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Pelosi calls for probe of 2 state Republicans / Democratic leader wants reform after lobbyist scandal

January 13, 2006 | By Edward Epstein, Chronicle Washington Bureau

(01-13) 04:00 PST Washington — **2006-01-13 04:00:00 PST Washington** -- House Democratic Leader Nancy Pelosi of San Francisco called Thursday for the dormant House Ethics Committee to open investigations of several members tied to lobbyist Jack Abramoff, including two Northern California Republicans, Rep. Richard Pombo of Tracy and Rep. John Doolittle of Rocklin (Placer County).

In a letter to House Speaker Dennis Hastert, R-Ill., Pelosi also called for Congress to pass sweeping lobbying reform legislation after it returns late this month. She also called for the House to change the new Medicare prescription drug benefit, and to repeal oil and gas industry tax breaks and liability protection for makers of avian flu virus, legislation Democrats cite as examples of laws Republicans passed to cater to industries that are major GOP contributors.

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Republicans reacted angrily to Pelosi's comment that Democrats, too, have been the

The letter to Hastert represented an intensification of the scandal as dominated by what she calls a "culture of corruption"

phrase 14 times, showing that Democrats plan to use the spreading Abramoff scandal as an issue to try to win back a House majority in the November midterm elections.

Abramoff, a powerhouse Washington lobbyist, has pleaded guilty to corruption charges and he is cooperating with federal prosecutors. His plea helped persuade one of his top House allies, Majority Leader Rep. Tom DeLay, R-Texas, to quit his leadership post.

Among the other members linked to Abramoff are Doolittle, whose wife got a job at a firm associated with the lobbyist, and Pombo, the Resources Committee chairman whose alleged ties to Abramoff included pushing for federal recognition for a Massachusetts Indian tribe that was a client of the lobbyist. Since the scandal erupted, Pombo has donated to charity \$7,000 in Abramoff campaign contributions.

Pelosi also suggested that the Ethics Committee look into DeLay and Rep. Bob Ney, R-Ohio, a member who was referred to obliquely in Abramoff's guilty plea.

"Media stories have contained allegations that each of these members committed egregious violations of

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House rules," Pelosi said in her letter.

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Hoyer: "Drain the swamp" not my line

By Jared Allen - 07/27/10 01:21 PM ET

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House Majority Leader Steny Hoyer (D-Md.) on Tuesday noted that it was Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.), not him, who promised to "drain the swamp" of corruption in Washington.

Pelosi famously vowed in 2006 to "drain the swamp" that ensnared Republican members and their leaders during the George W. Bush administration.

During his weekly press conference on Tuesday, Hoyer clarified that he has never used that phrase.

"I didn't use that term," Hoyer said when asked if he thinks Democrats have "drained the swamp." "What I believed and continue to believe is that we have made the ethics process work, and we have made it work in a meaningful way."

Hoyer's office pushed back against reports that his clarification was indicative of any kind of split between him and other Democratic leaders, including the Speaker, saying it was only in response to a question about whether Democrats have been able to "drain the swamp" as they promised to do.

Still, after a year of working seamlessly to pass a difficult agenda through a very ideologically diverse House, Hoyer and Pelosi have recently begun to show signs of divergence. Hoyer earlier this month said policymakers should consider raising the retirement age. He reiterated that position on Tuesday, even though Pelosi last week and again over the weekend clearly indicated she was opposed to the idea.

Pelosi defeated Hoyer in 2001 for the position of House minority whip, and five years later the California Democrat endorsed Rep. John Murtha (D-Pa.) over Hoyer in the race for majority leader. Hoyer easily defeated Murtha, who died in February.

However, Hoyer and the Speaker have worked well together in recent years.

Their complementary styles have helped pass the party's top legislative priorities through a very ideologically diverse House.

Ethics remains an area, though, in which the two leaders seem to have the most

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trouble staying on the same page, rhetorically or otherwise.

Aside from Hoyer's unsolicited declaration that he and Pelosi do not share a set of talking points when it comes to the ethics, the recent resignation of another member who was under investigation — former Rep. Eric Massa (D-N.Y.) — showcased a split over how the two handled an ethics scandal.

As reports first began to trickle out on March 2 of this year that Massa's retirement announcement was not, in fact, due to the reemergence of cancer — as the New York Democrat initially claimed — but was more closely tied to charges that he had sexually harassed male members of his staff, Hoyer's press office scrambled to alert media outlets of the back story of Hoyer's direct involvement in bringing about the ethics inquiry of Massa.

Soon after learning in early February that Massa's staff had lodged complaints with Hoyer's office, Hoyer's senior staff immediately told the majority leader. The result was an ultimatum: Alert the ethics committee personally within 48 hours or the majority leader would.

Not only did Hoyer's office go out of its way to explain his level of involvement, the level of involvement itself appears to have differed significantly from that of the Speaker.

When Hoyer became aware, he sought quick action. Pelosi apparently never became aware in the first place. And Pelosi herself described her lack of knowledge as appropriate.

Pelosi explained during a March 4 press conference that she had only become aware of the allegations against Massa the day prior — almost a month after Hoyer had — because while Hoyer's staff alerted him, Pelosi's staff did not alert her.

