

September 21, 2000

***Statement of the Committee on Standards of Official
Conduct
in the Matter of Representative Corrine Brown***

Pursuant to Committee Rules 12(b) and 17(a) and at the request of the Investigative Subcommittee in the Matter of Corrine Brown, the Committee on Standards of Official Conduct determined on Wednesday, September 20, 2000, to release the following statement:

On June 9, 1999, the Committee on Standards of Official Conduct voted, pursuant to House Rule 11, clause 3 and Committee Rules 15 and 19, to establish an investigative subcommittee to conduct a formal inquiry regarding Representative Corrine Brown and gave the Investigative Subcommittee jurisdiction:

to determine whether Representative Brown violated the Code of Official Conduct or any law, rule, regulation, or other standard of conduct applicable to her conduct in the performance of her duties or the discharge of her responsibilities, with respect to: (1) lodging provided in 1997 to Representative Brown or other persons at premises owned or controlled by Foutanga Dit Babani Sissoko; (2) the gift of a Lexus automobile to Representative Brown's adult daughter, Shantrel Brown, in 1997; and (3) the relationship, if any, between the lodging or car and Representative Brown's status or actions as a Member of Congress.

For over a year, the Subcommittee investigated the matters within its jurisdiction. Although the evidence developed by the Subcommittee raised concerns as to whether Representative Brown may have violated standards of conduct by her conduct in connection with Foutanga Dit Babani Sissoko, the Subcommittee did not obtain sufficient evidence to enable the Subcommittee to meet the standards of proof required by Committee rules either to adopt or to prove a Statement of Alleged Violation. This was due in large part to the fact that key witnesses who had actual knowledge of the events within the Subcommittee's jurisdiction were beyond the reach of the Committee's subpoena power and could not be compelled to give testimony.

Although the Subcommittee, as noted above, lacked sufficient evidence to adopt and prove a Statement of Alleged Violation, the Subcommittee does believe that Representative Brown's actions and associations in connection with Sissoko demonstrated, at the least, poor judgment and created substantial concerns regarding both the appearance of impropriety and the reputation of the House of Representatives.

For the reasons cited, the Subcommittee recommended that no further action be taken against Representative Corrine Brown regarding the matters within the Subcommittee's jurisdiction

On September 20, 2000, the Committee on Standards of Official Conduct accepted the recommendation of the Subcommittee. This statement constitutes the Committee's concluding action and statement regarding this matter.