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ONE HUNDRED TWELFTH CONGRESS

## U.S. House of Representatives

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**FOR RELEASE: Upon Receipt**

**December 20, 2012**

### **STATEMENT OF THE CHAIRMAN AND RANKING MEMBER OF THE COMMITTEE ON ETHICS REGARDING REPRESENTATIVE GREGORY W. MEEKS**

Pursuant to Committee Rule 7(g), the Committee on Ethics (Committee) determined on December 18, 2012, to release the following statement:

On May 18, 2011, the Committee received a referral from the Office of Congressional Ethics (OCE) regarding Representative Gregory W. Meeks. The Committee, pursuant to Committee Rule 18(a), conducted a further review of the matter and voted to accept the OCE's recommendation for further review of an allegation that Representative Meeks failed to disclose a loan he received in 2007 from Edul Ahmad (the Ahmad loan) in a timely manner.

The Committee adopted a Report on December 18, 2012 based on its independent review, which resolves the allegation regarding the Ahmad loan. The Committee has unanimously determined, based on the Committee's review of this allegation, that Representative Meeks failed to disclose the Ahmad loan as a liability on his 2007, 2008, and 2009 Financial Disclosure Statements. The Committee found no credible evidence that the errors were knowing or willful.

The Committee recognizes that unknowing failures to report such items are not uncommon. Such errors and omissions are typically corrected through amendments to Financial Disclosure Statements, and do not involve any further Committee action. Representative Meeks has since corrected the errors and omissions in his Financial Disclosure Statements by his subsequent amendments, which were filed in June 2010. Therefore, no further action by the Committee is warranted.

Although it was not the basis of the OCE referral, the Committee also investigated the allegation that the Ahmad loan was not accompanied by a written document and stated loan terms, and constituted an impermissible gift. The Committee determined that the evidence did not establish that the Ahmad loan was an impermissible gift.

Representative Meeks has consistently represented that the loan was memorialized in writing and had a set repayment schedule and rate of interest, but that he cannot produce the loan document now because he has misplaced it. Representative Meeks repaid the loan in June 2010, and stated that he ultimately paid an interest rate of 12.5%.

While counsel to Mr. Ahmad has represented that there was no loan document signed by Representative Meeks and no fixed interest rate, the Committee staff has been unable to confirm this allegation due to the inability to interview Mr. Ahmad. Mr. Ahmad has pleaded guilty to fraud charges in an unrelated federal criminal case. Mr. Ahmad's attorney has informed Committee staff that Mr. Ahmad would decline any request for a voluntary interview with the Committee, and, if subpoenaed, Mr. Ahmad would invoke his Fifth Amendment rights unless the Committee gave him immunity from criminal prosecution. Mr. Ahmad's attorney has also informed the Committee that no additional documentary evidence exists relating to the Ahmad loan.

Considering the highly compromised credibility of Mr. Ahmad, unless he could provide some documentary evidence indicating that the payment to Representative Meeks was not a loan—which his attorney has stated he cannot do—it would be unreasonable for the Committee to conclude, on the basis of his testimony alone, that Representative Meeks had been untruthful to the Committee in his sworn statement that such a document had accompanied the loan. Therefore, the Committee has decided to close its investigation regarding the allegation that Representative Meeks received an improper gift from Mr. Ahmad.

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