

OMAHA - Congressman Terry made the following statement regarding the indictment of Congressman William Jefferson (D-La.) on 16 charges of violating federal law, including soliciting bribes:

"The indictment of Mr. Jefferson, nearly 100 pages long, shows that the Justice Department has carried out a major investigation that included searches in Jefferson's Capitol Hill office, a location of possible evidence that the Justice Department had every right to pursue," Terry said. "The outcome for Mr. Jefferson at the end of the judicial process has not been determined, but this is certain: The House and Senate Leadership need to send legislation to the president immediately to deny government pensions to any federal employee, including a Member of Congress, who is convicted of bribery or other high crimes."

In January, Speaker Pelosi was forced to bring legislation (H.R. 476) to the House floor to deny public pensions to elected officials convicted of certain crimes, partially due to the strong support of Members of Congress, such as the 34 bipartisan cosponsors of Congressman Terry's Public Trust and Accountability Act (H.R. 232). H.R. 476 has not been signed into law.

Terry also attempted to amend recent ethics legislation debated in the House with an amendment that would mandate that Members of Congress forfeit their congressional pensions should they be convicted of certain felonies. However, a House panel voted 4 to 6 against allowing on the House floor the en bloc amendment offered by Terry and Congressmen Mark Steven Kirk (R-Ill.) and John Shadegg (R-Ariz.).

"Until this commonsense bill preventing a convicted felon from collecting a

government pension is signed into law, I question how effective Speaker Pelosi's reforms can be in restoring the public's faith in Congress."

