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ONE HUNDRED FOURTEENTH CONGRESS

U.S. House of Representatives

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STATEMENT OF THE CHAIRMAN AND RANKING MEMBER OF THE COMMITTEE ON ETHICS REGARDING REPRESENTATIVE BLAKE FARENTHOLD

Pursuant to Committee Rule 7(g), the Chairman and Ranking Member of the Committee on Ethics (Committee) determined on September 28, 2015, to release the following statement:

On June 29, 2015, the Committee received a referral from the Office of Congressional Ethics (OCE) regarding whether Representative Blake Farenthold sexually harassed a former member of his staff, discriminated against her on the basis of her gender, and retaliated against her for complaining about the alleged unlawful treatment. Pursuant to House Rule XI, clause 3(b)(8)(A) and Committee Rule 17A, the Chairman and Ranking Member jointly decided on August 13, 2015, to extend the Committee's review of the matter.

In its referral, OCE unanimously recommended that the Committee dismiss the matter, because OCE did not find substantial reason to believe that Representative Farenthold engaged in the alleged conduct.

These allegations are also the subject of a lawsuit filed in the United States District Court for the District of Columbia, and currently pending in that court. Due to the ongoing nature of the lawsuit, the Committee has not yet been able to complete its review of the matter and therefore is not in a position to dismiss the matter at this time. The Committee will continue its review and ultimately will take any additional action it deems necessary, consistent with the House and Committee rules. The Committee notes that the mere fact of conducting further review of a referral, and any mandatory disclosure of such further review, does not itself indicate that any violation has occurred, or reflect any judgment on behalf of the Committee.

In order to comply with Committee Rule 7 regarding confidentiality, out of fairness to all respondents, and to assure the integrity of its work, the Committee will refrain from making further public statements on this matter pending completion of its initial review.

Pursuant to Committee Rule 17A, the Committee hereby publishes OCE's Report related to allegations against Representative Farenthold. OCE did not transmit findings to the Committee in this matter, so no findings are published.

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