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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

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NATIONAL PARKS, FORESTS, AND PUBLIC LANDS

October 30, 2009

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker
United States House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable John Boehner
Republican Leader
United States House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable David R. Obey
Chairman
House Appropriations Committee
United States House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Jerry Lewis
Ranking Member
House Appropriations Committee
United States House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Speaker Pelosi, Leader Boehner, Chairman Obey, Ranking Member Lewis,

As I am sure you are aware, the *Washington Post* has published reports of a "widening inquiry into the relationships between lawmakers and PMA" and indicated that the Office of Congressional Ethics is "looking at House members who may have been 'accepting contributions or other items of value from PMA's PAC in exchange for an official act.'" I write to urge you to take immediate action to protect the dignity of the House of Representatives.

While the Committee on Standards and Official Conduct can state that "[n]o inference to any misconduct can be made from the fact that a matter is simply before the Committee," no one can deny the cloud that the PMA scandal continues to cast over this institution. There has been persistent media attention focused on questions related to the nature and timing of PMA political contributions, reports of a Justice Department probe on earmarks and campaign contributions, and an apparent on-going Ethics Committee investigation involving the PMA Group. Yet, the only outward acknowledgement of the issue has been the voluntary shuttering of the PMA Group. The appropriations process this year moved forward as if the issue did not exist, including more than seventy no-bid contracts for former clients of PMA, worth nearly \$200 million, in the form of earmarks tucked into the defense appropriations bill. This is all the more troubling when one considers a recent *Roll Call* story highlighting that, for the most part, the PMA Group simply morphed into other lobbying firms servicing former PMA clients, including many of whom are among the fiscal year 2010 earmark recipients.

The circumstances surrounding how the Ethics Committee information came to light are unfortunate; however, the emerging details relative to the scope of the investigation represent an important opportunity for the House to act. I respectfully request that all of the no-bid contracts in the form of House earmarks for former clients of PMA be stripped from the pending fiscal year 2010 defense appropriations conference report. There is simply no defensible reason to allow no-bid contracts for

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former clients of a lobby firm embroiled in an on-going scandal currently under investigation. Please let me know if I, or my staff, can be of assistance.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jeff Flake", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

JEFF FLAKE

Member of Congress

cc: The Honorable Zoe Lofgren, Chairwoman, House Committee on Standards of Official Conduct
The Honorable Joe Bonner, Ranking Member, House Committee on Standards of Official
Conduct