Help Us Fight Corruption and Restore Integrity to the White House

Dear Fellow Democrat:

There is no more urgent priority for American voters right now than cleaning up corruption and ending the abuse of power for personal gain in Washington.

Many young people, in particular, have lost confidence in the integrity of politicians and the political process. We believe that students and every American who cares about our nation's future have a responsibility to demand reforms to help restore that trust.

If Democrats win majorities in Congress on November 3, Democrats must have an agenda, not just for holding those who have abused power accountable, but for enacting reforms to ensure that abuse will never be repeated, regardless of which party is in power.

These reforms must start with measures that would restore integrity to the White House and curb the abuse of Presidential power for personal gain.

Elected officials and candidates should have an opportunity to tell voters where they stand and contrast their positions with those who won't.

We believe at least some key reforms must be placed in our Constitution, so that a future President, especially a would-be authoritarian with allies in control of Congress, cannot repeal them.

We therefore propose three important reforms that will help take away the ability of Presidents to abuse power and to break rules with near-impunity.

Reform #1
NO PRESIDENTIAL SELF PARDONS

> *"Presidents of the United States shall have not the power to pardon themselves or any member of their immediate family."*

REFORM #2
NO PRESIDENTIAL ENRICHMENT FROM FOREIGN DEALS

> *"No President and no member of a President's immediate family shall be permitted to receive a financial benefit from transactions or agreements with a foreign government or a foreign-controlled entity."*

REFORM #3
PRESERVE AN INDEPENDENT SUPREME COURT TO ENFORCE THESE RULES

> *"The Supreme Court of the United States shall be composed of nine Justices consisting of one chief justice and eight associate justices."*

We expect that many Democrats and most Americans will enthusiastically support the first two reforms.

But although polling show voters would overwhelmingly favor a "Keep 9" Amendment to preserve the current number of nine Justices, supporting it will require more thought for the many Democrats who consider this Supreme Court far too conservative and especially for those who would like to preserve the power of a President and Congress to expand the Court to create a new, more liberal or progressive Court majority.

Democrats who want to curb corruption in Washington should understand that no rule or reform that limits the ability of a President to abuse power is safe if the President and allies in Congress retain the power to control or intimidate the Supreme Court by altering, or threatening to alter, the Court's size.

The Supreme Court is the final authority on what the Constitution means and when it is violated. Only an independent Supreme Court can say "NO!" to a would-be abuser of power who controls Congress.

If one party expands the size of the Court to control it, another party or a future authoritarian will almost certainly do so again, turning the Court from one that can say NO to the abuse of power into one that could always say YES.

For more than 150 years the tradition of preserving nine Justices has protected the independence of the Court. But now expanding the size of the Court has become just another political option.

That is why it is urgently necessary to take away the power of politicians in Washington to manipulate the size of the Court for partisan gain, before one party or the other actually does it.

Some Democrats will argue that conservative decisions of the Supreme Court on abortion, voting rights, environmental protection, and other issues require the expansion of the Court to reverse those decisions.

But if Democrats win control of Congress and the White House, they will have the power to pass measures to strengthen abortion rights, voting rights, and environmental protection, to curb corruption, and to limit the abuse of presidential power, without undermining the independence of the Supreme Court that protects democracy from authoritarians.

Some Democrats will argue that Republicans should not be rewarded for abusing the confirmation process to create the current conservative Court majority. But permanent reforms are not possible without bipartisan support. Preserving an independent Supreme Court that protects every one of our Constitutional rights is far more important than seeking revenge that weakens checks and balances against the abuse of power.

The best response to the abuse of power is not enabling even more abuse of power but winning elections and enacting reforms that permanently prohibit that abuse.

These three reforms are only a first step. They are not a substitute for other and more comprehensive reforms that have been or may be proposed for each of the three branches of government. But each of these three is very simple, easy for voters to understand, urgently needed, and would have the overwhelming support of the American people.

Each would require the support of 2/3 of Congress and majorities in the legislatures of 3/4 of the states.

The first two have not yet been finalized or introduced in Congress. The third is the text of H.J. Res 1 which was considered by the House on Sept 2, but did not receive the 2/3 majority required.

A candidate or elected official running for any federal or state office who won’t support one or more of these simple proposals to can be held accountable. Each of these reforms could be proposed by Congress in 2027 and ratified in 2028, before the next Presidential election. They could become powerful election issues. They could even decide which party controls Congress and the White House in 2029.

We look forward to discussing and debating these reforms in the coming weeks and months and to working with willing Members of Congress and state leaders to enact them.