

Susan W. Brooks, Indiana
Chairwoman
Theodore E. Deutch, Florida
Ranking Member



Patrick Meehan, Pennsylvania
Trey Gowdy, South Carolina
Kenny Marchant, Texas
Leonard Lance, New Jersey

Yvette D. Clarke, New York
Jared Polis, Colorado
Anthony Brown, Maryland
Steve Cohen, Tennessee

ONE HUNDRED FIFTEENTH CONGRESS

U.S. House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON ETHICS

Thomas A. Rust
Staff Director and Chief Counsel

Donna Herbert
Director of Administration

Megan Savage
*Chief of Staff and Counsel to
the Chairwoman*

Daniel J. Taylor
Counsel to the Ranking Member

1015 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515-6328
Telephone: (202) 225-7103
Facsimile: (202) 225-7392

FOR RELEASE: Upon Receipt

December 7, 2017

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

In accordance with House Rule XI, clause 3, and Committee Rules 10(a)(2) and 18, the Committee on Ethics (Committee) unanimously voted on December 7, 2017, to establish an Investigative Subcommittee. Pursuant to the Committee's action, the Investigative Subcommittee shall have jurisdiction to determine whether Representative Blake Farenthold violated the Code of Official Conduct or any law, rule, regulation, or other applicable standard of conduct in the performance of his duties or the discharge of his responsibilities, with respect to allegations that he, or any person acting on his behalf, sexually harassed a former member of his staff, discriminated against her on the basis of her gender, and retaliated against her for complaining of discriminatory conduct, and allegations that Representative Farenthold made inappropriate statements to other members of his official staff.

The Committee has determined to take this action based upon a discretionary review of the allegations, as well as evidence obtained pursuant to Committee Rule 18(a). On September 28, 2015, the Committee publicly announced that it was beginning a review of this matter, which was also the subject of a lawsuit brought by a Complainant under the Congressional Accountability Act. That lawsuit was subsequently dismissed on November 18, 2015, after the parties entered a confidential settlement.

During the Committee's investigation to date, the Committee has issued requests for information, reviewed over 200,000 pages of materials, and interviewed multiple witnesses. Although Representative Farenthold has cooperated with the Committee's investigation to date, the resolution of this matter has been significantly delayed by difficulties in obtaining live testimony from key witnesses other than Representative Farenthold and in accessing confidential documents the parties to the federal litigation exchanged in discovery.

Over the last two weeks, more information has been disclosed about the nature of the settlement between the parties. In addition, both Representative Farenthold and the Complainant have publicly expressed an interest in increased transparency in this matter. In light of these developments, the Committee has determined that it is appropriate to establish an Investigative Subcommittee to continue its investigation.

The Committee notes that the mere fact of establishing an Investigative Subcommittee does not itself indicate that any violation has occurred.

The Committee will announce the Members who will serve on the Investigative Subcommittee in the next week. No other public comment will be made on this matter except in accordance with Committee rules.

###