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November 13, 2007

Barbara Boxer, Chairman
John Cornyn, Vice Chairman
United States Senate Select Committee on Ethics
220 Hart Building
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Sens. Boxer and Cornyn,

We are writing to object to the inherently contradictory and disparate treatment of allegations of ethical misconduct by Sens. Larry Craig and David Vitter.

You have already launched an investigation into Sen. Craig's conduct, arising from his pleading guilty to misdemeanor disorderly conduct charges after his June arrest by an undercover police officer in a men's restroom at Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport.

To date, however, you have refused to open a similar investigation into whether Sen. Vitter violated the Senate Rules of Conduct by soliciting for prostitution. As is well known, Sen. Vitter's telephone number was included in the so-called "D.C. Madam's" list of client telephone numbers. Sen. Vitter subsequently confirmed that he had sought Ms. Palfrey's services. In addition, at least two other women have alleged Sen. Vitter engaged the services of prostitutes. Engaging the services of a prostitute violates both District of Columbia and Louisiana criminal law and would constitute more serious offenses in the eyes of the law than Sen. Craig's conduct.

The fact that Sen. Vitter has not yet been charged in a criminal court is not relevant. Your committee has the authority — indeed, the obligation — to investigate such serious matters and determine what course of action is appropriate.

There is no explanation for the diametrically opposed responses to these two situations, other than hypocrisy tinged by homophobia. There are only two ways to resolve this: drop the investigation into Sen. Craig or investigate the allegations surrounding Sen. Vitter.

Matt Foreman
Executive Director