

September 14, 2022

The Hon. Ted Deutch
Chairman
Committee on Ethics
U.S. House of Representatives
1015 Longworth House Office Building (LHOB)
Washington, DC 20515

RE: August 30, 2022 Office of Congressional Ethics referral to Committee on Ethics

Dear Chairman Deutch

As the Committee considers two referral recommendations related to OCE Review No. 22-9485, I write to provide written comment on OCE's report.

Throughout the course of OCE's review I have intended to comply in full with OCE's Request for Information and interview request in connection with Review No. 22-9485. I agree with OCE's recommendation regarding my outside employment, as I believe that the documents and information provided in response to OCE's inquiry demonstrates no official action was taken that affected my personal financial interests, nor was motivated by potential personal financial interests. Further, myself and my office received information and requested feedback from both the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure staff and external stakeholders on a variety of aviation-related legislative proposals, as is common practice in Congress. The nature of these communications are routine for a Member of Congress and their staff who are performing oversight and legislative duties as a member of the Aviation Subcommittee in order to seek feedback on legislative priorities.

However, I contest the allegation that I have misused official resources. I have always maintained a personal social media account (@kaikahele) throughout my service in elected office in the State of Hawai'i and in the U.S. House of Representatives that is distinctly separate from my official social media account (@repkahele), and campaign social media account (@friendsofkaialiikahele). Contrary to the allegation presented in the OCE referral, I have never posted official material in my capacity as a U.S. Representative on my political campaign account.

Myself and our team strive to uphold the highest ethical standards, and knowledge of the House Ethics and communications rules are a required element of our onboarding and staff training. Our Congressional Staff Handbook - that is circulated to all members of my Congressional staff when they join our team - clearly states that “The House has clear rules around campaign activities. Staff should review and understand these rules, available here: <https://ethics.house.gov/campaign-activity>” and states “Official House property, equipment, resources or franking privilege may never be used for campaign activities.”

Further, consistent with the Committee’s request to provide copies of written correspondence and electronic communication between myself and OCE regarding OCE Review No. 22-9485, please find enclosed the documents requested. As noted in copy of my letter to the OCE Chief Counsel dated June 19, 2022, we transmitted a total of 221 electronically stored items that contained email files and PDF copies, screenshots of text messages and screenshots of Slack messages in response to OCE’s Request for Information in connection with Review No. 22-9485. I would be happy to provide these electronic files to the Committee through alternate means.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comment on OCE’s referral. Please find the requested documents enclosed.

Sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Kai Kahele', written in a cursive style.

Kai Kahele

Encl: Email RFI from OCE with Attachments dated May 23, 2022, Signed Request for Information Acknowledgment of Receipt dated June 9, 2022, Letter to OCE to Accompany Document Production dated June 19, 2022, Designation of Point of Contact dated June 23, 2022, Supplemental RFI from OCE dated June 24, 2022, Signed RFI Certification form dated August 12, 2022, Written Statement to OCE Board of Directors dated August 24, 2022, Signed False Statements Certification dated August 24, 2022