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ONE HUNDRED TWELFTH CONGRESS

U.S. House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON ETHICS

March 9, 2012

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MEMORANDUM FOR ALL MEMBERS, OFFICERS, AND EMPLOYEES

FROM: Committee on Ethics
Jo Bonner, Chairman *JB*
Linda T. Sánchez, Ranking Member *ATS*

SUBJECT: Change in Rules Regarding Providing a Hyperlink from Campaign Internet Sites to Official Internet Sites

In order to reduce confusion among constituents and the general public, and to help clarify the difference between campaign media and official media, the Committee is announcing a recent change, made after consideration of a request from the Franking Commission, in the policy regarding whether Members' campaign Web sites and other Internet communications resources, such as Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube (collectively Internet Sites), may contain language notifying constituents of Members' official Internet Sites and provide hyperlinks to those resources. Members' campaign Internet Sites may now provide a hyperlink to Members' official Internet Sites *if that hyperlink is presented in a brief notification that has been approved by the Committee on Ethics in advance.*

The Committee on Ethics has approved the use of the following notification:

Thank you for visiting my campaign (Web site/Twitter page/Facebook page). If your intention was to visit my official House of Representatives (Web site/Twitter page/Facebook page), please click here. [The "click here" would be hyperlinked to the appropriate Web site.]

Members must seek written approval of the Committee on Ethics prior to using any other language in their disclaimer. This new policy remains an exception to the general rule that campaign resources may not be used to advertise the contact information, such as the address or telephone number, for the official congressional office. *Therefore, any Internet Sites that do not use a specifically-approved notification, such as the one above, may not contain a hyperlink or reference to a Member's official Internet Site.*

Note that this exception applies only to a hyperlink to an official Internet Site from a Member's campaign Internet Site. The new policy does not cover the reverse

situation; thus, a Member's official Internet Site still may not contain a reference or link to any campaign Internet Site.

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Any questions on these matters should be directed to the Committee's Office of Advice and Education at extension 5-7103.