

June 9, 2016

Dear Representative:

We strongly urge you to vote against the amendment expected to be offered by Rep. Steve Pearce (R-NM) to reduce the proposed budget of the Office of Congressional Ethics (OCE) and keep it at its FY16 levels. This effort is nothing more than sour grapes from a Member who has had a several interactions with the Office. The OCE has played a critically important role in restoring public credibility of the congressional ethics process. The Pearce amendment should be rejected on a bipartisan basis.

The OCE has been a singular success at a time when public approval of Congress is at an all-time low. It has compiled a record of professionalism, and more amazing in the current atmosphere, a record of bipartisan agreement. It has dismissed more than half of the complaints it has received. The Office applies ethics standards consistently, and interprets ethics rules and laws in a common sense way.

This is the second time Rep. Pearce has targeted the Office since OCE investigated a Pearce staffer. In 2015, Rep. Pearce inserted late-night provisions into House Rules that among other things directed the Office not to “take any action that would deny any person any right or protection provided under the Constitution of the United States” – an unnecessary restatement of existing law and practice.

The Pearce amendment seeks to cut \$190,000 from the OCE’s proposed budget. This cut will hamper the agency’s efficiency and reduce its ability to conduct and complete its investigations in a manner that is timely and fair to Members and staff.

We urge you to reject the Pearce amendment.

Sincerely,

Campaign Legal Center
Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington (CREW)
Common Cause
Demand Progress
Democracy 21
Issue One
League of Women Voters
Thomas Mann
National Legal and Policy Center
Norman Ornstein
Project on Government Oversight (POGO)

Public Citizen
Taxpayers for Common Sense
Professor James A. Thurber