

105TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. RES. 424

Requiring members, officers, and employees of the House of Representatives to submit reports on travel to the Clerk of the House which include information on the source of funds used to pay for such travel, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MAY 7, 1998

Mr. HAMILTON (for himself, Mr. COX of California, Mr. VISCLOSKY, and Mr. CAMPBELL) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on House Oversight, and in addition to the Committee on Rules, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned

RESOLUTION

Requiring members, officers, and employees of the House of Representatives to submit reports on travel to the Clerk of the House which include information on the source of funds used to pay for such travel, and for other purposes.

1 *Resolved,*

2 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

3 This resolution may be cited as the “Comprehensive

4 Travel Reform Rule of 1998”.

1 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

2 The House makes the following findings:

3 (1) The duties of Members of Congress require
4 knowledge of a broad range of domestic and foreign
5 issues. Domestic and foreign travel can greatly en-
6 hance a Member's knowledge, improving the quality
7 of legislation and congressional oversight. At the
8 same time, the lack of personal travel experience can
9 be a valid consideration in evaluating a Member's
10 views on foreign policy and security issues.

11 (2) Congressional travel has many concrete ben-
12 efits. Domestic travel can improve a Member's un-
13 derstanding of the impact government policies have
14 on a particular region or group of citizens. Such
15 travel can also increase public awareness and knowl-
16 edge of issues before Congress.

17 (3) Foreign travel by Members of Congress can
18 advance United States national interests. A Con-
19 gress that engages in no foreign travel is unequipped
20 to handle the many challenges facing the United
21 States. Travel increases the foreign policy expertise
22 of all Members, who must vote regularly on pro-
23 grams and issues that commit significant United
24 States resources abroad. Travel alerts Members to
25 United States foreign trade opportunities. Some
26 trips have saved millions of taxpayer dollars by ex-

1 posing wasteful programs at home and abroad.
2 Firsthand experience has inspired Members to im-
3 prove the safety and quality of life of United States
4 military and civilian personnel serving abroad. Mem-
5 bers have frequently promoted United States inter-
6 ests by calling attention to human rights abuses or
7 environmental dangers during their travel.

8 (4) Travel by Members improves foreign under-
9 standing of the views of Congress, as well as of the
10 unique and important role Congress plays in formu-
11 lating United States policy. Members who do not
12 represent the administration directly are often able
13 to say things that United States diplomats cannot.
14 Congressional travel builds important personal rela-
15 tionships with United States allies, and inter-
16 parliamentary exchanges promote democracy by en-
17 couraging foreign legislators.

18 (5) Members should share their travel experi-
19 ences with the House and the general public. When-
20 ever possible, these statements should include policy
21 recommendations based on such travel.

22 (6) Abuses of foreign and domestic travel waste
23 taxpayer dollars, increase the influence of special in-
24 terests, and undermine public confidence in Con-
25 gress. Abuses discourage Members from taking im-

1 portant, legitimate travel and diminish the ability of
2 Congress to act effectively in many areas.

3 (7) Congress has a responsibility to try to elimi-
4 nate all abuses of travel, while also encouraging
5 Members to take travel that enhances the ability of
6 Congress to advance the interests of the United
7 States.

8 (8) Members have a personal responsibility to
9 ensure that their travel not only complies with de-
10 tailed travel rules but reflects creditably on the
11 House of Representatives (Rule XLIII.1).

12 (9) Each Member should endeavor to travel on
13 a periodic basis to inspect important government ac-
14 tivities at home and abroad.

15 **SEC. 3. REQUIRING REPORTS ON TRAVEL.**

16 (a) IN GENERAL.—Each Member, officer, and em-
17 ployee of the House of Representatives shall submit to the
18 Clerk of the House of Representatives a report on the fol-
19 lowing categories of travel undertaken by the Member, of-
20 ficer, or employee:

21 (1) Travel for which payment is made from the
22 Members' representational allowance or from the ac-
23 counts of a committee or other office of the House,
24 other than travel undertaken by a Member (or by an
25 employee of the Member or an employee of a com-

mittee on which the Member is the chair or ranking minority member) between the district the Member represents and the District of Columbia.

(2) Travel within a foreign country for which payment is made by the government of a foreign country.

(3) Travel in support of the official business of the Member, officer, or employee for which payment is made from any source not described in paragraph (1) or (2).

(b) INFORMATION CONTAINED IN REPORT.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Each report submitted under subsection (a) shall contain the following information:

(A) An identification of the individual or entity paying for the travel described in the report.

(B) A substantive report on the relation of the travel to the official business of the House, including findings and recommendations. Individuals traveling in groups may submit a joint report, which may include separate minority or additional views. Each report submitted under this subparagraph shall include a detailed itinerary of all meetings, interviews, inspection

1 tours, and other official functions in which the
2 individual involved participated, except that the
3 Clerk may withhold from publication certain in-
4 formation contained in the report if the individ-
5 ual certifies that disclosure of the information
6 would—

7 (i) be detrimental to the national se-
8 curity interests of the United States;

9 (ii) pose a threat of harm or reprisal
10 to an individual or group;

11 (iii) endanger the confidentiality of
12 sources or methods of intelligence or law
13 enforcement operation or activity; or

14 (iv) compromise or hamper a commit-
15 tee investigation or oversight function.

16 (C) In the case of travel described in sub-
17 section (a)(3) for which transportation is pro-
18 vided by the Department of Defense, an esti-
19 mate of the amount which would have been paid
20 if the transportation had been provided through
21 commercial sources.

