

U.S. House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON STANDARDS OF
OFFICIAL CONDUCT

Washington, DC 20515

May 17, 2006

Attached are four statements issued today by the Chairman and Ranking Minority Member of the Committee on Standards of Official Conduct.

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Statement of Chairman Doc Hastings and Ranking Minority Member Howard L. Berman

In accordance with Clause 3 of House Rule XI and Rule 14(a)(3) and 18 of the Committee on Standards of Official Conduct, which authorize the Committee to establish an investigative subcommittee of its own initiative, the Committee has voted to establish an investigative subcommittee to conduct an inquiry regarding Representative Robert W. Ney.

Pursuant to the Committee's action, the investigative subcommittee shall have jurisdiction to determine whether Representative Ney violated the Code of Official Conduct or any law, rule, regulation, or other standard of conduct applicable to his conduct in the performance of his duties or the discharge of his responsibilities, with respect to allegations that Representative Ney received gifts, travel benefits, campaign contributions to political committees and organizations, or any other items of value from Jack A. Abramoff, Michael P. S. Scanlon, Tony C. Rudy, Neil G. Volz, or any individuals or entities associated with those individuals, and the relationship, if any, between the gifts, travel benefits, campaign contributions to political committees and organizations, or other items of value, and Representative Ney's status or actions as a Member of Congress.

Representative Lamar S. Smith will serve as Chairman of the investigative subcommittee, and Representative Gene Green will serve as its Ranking Minority Member. The other two members of the subcommittee are Representative Marsha Blackburn and Representative Xavier Becerra.

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Statement of Chairman Doc Hastings and Ranking Minority Member Howard L. Berman

In accordance with Clause 3 of House Rule XI and Rule 14(a)(3) and 18 of the Committee on Standards of Official Conduct, which authorize the Committee to establish an investigative subcommittee of its own initiative, the Committee has voted to establish an investigative subcommittee to conduct an inquiry regarding Representative William J. Jefferson.

Pursuant to the Committee's action, the investigative subcommittee shall have jurisdiction to determine whether Representative Jefferson violated the Code of Official Conduct or any law, rule, regulation, or other standard of conduct applicable to his conduct in the performance of his duties or the discharge of his responsibilities, with respect to allegations that Representative Jefferson or his family members received cash, stock shares, agreements to receive future profits, retainers, offers of employment, travel benefits, or any other items of value from Brett Pfeffer, Lori Mody, Vernon Jackson, iGate, Inc., or any other individual or entity associated with those individuals or that entity, and the relationship, if any, between the cash, stock shares, agreements to receive future profits, retainers, offers of employment, travel benefits, or other items of value and Representative Jefferson's status or actions as a Member of Congress.

Representative Melissa A. Hart will serve as Chairman of the investigative subcommittee, and Representative Stephanie Tubbs Jones will serve as its Ranking Minority Member. The other two members of the subcommittee are Representative Tom Latham and Representative Adam B. Schiff.

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Statement of Chairman Doc Hastings and Ranking Minority Member Howard L. Berman

Serious allegations have been made concerning the conduct of Representative Tom DeLay with respect to his participation in certain overseas trips funded by private sector entities. But for his imminent resignation from the Congress, which we understand will take place by June 9, 2006, we would have recommended to our colleagues on the Committee the formation of an investigative subcommittee to conduct a formal inquiry into those allegations. No vote on any matter concerning Representative DeLay has been taken by the Committee during the 109th Congress.

Previously, during the 108th Congress, the Committee had deferred action under Committee Rule 15(f) on one count of a three-count complaint against Representative DeLay filed by former Representative Christopher Bell, on the grounds that that count raised issues under Texas criminal law that, in the Committee's view, could be better addressed by Texas courts in the first instance. In light of Representative DeLay's announced departure from the House, we are closing that matter.

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Statement of Chairman Doc Hastings and Ranking Minority Member Howard L. Berman

Representative Randy Cunningham resigned from the House last year and is now in federal prison after pleading guilty to engaging in a criminal conspiracy and to tax evasion. Representative Cunningham resigned his House membership after his misconduct became known, and the Committee did not initiate a formal investigation into his conduct.

Since Representative Cunningham's resignation, however, there have been continuing reports regarding his conduct, the conduct of his alleged co-conspirators, and others, that, if true, raise serious issues concerning possible violations of House Rules and standards. Most recently, reports have suggested that federal officials are investigating whether Representative Cunningham and possibly other Members and staff were provided hotel rooms, limousines, and other services in exchange for performing official acts.

In light of those continuing reports and the seriousness of the potential rules violations, we have, pursuant to the authority given to the Chairman and Ranking Minority Member, initiated an inquiry under Committee Rule 18(a) into a variety of allegations related to former Representative Cunningham and his alleged co-conspirators in order to determine whether other House Members or staff are implicated by those allegations.

Should we become aware, either through the inquiry we have undertaken or through any other source, of facts supporting more formal investigation of one or more Members, officers or employees, we intend to take all appropriate steps under Committee rules, including recommending the establishment of one or more investigative subcommittees.

It has not generally been the custom of the Committee, nor will it become our practice, to announce the initiation of an inquiry under Committee Rule 18(a), but because of the circumstances regarding this matter, we are making an exception. The text of the Committee Rules is available on the Committee Web site, www.house.gov/ethics.