

**Mr. SCOTT of Virginia:** Mr. Speaker, it is the unfortunate reality that the House of Representatives has seen its share of unethical behavior on the part of public officials elected to represent and serve their constituents. Moreover, this problem is not one confined to Democrats or Republicans. Rather, it is a problem that we all need to recognize and take steps to address.

For these reasons, and with the interest of the American people in mind, we need a fair and just manner to investigate any allegations of unethical behavior by a Member of the House. With this goal in mind, the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. *Capuano*) introduced H. Res. 895, and I support his efforts.

H. Res. 895 takes every possible step to ensure equality, fairness, and nonpartisanship in addressing questions of ethics. It establishes a new independent Office of Congressional Ethics within the House of Representatives to be governed by a board that will be comprised of six members jointly appointed by the Speaker of the House and the minority leader.

To further ensure fairness and prevent preferential treatment, current Members of the House of Representatives and lobbyists are not eligible to serve as board members. Moreover, removal of a board member may only occur with the approval of both the Speaker and the House minority leader.

The Office of Congressional Ethics could include former Members of the House, but all of the members of the board would be qualified by virtue of their exceptional public standing. This office has the potential to clean up politics and, in turn, restore the public's faith in politics in the political process.

This has the support of Common Cause, U.S. PIRG, and two very well-respected scholars in government and politics, Thomas Mann of the Brookings Institute and Norm Ornstein of the American Enterprise Institute.

I support H. Res. 895 and urge my colleagues to vote in favor of this reform.