



**Comments of Glenn S. Ruskin
Director, Office of Public Affairs
American Chemical Society
On the Launch of
Professionals for the Public Interest (PftPI)
May 20, 2009
National Press Club – First Amendment Lounge**

Thank you very much Paul and let me join you in welcoming our guests here this morning!

Nearly two years ago this diverse group came together -- united around a common interest in professionalism, and today, after much work and collaboration, we successfully launch Professionals for the Public Interest (PftPI).

ACS is proud to be a founding member in this historic partnership, and I would like to give everyone some insight as to why ACS is part of this noteworthy endeavor.

Our particular interest in this cause has to do with scientific integrity. We are the world's largest scientific society with more than 154,000 members and our roots go back to our creation in 1876.

We also operate under a national charter of incorporation passed by the U.S. Congress in 1937 and signed into law by President Franklin Delano Roosevelt – and that charter calls for us to advance chemical sciences in all its forms, to disseminate chemical research & information for the material prosperity and happiness of our people.

The men and women of the ACS are “solution providers” – it is they who are finding solutions to our nation's grandest challenges – safe drinking water and food; new health care breakthroughs; new and alternate energy sources; ensuring a healthy environment and a sustainable world.

Our policy statement: ‘Scientific Insight and Integrity in Public Policy’ lays out the importance of employing insightful and comprehensive scientific and engineering analyses to craft policies that deal with the broad spectrum of challenges that I just mentioned. This policy statement is posted under the ACS section of the new web-site at www.pftpi.org.

To be a solution provider, scientists and engineers must have the ability to have unfettered freedom to explore issues and express their findings in a transparent, unbiased and understandable manner.

Policymakers have an obligation to avoid applying political or other non-scientific criteria to reject, restrict, or reinterpret scientific findings and technical input – and over the past several years there has been reported several e have seen numerous cases of federal censorship that have occurred at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and Office of the Surgeon General -- to name a few.

Needless to say, ACS and the members of the Professionals for the Public Interest were encouraged and galvanized by President Obama's executive memo of March 9, 2009 regarding scientific integrity. Now that Professionals for the Public Interest has officially launched, we hope that will be able to work with the new Administration to develop a government-wide policy to address this issue.

We hope that this launch of our Web site forum will help to promote a discussion of professional integrity and help to advise the administration on this issue.

It is now my pleasure to introduce our four other speakers this morning. Biographies of each speaker are in your information packets. I will introduce them in the order they will speak:

- Ann Converso, RN, President, United American Nurses (UAN), AFL-CIO has worked for 30-plus years as an acute medical/surgical and I.V. therapy nurse at the VA Western New York Healthcare System at Buffalo.
- Mary W. Ghikas, Senior Associate Executive Director, American Library Association (ALA). ALA is a nonprofit organization headquartered in Chicago. The ALA strives to provide leadership for the development, promotion and improvement of library and information services and the profession of librarianship.
- Dr. Mark S. Frankel, Director, Scientific Freedom, Responsibility and Law Program, American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS). AAAS is the world's largest general science organization.
- Randi Weingarten, President, American Federation of Teachers (AFT), AFL-CIO. AFT represents more than 1.4 million members. Randi also serves as president of New York City's United Federation of Teachers, AFT Local 2.

I now invite Ann to take the podium – Ann.