**Coalition for Integrity Releases States With Anti-Corruption Measures for Public officials (S.W.A.M.P.) Index**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Washington, DC, October 4, 2018–** Today, Coalition for Integrity released its States With Anti-Corruption Measures for Public officials (S.W.A.M.P.) Index which sheds light on the surprising lack of coherent, consistent statutes and regulations that exist in states to protect the public. The index shows there is need for improvement everywhere.  The relative performance of states should be a wake-up call for citizens and voters.

The S.W.A.M.P. Index is a comparative scorecard which rates the 50 States and District of Columbia based on the laws and regulations governing ethics and transparency in the executive and legislative branch. The questions in the index relate to the scope and independence of ethics agencies, powers of those agencies, acceptance and disclosure of gifts by public officials, transparency of funding independent campaign expenditures and client disclosure by legislators. The index uses a scale of 0 to 100, where 100 is a perfect score.

Shruti Shah, President and CEO of the Coalition, pointed out that “State laws are the first line of defense against corruption and cover thousands of elected or appointed officials and state employees nationwide. Unfortunately, the S.W.A.M.P. Index highlights that there are many gaps and loopholes in state laws and regulations governing ethics and transparency issues. I want voters to understand the “state of ethics” in their state so they can better evaluate candidates, demand commitments to improve the legal framework and better judge proposed reforms.”

* No state has achieved a perfect score and in fact there is no state in the top 20th percentile.
* 36 states scored 60 or below and 21 states scored 50 or below. For example, New York scored only 56 and Virginia’s score was 35. (comparatively, below 60 is a failing grade is most school systems).
* Three states Washington (78), Rhode Island (75) and California (75) land at the top of the score chart.
* Two states that scored very poorly, New Mexico (36) and North Dakota (0), are voting on ballot initiatives in the November 2018 election to create independent ethics agencies.

“The Index is not based on perceptions, but is an objective analysis,” stated Laurie Sherman, Policy Advisor to the Coalition, “based on current state laws and regulations governing ethics and transparency in the executive and legislative branches.” The laws of the higher-scoring states provide examples of best practice that other states can follow to improve their ethical frameworks and transparency.

The report, rankings, scoring chart, and the methodology are available at <http://swamp.coalitionforintegrity.org>.

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