLay in a nonpartisan fashion, with the seriousness and thoroughness it deserves. Only then can we move closer to healing the divide between Democrats and Republicans in this body; only then can we turn our full attention to working on behalf of the American people.

With power comes duty. I have done my duty as a Member of Congress in requesting this investigation. Responsibility now lies with the House Committee on Standards of Official Conduct to investigate Congressman DeLay's alleged activities and behavior.

Let us join together to ensure the credibility of this great institution and let us begin today to protect the People's House by calling on the House Committee on Standards of Official Conduct to immediately begin an investigation into these allegations that Congressman DeLay may have engaged in multiple activities and behaviors that do not reflect creditably on this House.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Chris Bell". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.