

Rep Mike Honda Pushes Speaker Boehner on \$500k DOMA Defense Tab

Written by Michael Shank
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Earlier this year, at Speaker Boehner's direction, House Administration Committee Chair Dan Lungren and House General Counsel Kerry Kircher signed a \$500,000 contract with the private law firm Bancroft PLLC for legal services to assist the House in defending DOMA. While the contract states that "the General Counsel agrees to pay the Contractor for all contractual services," Mr. Kircher said at the hearing that he was told by the House Republican leadership that funds will not come out of the Office of General Counsel's budget. The Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) Dan Strodel, who would ultimately write the checks to Bancroft PLLC on behalf of the House, said that he too had no knowledge of where the money would come from.

"No matter where you fall on the issue politically, it is this Committee's responsibility to ensure that the American people's tax dollars are spent legally and judiciously," said Rep. Honda. "Is this a case where an overzealous House Speaker committed \$500,000 of the American people's tax dollars to push a partisan and political agenda without having a funding source already in place? If so, do Speaker Boehner's actions violate the Antideficiency Act, which prohibits involving the government in any obligation to pay money before funds have been appropriated for that purpose."

Rep. Honda went on to ask, "If the Republican Leadership can't handle the responsibility of properly administering the budget of the House, is it any surprise that the American people are beginning to question how they are handling the budget of the nation? If the message from the last election is to cut spending, then why is Speaker Boehner forcing Americans to pay a high-priced private law firm \$520 per hour to defend a Constitutionally-flawed and discriminatory law?"