

Sixteen-Year-Old Who Worked as Capitol Hill Page Concerned About E-mail Exchange with Congressman

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Rhonda Schwartz and Maddy Sauer Report:



A 16-year-old male former congressional page concerned about the appropriateness of an e-mail exchange with a congressman alerted Capitol Hill staffers to the communication.

Congressman Mark Foley's office says the e-mails were entirely appropriate and that their release is part of a smear campaign by his opponent.

In the series of e-mails, obtained by ABC News, from Rep. Foley (R-FL) to the former page, Foley asks the young man how old he is, what he wants for his birthday and requests a photo of him.

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The concerned young man alerted congressional staffers to the e-mails. In one e-mail, the former page writes to a staffer, "Maybe it is just me being paranoid, but seriously. This freaked me out."

Foley's office acknowledges that Foley wrote the e-mails to the young man but says they were completely innocent and that Foley is at most guilty of being "too friendly and too engaging" with young people.

The e-mails were sent from Foley's personal AOL account, and the exchange began within weeks after the page finished his program on Capitol Hill. In one, Foley writes, "did you have fun at your conference...what do you want for your birthday coming up...what stuff do you like to do."

EXHIBIT

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In another Foley writes, "**how are you weathering the hurricane...are you safe...send me an email pic of you as well...**"

The young man forwarded that e-mail to a congressional staffer saying it was "sick sick sick sick sick."

Foley's office says it is their policy to keep pictures of former interns and anyone who may ask for a recommendation on file so they can remember them.

The Congressional page program was started in the 1800s. In its current form, juniors from high school work on Capitol Hill after school or over the summer. The young man in question did not work or intern for Foley's office.

Elizabeth Nicolson, Foley's Chief of Staff, said they believe the e-mail exchange began when the page asked Foley for a recommendation and that the subsequent exchange was totally innocent. She said Foley's office believes the e-mails were released by the opposition as part of an "ugly smear campaign."



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