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For More Information, Contact:
Kirstin Brost, 202-225-3481

Former Chair of the Corporation for Public Broadcasting Resigns in Face of Inspector General's Report

WASHINGTON — On May 11th Reps. David Obey (D-WI) and John Dingell (D-MI) called for an investigation into reports that former Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB) Chair Ken Tomlinson used questionable tactics to exert political influence over public broadcasting.

Nearly six months later, the Inspector General has found enough problems to cause the CPB Board to meet in secret for three days to consider his preliminary findings.

Today, at the conclusion of that meeting, Tomlinson resigned.

"The public interest is hurt when there are no checks and balances. This Administration believes that since they control all branches of government, they can abuse the public trust and get away with it and Mr. Tomlinson is part of this pattern," said Obey. "Mr. Tomlinson's resignation should be used to bring people together, not divide them as he and the administration have done. Public Broadcasting is too important to be anybody's partisan or ideological play thing."

"This is a long overdue step," added Dingell. "I await the Inspector General's report, and we will need to determine how to stop this kind of misbehavior in the future. The Corporation is funded completely with federal funds. It has an obligation to operate with transparency and without partisan motivation in all of its actions and decision-making. We hope that today's action is the first step by the board to operate in a more professional, nonpartisan manner that serves all of our citizens."

"Under Mr. Tomlinson's reign, the Corporation for Public Broadcasting lost sight of its core mission," said Henry Waxman (D-CA), Ranking Member of the House Committee on Government Reform. "He interjected partisanship into an institution revered for its independence and objectivity. I hope today's resignation will allow the Corporation to return to its nonpartisan traditions. I look forward to the final IG report, and urge the Board to take aggressive steps to root out any legacy of partisanship left by Mr. Tomlinson."

On May 11th, Obey, Ranking Member of the House Committee on Appropriations, and Dingell, Ranking Member of the House Committee on Energy and Commerce, requested that Kenneth A. Konz, Inspector General for the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, investigate whether the Corporation for Public Broadcasting violated the Public Broadcasting Act of 1967 (PBA), which prohibits interference by Federal officials over the content and distribution of public programming, and forbids "political or other tests" from being used in CPB hiring decisions.

Obey and Dingell asked that the CPB Inspector General investigate a consulting contract that, according to *The New York Times,* was initiated by CPB Chairman Kenneth Tomlinson to review the "Now with Bill Moyers" television show for political content. They also asked the CPB Inspector General to look into CPB's decision to hire two ombudsmen to review public programming.

Read the letter by Reps. Obey and Dingell that started the investigation at
http://www.house.gov/appropriations_democrats/press/pr_050511.htm

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