

U.S. House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON STANDARDS OF
OFFICIAL CONDUCT

Washington, DC 20515

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STATEMENT ON SELECTION OF ETHICS STAFF DIRECTOR

Representative Zoe Lofgren, Chair of the Committee on Standards of Official Conduct and Representative Jo Bonner, Ranking Republican Member of the Committee today announce the selection of R. Blake Chisam to serve as the Committee's Staff Director and Chief Counsel. The appointment will take effect May 1, 2009.

"I'm certain that Blake will bring the same professionalism and dedication to the Committee that he has demonstrated throughout his career," noted Chair Lofgren. "The Committee's mission is to serve the institution, its Members and staff, and to assure the public that Members and staff adhere to the highest standards of ethics in government. The bipartisan nature of this appointment clearly points to Blake's proven abilities to manage staff, along with technological and business process changes, in challenging legal environments."

"The past several months have been challenging for the committee. Last summer, Chairwoman Tubbs-Jones passed away unexpectedly; we finished the 110th Congress with an interim chairman and an interim staff director and we've had a number of other vacancies on the staff to deal with as well," Ranking Member Bonner stated. "That said," he added, "the Chair and I felt duty bound to do a thorough and extensive search of some extremely qualified applicants," he added. "While all of them offered us different strengths and qualities, I am convinced that Blake will be the kind of leader that will help us transform the committee into a much more effective, efficient and respected part of this institution."

"I am honored and humbled by the Committee's trust," Mr. Chisam said. "I look forward to serving the public and the People's House."

The Chair and Ranking Member noted that Mr. Chisam was chosen from a field of nearly 150 applicants. In addition to Mr. Chisam, the Committee expects to hire several additional attorneys, support staff and other professionals in the coming months.

Mr. Chisam currently serves as counsel and senior policy advisor to Committee Chair Zoe Lofgren. His distinguished legal experience includes service as senior counsel to the House Committee on the Judiciary during the 110th Congress, more than ten years of private law practice with major private sector law firms, and three years as senior trial attorney for the Legal Aid Society's Criminal Defense Division in Brooklyn, New York. Mr. Chisam is co-author of a distinguished immigration law treatise and, in 2000, he received the U.S. Department of Justice Director's Award for Meritorious Public Service for *pro bono* work on behalf of mentally ill immigrants and refugees.

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