"I asked my staff, I said, have there been any rumors about any of this before?" she said. "There had been a rumor, but just that, no formal notification to our office that anything — a one, two, three person removed rumor that had been reported to Mr. Hoyer's office that had been reported to my staff, which they didn't report to me, because, you know what? This is rumor city. Every single day there are rumors. I have a job to do and not to be the receiver of rumors."

The House ethics committee is investigating the Massa case.

Comments (41)

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Hoyer throwing Pelosi under the bus; how quaint. Hoyer, Hoyer, Hoyer, ever hear of a thing called 'loyalty'?

BY **K FROM AZ** on 07/27/2010 at 14:55

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JVsr_-v2sl

We may have to wait to drain the swamp until after November as there is no will to patrol their own.

BY **CHARLSIE** on 07/27/2010 at 15:00

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OTHERWISE VOTE FOR SOMEONE ELSE!

BY **MARKG-NV** on 07/27/2010 at 15:15

Rep. Nancy Pelosi's "drain the swamp" will come back to haunt her since her Congress from 2007-2010 is one of the most corrupt House's ever. Instead of draining the swamp, Pelosi put on her bathing suit & jumped right into the swamp! The list is quite long, but the most prominent corruptocrats in both Houses are Senators Charles Rangel, the late Murtha, the retiring Chris Dodd, & Barney Frank. And that's just the Senate!

Hoyer waited too little, too late. He's in the swamp with Nancy Pelosi too.

BY **SEBASTIAN SHAW** on 07/27/2010 at 15:20

What Happened:::: Nancy and Charlie had covered this up for over two years and now this. Is Nancy losing some of her control?

BY **DON** on 07/27/2010 at 15:25

Pelosi in a bathing suit; now that's a revolting thought.

BY **K FROM AZ** on 07/27/2010 at 15:31

The Democrats House majority is on its last legs. Pelosi had no intention of "draining the swamp" considering how she aligned herself with Murtha, Frank, Rangel, et al. The Dems are much worse than the GOP ever was. I hope they lose 60 seats. That should scare the daylight out of Obama.

BY **TAXPAYER** on 07/27/2010 at 15:41

There is certainly alot of dirty slimey water to be drained.Hopefully Nance will be part of that dirty corrupted water.

BY **WISHING** on 07/27/2010 at 16:01

@Sebastion, Thanks for ruining my day with that "Nancy in a bathing suit..Image" OUCH!!

BY **NUFFSAID** on 07/27/2010 at 16:03

It's no swamp...it's a cesspool. All of the Dems stink like sewage!

BY **LIAMD2** on 07/27/2010 at 16:03

Thats funny just last month the democratic black caucus wanted to eliminate the ethics committee. Too bad for Charlie had they been able to do so he would not be in this mess.

BY **STENY** on 07/27/2010 at 16:17

FACT: Under the progressive leadership of soon to be SpeakerShipless Madame/Comrade Pelosky and soon-to-be-lobbiest DirtyDingy Harry "The War is Lost"The Racist" Reid, FACT: Gallup's 2010 Confidence in Institutions poll finds Congress ranking dead last out of the 16 institutions rated this year. Only 11% of Americans, definitely kool-aid drinkers, say they have a great deal or quite a lot of confidence in Congress, down from 17% in 2009 and a percentage point lower than the previous low for Congress, recorded in 2008. FACT: Underscoring Congress image problem, over 50% of Americans now say they have "very little" or no confidence in Congress, up from 38% in 2009 - and the highest for any institution since Gallup first asked this question in 1973. This year's poll also finds a 15-point drop in high confidence in the progressive presidency, to 36% from 51% in June 2009.

BY **VOTE DEMSOUT 2010/12** on 07/27/2010 at 16:20

FACT: Gallup has the Dems leading in the Generic Ballot for the second week in a row. FACT: A historically low 10% approve of Republicans in Congress. FACT: President Obama's Gallup approval is higher than Reagan's at the same point of his first term. FACT: The GOP is in disarray, with top Republicans calling for the firing of RNC chair

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Michael Steele and former Republican Congressman Joe Scarborough describing GOP House leader John Boner is a lazy bar hopper.

BY **VOTE GOPOUT 2010/12** on 07/27/2010 at 16:26

Ugh. Steny you are one ugly piece of work. Prima Donna, Nancy has bigger balls than you.

BY **MANBEARPIG** on 07/27/2010 at 16:26

FACT: Washington is abuzz with rumors of late-night partying and of House Republicans inappropriately hanging out with female lobbyists.

http://www.rollcall.com/issues/56_11/news/48646-1.html

BY **VOTE GOPOUT 2010/12** on 07/27/2010 at 16:29

In essence queen nancy may actually drain the swamp after the dems get booted out of congress November 2nd. This, however, is not how she intended to do it.

BY **POPPA** on 07/27/2010 at 17:18

It depends on what the meaning of 'is' is. Hmmm...I've heard this somewhere before..

BY **RIGOMAN3** on 07/27/2010 at 17:28

Hey Vote Gopout, you don't think the Dems are not out late trying to get some!!!!!!!!!!!!!!
!!

BY **DWAYNE** on 07/27/2010 at 18:00

These DIMS are liars extraordinaire. They are absolutely ruining the country and have done ZERO to create private sector jobs.

Flush these racist RATS in NOVEMBER!

BY **DUNCE BIDEN** on 07/27/2010 at 19:26

SWAMP...Stupid Weird And Mad People...See Congress

BY **UKNOW?** on 07/27/2010 at 19:29

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