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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC

March 18, 2010

The Honorable John A. Boehner
Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
1011 Longworth
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Minority Leader Boehner,

I was very disappointed to read a quote from you in the Market Watch article by Ronald Orol, on March 17th, in which you say "Don't let those little punk staffers take advantage of you and stand up for yourselves."

I am appalled that a Leader of the House, who must know what good work is done by our staffs, would take such an inaccurate cheap-shot at these people, for the purpose of ingratiating himself with bankers or any other group. As Chairman of the Financial Services Committee, I work closely with a large number of the staff members whom you are demeaning by this statement, and while I obviously have closer working relationships with the members of the majority staff, I am familiar with the work done by a number of the minority staff members as well, both for the Committee and on personal staffs. Your reference to "punk staffers" trying to "take advantage" of people in the financial industry is wholly unfair to a lot of hardworking men and women, the majority of whom, in my judgment, could be making more money if they were working elsewhere, and working under less stressful conditions and shorter hours. It is of course possible that you were misquoted, and if that is the case, I urge you to quickly make that clear. But if Mr. Orol accurately quoted you in referring to the people who work so hard in the public interest as "little punk staffers," I urge you to apologize to them.

I understand that you differ with what we and the majority are doing in what we believe is appropriate, tough regulation of the financial industry. And of course you are free to defend that industry and work with them to try to defeat those regulations. But picking on members of the staff is unworthy of you. I urge you to confine your campaign against financial regulation to debates with other Members of Congress, and not engage in this sort of personal attack on staff members who, as you know, are constrained by our rules against even defending themselves from your name-calling.

BARNEY FRANK

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