

R046-0708

10 **RESOLUTION CONCERNING THE ESTABLISHMENT OF OFFICES OF PUBLIC**
20 **INTEGRITY FOR THE UNITED STATES HOUSE AND SENATE**

30 **WHEREAS:** In the American Republic all power is vested in, and consequently derived from,
40 the people; and,

50 **WHEREAS:** The very essence of a free government consists in considering offices public
60 trusts, bestowed for the good of the country and not for the benefit of any individual or
70 party; and,

80 **WHEREAS:** Senators and House Members occupy positions of public trust, they must always
90 act to further the public interest, pursue justice and seek the common good and must
100 always endeavor to avoid the appearance that they, the House or Senate, or the
110 governmental process may be influenced by campaign contributions or other benefits
120 provided by those with significant legislative or governmental interests; and,

120 **WHEREAS:** It is the responsibility of the United States House of Representatives and Senate
130 take the most effectual precautions to insure that its Members and employees
140 pursue the common good of the society while they continue to hold their public trust;
150 and,

160 **WHEREAS:** The American people rightfully expect that Members of the House and Senate
170 will use the power entrusted to them by the people and by virtue of the office of trust
180 which they hold, only for the public good and never for their own benefit or the benefit
190 of a few; and,

200 **WHEREAS:** Citizens' respect for, and thus adherence to, the law, will decline if they lose
210 respect for their representatives in government or believe that the governmental
220 process reflects the desires of special interests rather than the public good; and,

230 **WHEREAS:** When, in the late 1960s a series of scandals demonstrated obvious corruption in
240 the Federal legislative process, the United States House and Senate recommitted
250 themselves to restore the people's trust in the integrity of Members and the legislative
260 process by recommitting themselves to the fundamental ethical principle of American
270 Government that public office is a public trust and by establishing Codes of Ethics and
280 bi-partisan committees to interpret those Codes and to investigate allegations that
290 Members or employees had engaged in conduct which violated any law, rule,
300 regulation or ethical principle of American government and to restore the
310 public trust in the legislative process; and,

320 **WHEREAS:** After forty years the Ethics Committees have failed to restore the public's trust in
330 the integrity of the Federal legislative process and, in fact, have further diminished the
340 public's faith in Congressional integrity.

350 **THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:** That the Maryland Student Legislature urge the United
360 States Congress to pass and the President sign a bill abolishing the Senate Ethics
370 Committee and the House Standards of Official Conduct Committee and replace those
360 Committees with independent Offices of Public Integrity, responsible for all the
370 responsibilities previously vested in those Committees and that each Office shall
380 operate in a nonpartisan manner and report to the House or Senate, and the American
390 people on the results of any inquiry it undertakes and shall make recommendations on
400 disciplinary action including, when it finds necessary, the expulsion of any Member;
410 additionally, the appropriate Office will be responsible for executing subpoenas or

420 search warrants as necessary to further the proper activities of other law enforcement
430 agencies and the appointment of individuals to serve in the Offices of Public Integrity
440 shall be accomplished in a manner which encourages the people to have faith that those
450 serving in the Offices shall act as non partisans to restore the public's trust in the
460 commitment of the legislative process to the pursuit of justice.

470 **MANDATES:** President George W. Bush
480 Nancy Pelosi, Speaker of the House
490 Harry Reid, Senate Majority Leader
500 Mitch McConnell, Senate Minority Leader
510 Steny Hoyer, House Majority Leader
520 John Boehner, House Minority Leader

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