

# U.S. House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON STANDARDS OF  
OFFICIAL CONDUCT

Washington, DC 20515

October 12, 2001

## PRESS STATEMENT

The Committee on Standards of Official Conduct today issued an Advisory Memorandum to all Members, officers and employees of the House reminding them that violations of the Classified Information Oath are violations of the Code of Official Conduct and are sanctionable as such. At all times—and especially in this time of our country’s war on terrorism—the Committee on Standards takes the obligations imposed by the Classified Information Oath with the greatest seriousness.

The Oath is set forth in Clause 13 of the Code of Official Conduct (Rule XXIII of the Rules of the House). This clause provides that, before a Member, officer or employee of the House may have access to classified information, the following oath (or affirmation) shall be executed:

“I do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will not disclose any classified information received in the course of my service with the House of Representatives, except as authorized by the House of Representatives or in accordance with its Rules.”

Consistent with its guidance on the Classified Information Oath issued in July 1995, the Committee continues to read the reference in the oath to “information received in the course of . . . service with the House of Representatives” to include *any* classified information provided to a Member, officer or employee by *any* source during service with the House. The Committee also continues to read the oath as imposing a duty to inquire; that is, when in doubt as to whether information in his or her possession is classified, the Member, officer or employee must make a good faith effort to determine if it is classified before disclosing it in an unauthorized manner.

A copy of the Committee’s Advisory Memorandum is attached to this statement.

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## MEMORANDUM TO ALL MEMBERS, OFFICERS, AND EMPLOYEES

**FROM:** Committee on Standards of Official Conduct  
Joel Hefley, Chairman  
Howard L. Berman, Ranking Member *HXB*

**SUBJECT:** Classified Information Oath

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Clause 13 of Rule XXIII (the Code of Official Conduct) of the Rules of the House of Representatives provides:

**Before a Member, Delegate, Resident Commissioner, officer, or employee of the House may have access to classified information, the following oath (or affirmation) shall be executed:**

**“I do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will not disclose any classified information received in the course of my service with the House of Representatives, except as authorized by the House of Representatives or in accordance with its Rules.”<sup>1</sup>**

Consistent with its guidance on the Classified Information Oath issued in July 1995, the Committee continues to read the reference in the oath to “information received in the course of . . . service with the House of Representatives” to include *any* classified information provided to a Member, officer or employee by *any* source during service with the House. The Committee also continues to read the oath as imposing a duty to inquire; that is, when in doubt as to whether information in his or her possession is classified, the Member, officer or employee must make a good faith effort to determine if it is classified before disclosing it in an unauthorized manner.

Violations of the Classified Information Oath, or of the provision of Clause 13 of Rule XXIII regarding access to classified information, are violations of the Code of Official Conduct and are sanctionable as such. At all times—and especially in this time of our country’s war on terrorism—the Committee on Standards takes the obligations imposed by the Classified Information Oath with the greatest seriousness.

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<sup>1</sup> The Rule further provides that “Copies of the executed oath (or affirmation) shall be retained by the Clerk as part of the records of the House.” The names of persons who have executed the oath are also published in the Congressional Record in accordance with the Rule.