

*Washington, D.C. (June 28, 2012) – Today, Rep. Jan Schakowsky released the following statement in response to the House Resolution contempt vote against U.S. Attorney General Eric Holder :*

“I am extremely disappointed that, instead of working to create jobs and rebuild the American economy, the House of Representatives has engaged in this act of political theater. Today’s vote to hold Attorney General Eric Holder in contempt of Congress is not an effort to uncover the truth, it is a political witch-hunt against the Obama Administration and a distraction from what we should be doing – working to create jobs for Americans. This is why I chose to join members of the Congressional Black, Hispanic, Asian Pacific American, Progressive and Democratic Caucuses to walk off the House floor in opposition to this partisan activity.

The simple truth is that gunwalking programs began under the Bush Administration, and as soon as Attorney General Holder became aware of it, he stopped it. The Obama Administration and Attorney General Holder have produced thousands of pages of documents. The Committee on Oversight has interviewed some two-dozen Administration officials, and Attorney General Holder himself has testified nine times.

And now the Attorney General has offered to provide additional internal documents, requested by the Chairman of the Oversight Committee, asking in return for a good faith effort to resolve the contempt issue. Instead of working with the Attorney General, House Republicans have refused to take yes for an answer. Every time the Attorney General complies with their requests, House Republicans move the goalposts.

The House Oversight Committee Republicans have not conducted a credible investigation. Chairman Issa refused ten different requests from Democrats for a hearing with Ken Melson, the former director of the ATF, and he refused call former General Mukasey, who was personally briefed on botched operations during the Bush Administration, as a witness. In fact, Republicans have not granted a single Democratic witness request during the entire 16 month investigation. Far from an evenhanded investigation, this entire process has been a partisan ploy by House Republicans.

Today’s vote does not move us closer to understanding what went wrong in this operation, nor does it reflect an evenhanded investigation. Instead of engaging in election-year political

theater, the House should be making progress toward rebuilding our economy, creating jobs, repairing crumbling infrastructure, and the other work of making our nation stronger.”

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