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March 6, 2014

The Honorable John Boehner
Speaker, United States House of Representatives
H-232, The Capitol
Washington, DC, 20510

Mr. Speaker,

The American people have the right to expect that their elected leaders be held to the highest possible standards of conduct. Congressional committee leaders are held to an even higher standard due to their unique positions. The abuse of authority and misuse of the Congressional privileges afforded them are an affront to the expectations of the American public. Congressman Darrell Issa of California abused his authority and therefore must be reprimanded to ensure the dignity of the House of Representatives is preserved.

On behalf of the Congressional Black Caucus and the people we represent, I urge you to take immediate action to address the recent deplorable conduct of Oversight & Government Reform Committee Chairman Darrell Issa. After a witness invoked the 5th Amendment and during time allotted to Ranking Member Elijah Cummings, Mr. Issa abruptly ended the hearing by directing staff to disconnect the audio system. And further, he refused committee members' participation during the hearing. Mr. Issa's conduct is unequivocally unacceptable for a member of the House of Representatives.

Under the applicable Rules of the House, we strongly encourage you to take disciplinary action against Mr. Issa and force him to present himself before the American people on the House floor with an apology. Under Rule 9, questions of the privileges of the House are those that affect its rights collectively, its dignity and the integrity of its proceedings. Additionally, according to Rule 23, a member of the House shall behave at all times in a manner that reflects creditably on the House, and shall adhere to the spirit and letter of said Rules, including those established by committees.

Mr. Issa not only violated House Rules 9 and 23, he also violated the rules of the committee he chairs. According to Oversight & Government Reform Committee Rule 9 and House Rule 11, each member is allowed five minutes to question a witness during a Congressional hearing. Mr. Issa blatantly disregarded this rule when he adjourned the hearing and denied committee members the opportunity to speak in the middle of the customary five minutes afforded to Ranking Member Cummings. Mr. Issa is a disgrace and should not be allowed to continue in a leadership role.

As the Speaker, you are responsible for maintaining decorum and appropriate conduct in the House of Representatives and ordering the Sergeant at Arms to enforce House rules. We urge you to take prompt action to maintain the integrity of this body and remove Mr. Issa as chair of the Oversight & Government Reform Committee immediately.

Sincerely,



Marcia L. Fudge
Chair, Congressional Black Caucus

cc: Sergeant at Arms Paul D. Irving, United States House of Representatives

