

Washington, DC (Oct. 6, 2011) – Rep. Elijah E. Cummings, the Ranking Member of the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, released the following statement today in response to the U.S. Office of Special Counsel’s (OSC) proposed legislative changes to the Hatch Act, which limits partisan activity of government employees:

“The Hatch Act is ripe for reform, and Special Counsel Carolyn Lerner’s proposals provide a great foundation. I hope the Chairman will join me in drafting legislation to add clarity and remove some of the unintended consequences from the Hatch Act. It doesn’t make sense that current law prevents a police officer from running for his local school board, simply because his police dog was funded by the Department of Homeland Security or that the punishment for a Hatch Act violation is termination no matter how minor the offense.”

OSC’s proposed legislation amends the Hatch Act by removing the law’s prohibition on partisan candidacy by state and local employees whose work is financed by federal loans or grants. It also modifies the Hatch Act’s penalty structure for federal employees to ensure flexibility and fairness in OSC’s enforcement efforts.