November 4, 2026

Incoming Members of the 120th Congress:

We, the undersigned organizations, write both on behalf of our organizations and as concerned Americans to urge you to prioritize an anti-corruption agenda when the 120th Congress begins in January.

As President Trump continues to use the White House to amass wealth and consolidate power, this week's election results and exit polls show that voters are desperate for change. According to polling, corruption was the number one issue in the midterms, surpassing concerns about things like housing, the cost of food and groceries and immigration and border security. This is a bipartisan concern, with 91% of Democrats, 90% of Independents and 83% of Republicans agreeing that corruption is widespread according to a recent Gallup poll. Perhaps most soberingly, Americans see both political parties as corrupt and view corruption as infecting all three branches of government with significant majorities viewing Congress (85%), the president (68%), the cabinet (81%) and the Supreme Court (62%) *all* as corrupt.

The legitimacy of democracies is built on public trust. When the public no longer trusts the government, it creates a downward spiral of cynicism and apathy that makes people susceptible to authoritarian strongmen. Corruption in America is also costing people directly. Extractive tariffs, reckless abuse of public funds, mergers that drive up prices – these are all deepening the affordability crisis in America. Cronyism is harmful to the level playing field on which American businesses depend. In addition, corruption is a national security vulnerability – making American diplomatic, trade and aid decisions vulnerable to foreign adversaries. Simply put, corruption is an existential threat to democracy.

When the 120th Congress begins, Congress must prioritize an anti-corruption agenda that curbs the most dangerous forms of corruption and starts rebuilding the trust of the American people. It is critical to show in word and deed that Congress is serious about combatting corruption throughout the government. To that end, we urge you to prioritize the following six steps to combat corruption.

- **Conduct robust oversight**: To date congressional oversight of the Trump-Vance administration has been largely lacking. That needs to change. Public reporting of President Trump and his family's personal enrichment is staggering – a $500 million dollar investment by the United Arab Emirates National Security Adviser Sheikh Tahnoon bin Zayed Al Nahyan (sometimes referred to as the "Spy Sheikh" because he oversees the UAE's vast spying operation) in Trump's crypto company, World Liberty Financial, only for the country to gain access a few months later to prized AI chips; the donation of a $400 million dollar airplane from Qatar for Trump's use; a Russian oligarch with ties to Vladimir Putin bankrolling the president's son's wedding;

companies backed by Trump's sons receiving over $6 billion in defense contracts; $330 million in private funds, largely from corporations that stood to gain from government favor, donated to construct a new White House ballroom. And this is just the corruption that we know about. Congress must use all of the tools at its disposal to prioritize oversight of corruption and build the case for more muscular anti-corruption guardrails. And if necessary, Congress should use its investigative powers to compel information, not only from the executive branch, but from the corporations who have enabled this corruption by bankrolling his various vanity projects. The American public has a vested interest in understanding how corporations have enabled corruption under the Trump administration, and what those corporations may have gotten in exchange. Congress must not only expose corruption. It also must offer bold solutions to fix it so that the American public does not become even more disenchanted. In both conducting oversight and crafting legislative solutions, it is crucial that members of the House and the Senate coordinate across chambers to leverage the full array of powers and tools that Congress has at its disposal.

- **Ban congressional stock trading and prediction market betting:** Congress must get its own house in order by passing a stock trading ban and prohibiting members and high-ranking staff from using their positions of public trust to make money by betting on prediction markets. Bipartisan majorities including 87% of Republicans, 88% of Democrats and 81% of Independents support a congressional stock trading ban, such as the bipartisan Restore Trust in Congress Act. A similar approach needs to be taken with prediction markets. The House needs to follow the Senate's lead and ban members and their staff who could have access to non-public information from placing prediction market bets. This harm is not theoretical, with NPR reporting that campaign staffers have made thousands by using tips about soon to be released polls to place bets on their own candidates. Additionally, the markets themselves must be prohibited from holding event contracts for war, terrorism or elections in the first place. Promptly passing these common sense reforms is critical to showing the American public that Congress takes seriously the public's concerns about corruption.
- **Reverse the Supreme Court's corruption jurisprudence:** In a series of cases decided over the past 39 years, the Supreme Court has systematically gutted the country's public corruption laws. The Court's rulings have helped foster a culture of corruption and impunity among public office holders across the ideological spectrum. Congress must prioritize reversing this trend by passing legislation that rebuilds public trust and reverses the Court's decisions in a series of cases including *McDonnell v. United States*, *Snyder v. United States*, *United States v. Sun Diamond* and *Skillings v. United States*. Luckily, legislative solutions have already been introduced in both houses of Congress to undo these disastrous decisions. Passing these legislative fixes is a necessary first step to ensuring we have meaningful anti-corruption laws on the books.

- **Ban presidential profiteering:** President Trump has used the White House to get rich, reportedly earning over $2 billion in 2025 alone. But no president, regardless of political party, should be able to leverage the power of their office to get rich. Congress needs to respond by banning any current or future president from earning outside income while they are in office. Executive branch political appointees are already banned from earning outside income. Extending this prohibition to the president is both legal and necessary.
- **Anti-corruption enforcement:** The Trump administration has systematically dismantled the anti-corruption investigative and prosecutorial apparatus at the federal level. That needs to be reversed. Congress should establish dedicated anticorruption infrastructure for all three branches of government and should use its appropriations powers to ensure that these efforts are funded through nondiscretionary sources and should, where appropriate, create causes of action that also allow for state AG enforcement.
- **End slush funds and personal payouts:** The Trump Administration has bypassed Congress and created slush funds throughout the government - from the Commerce Department to the Justice Department - to channel money however it chooses. These funds not only undermine Congress' appropriations powers, but create unguarded pools of money that can be used for payouts to allies and cronies. Perhaps nowhere is this more acute than the attempt to create a $1.776 billion payout to January 6th insurrectionists that was enjoined by the courts. But the pattern continues, with Trump recently asserting direct personal control over a $25 million dollar 'antifraud' fund whose first award was to a right-wing YouTube personality who reportedly used deceptive techniques. Congress must immediately pass guardrails to curb the use of slush funds and also make significant reforms to the federal government's Judgment Fund that curb the ability to make unwarranted payouts including prohibiting payouts to the president, vice president, and their immediate family members while they are in office.

Corruption is a serious problem in the United States – but we have also seen globally how robust anti-corruption movements can help reinvigorate democracy. The 120th Congress must understand that addressing corruption is essential to preserving our democracy. As such, the 120th Congress must pursue effective anti-corruption measures with all due urgency. We stand ready and willing to help Congress pass bold reforms and conduct vigorous oversight to expose corruption and pass meaningful solutions aimed at regaining the trust of the American people.

Sincerely,

Campaign Legal Center
Center for Common Ground
Center for Media and Democracy
Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington (CREW)

Common Cause
Defend the Vote Action Fund
Democracy 21
Democracy Defenders Action
Democracy SENTRY
Democratic Messaging Project
E-PluribusUnum.org
End Citizens United
Faithful Voter Project
Faiths for Safe Water
Lawyers for Good Government
National Association of Social Workers
National Council of Asian Pacific Americans (NCAPA)
National Voter Corps
National Women's Law Center Action Fund
People For the American Way
Protect Democracy
Public Citizen
RepresentUs
Revolving Door Project
Secure Elections Network
Transparency International U.S.