



Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

September 4, 2009

The Honorable Charles B. Rangel
Committee on Ways & Means
U.S. House of Representatives
1102 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Charlie:

When it comes to the relationship between the American people and those they elect to serve them, trust is everything. This is especially true at a difficult time such as this for our nation, when Americans are looking to their government for leadership and solutions, and finding both in short supply. For this reason, I am writing to again respectfully urge that you step aside as chairman of the Committee on Ways & Means until the Ethics Committee has completed a bipartisan investigation of questions relating to your official conduct.

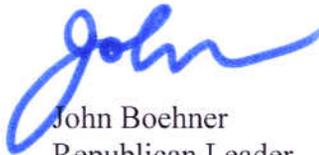
As I have noted often in the past year, I have long considered you a friend, and I still do. But friends are not infallible; they make mistakes. And when mistakes are made, particularly in the course of public service, accountability is necessary. Friendship does not trump our obligations to the offices we hold, or to the constituents we serve.

The American people have every right to demand that their elected leaders be held to the highest possible standards of ethical conduct in every situation, regardless of a member's political party, personality, or past record. You have a record of long and highly-decorated service, and through your good-natured service, you have earned the friendship and admiration of individuals on both sides of the aisle. It is for precisely this reason that I am urging you to take this action. As chairman of the powerful House committee, entrusted with the responsibility of writing the tax laws that affect every law-abiding American citizen, you, along with the Speaker and other leaders of the majority party, have an obligation to help set the pace when it comes to standards of official conduct. By relinquishing the gavel voluntarily while the Ethics panel does its work, you would demonstrate your respect for this obligation.

Americans have always maintained a healthy skepticism about government, and Congress in particular. But as we have witnessed this summer, that skepticism is intensifying, in some cases into open anger – anger fueled by congressional actions that demonstrate a fundamental disrespect for the sacrifices made on a daily basis by citizens and their families throughout our country.

I urge you not to allow yourself to become an emblem of this disrespect. Show the American people that having their confidence in your leadership means more to you than having the opportunity to wield power. Set aside your gavel while the Ethics Committee works to resolve the questions that have been raised. I respectfully urge you to consider this course of action.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "John". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the "J" being particularly large and stylized.

John Boehner
Republican Leader