

# The Connecticut General Assembly



For IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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## **WALKER BLASTS POTENTIAL CUTS TO WATCHDOG AGENCIES**

**Rep. Toni Walker** (D-New Haven), House chair of the legislature's Appropriations Committee, vehemently disagreed with the state Office of Policy and Management's (OPM) recent position that the governor has the authority to rescind budgeted funding, from the state's three watchdog agencies: the State Elections Enforcement Commission, the Office of State Ethics and the Freedom of Information Commission.

"I find OPM's stance to be totally inappropriate," Rep. Walker said. "The watchdog agencies ensure government officials walk the straight and narrow and serve the people of Connecticut."

In a recent letter to the watchdog agencies, State OPM Secretary Ben Barnes outlined more than \$180,000 in rescissions to the agencies.

In 2004, the General Assembly passed legislation protecting the budgets of the watchdogs.

"From Watergate to Rowland-gate, we are all too familiar with the willful destruction of the public's trust by those in power. The watchdogs cannot face additional cuts outside of the budget process and do their jobs effectively," Rep. Walker said.

The State Elections Enforcement Commission has roots back to the Watergate scandal. In 1974, the General Assembly created the independent elections commission to ensure the integrity of the state's electoral process.

Created in 2005 after the Rowland scandal the Office of State Ethics administers and enforces the Connecticut Codes of Ethics.

The Freedom of Information Commission, formed in 1975, oversees and enforces the provisions of the Connecticut Freedom of Information Act to ensure open government.

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