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ONE HUNDRED FIFTH CONGRESS

# Congress of the United States

## House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT REFORM AND OVERSIGHT

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September 25, 1997

The Honorable Dan Burton  
Chairman  
Committee on Government Reform and Oversight  
2157 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Mr. Chairman:

I wanted to share my thoughts with you regarding yesterday's meeting of the Committee.

For over a month our staffs tried to develop procedures so that individual members of the Committee and one of their staff members would have ready access to deposition material. Although we have not been able to agree on much this year, in this one instance we did reach a compromise and you sent me a letter on September 22 memorializing the procedures.

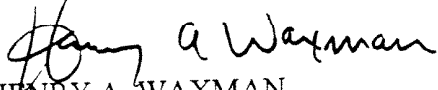
I am astonished that only hours after the Democratic members put aside partisanship and unanimously voted for immunity yesterday, our agreement was breached in Committee by passage of the Cox amendment. The Republican majority sent a clear message to the Democratic members by refusing to oppose the amendment. There appears to be no point in reaching agreement with you, since your commitments clearly are not binding on the Republican majority.

For the record, Democrats have been denied the traditional right of the minority to raise objections to your subpoenas and receive a committee vote on minority subpoena requests; our staff has effectively lost its right to ask questions in depositions; we aren't notified of investigative trips the majority initiates; our share of the budget is the lowest of any House committee; and yesterday's vote significantly impedes the ability of individual members to review deposition material and prepare for hearings. It is a shameful record that deprives Democratic members of any meaningful participation in the Committee's investigation. The only exception, of course, is immunity decisions, and federal law prevents you from eliminating us from that process.

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Yesterday was profoundly embarrassing to the Committee and the House of Representatives.

Sincerely,

  
HENRY A. WAXMAN  
Ranking Minority Member

cc: Members of the Committee on Government Reform and Oversight