22 (D) In the case of travel described in sub-
23 section (a)(2), an estimate of the expenses in-
24 curred for which payment was made by the for-
25 eign government involved.

1 (E) In the case of travel described in sub-
2 section (a)(3) (other than travel for which pay-
3 ment is made by the Federal Government),
4 such information as the Member, officer, or em-
5 ployee may reasonably ascertain on the source
6 of the funds used by the individual or entity to
7 pay for the travel (together with any informa-
8 tion required under paragraph (2)).

9 (2) SPECIFIC INFORMATION REQUIRED FOR
10 TRAVEL PAID FOR BY CERTAIN NONPROFIT ORGANI-
11 ZATIONS.—In the case of travel described in sub-
12 section (a)(3) which is paid for (in whole or in part)
13 by an organization exempt from Federal tax under
14 section 501(c)(3) or 501(c)(4) of the Internal Reve-
15 nue Code of 1986, the Member, officer, or employee
16 shall include in the report submitted under sub-
17 section (a)—

18 (A) a copy of the form filed by the organi-
19 zation with the Internal Revenue Service which
20 summarizes the organization's contributions
21 and expenditures; and

22 (B) a copy of the schedule of contributions
23 filed by the organization with the Internal Rev-
24 enue Service which lists all contributions of

1 \$5,000 or more received by the organization
2 during a taxable year.

3 (c) DEADLINE.—

4 (1) IN GENERAL.—A Member, officer, or em-
5 ployee shall submit the report required under this
6 section not later than 30 days after the completion
7 of the travel involved.

8 (2) CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.—

9 (A) COMMITTEE TRAVEL EXPENSES.—
10 Clause 2(n)(1)(B) of rule XI of the Rules of the
11 House of Representatives is amended by strik-
12 ing the second sentence.

13 (B) GIFT BAN.—Clause 2(a)(1)(B) of rule
14 LI of the Rules of the House of Representatives
15 is amended to read as follows:

16 “(B) meets the applicable reporting require-
17 ments with respect to the expenses under the rules
18 of the House of Representatives.”.

19 (d) REPORTS TO COMMITTEE ON STANDARDS OF OF-
20 FICIAL CONDUCT ON LATE FILINGS.—The Clerk shall no-
21 tify the Committee on Standards of Official Conduct of
22 any Member, officer, or employee who submits a report
23 required under this section after the expiration of the ap-
24 plicable deadline, or who submits a report which otherwise
25 fails to meet the requirements of this section.

1 (e) MEMBER DEFINED.—In this section, the term
2 “Member” includes any Resident Commissioner or Dele-
3 gate to the Congress.

4 **SEC. 4. COMPILATION AND PUBLICATION OF REPORTS ON**
5 **TRAVEL.**

6 (a) QUARTERLY REPORTS.—Not later than 45 days
7 after the end of each calendar quarter, the Clerk of the
8 House of Representatives shall compile all reports submit-
9 ted under section 3 for the quarter and submit such com-
10 pilation for publication in the Congressional Record.

11 (b) ANNUAL REPORTS.—Not later than 90 days after
12 the end of each session of a Congress, the Clerk of the
13 House of Representatives, in consultation with the Com-
14 mittee on House Oversight, shall publish a report contain-
15 ing the following information:

16 (1) A summary of the total amount of travel
17 described in section 3(a) which is undertaken by
18 Members, officers, and employees of the House dur-
19 ing the session, including the total amount expended
20 for travel described in paragraph (1) of such section
21 and the percentage such total amount represents of
22 all expenditures of the House during the session.

23 (2) A summary of the foreign travel described
24 in section 3(a) which is undertaken by Members, of-
25 ficers, and employees during the session.

1 (c) REQUIRING POSTING OF REPORTS ON INTER-
 2 NET.—The compilation of reports required under sub-
 3 section (a) and the reports published under subsection (b)
 4 shall be posted on the Internet upon completion in a man-
 5 ner that permits any member of the public to obtain such
 6 compilation and report at any time. For purposes of this
 7 subsection, the term “Internet” means the international
 8 computer network of both Federal and non-Federal inter-
 9 operable packet-switched data networks.

10 **SEC. 5. ADDITIONAL RESTRICTIONS ON TRAVEL.**

11 (a) LIMITATION ON AMOUNT EXPENDED ON TRAVEL
 12 PAID BY PRIVATE SOURCES.—No Member, officer, or em-
 13 ployee of the House of Representatives may accept any
 14 travel described in section 3(a)(3) for which—

- 15 (1) first class airfare is provided; or
 16 (2) the total costs of meals and lodging exceed
 17 the amount of the maximum per diem rate set forth
 18 in applicable Federal law for other employees of the
 19 Federal Government.

20 (b) RESTRICTIONS ON PRIVATELY-FUNDED GIFTS
 21 FOR SPOUSE OR FAMILY MEMBER TRAVEL.—Clause
 22 2(d)(4) of rule LI of the Rules of the House of Represent-
 23 atives is amended by striking the period at the end and
 24 inserting the following: “, but only if the travel is not of-
 25 fered or enhanced because of the official position of the

1 Member, officer, or employee and is customarily provided
2 to others in similar circumstances.”.

3 (c) CLARIFICATION OF PER DIEM LIMIT APPLICABLE
4 TO COMMITTEE TRAVEL.—Clause 2(n)(1)(A) of rule XI
5 of the Rules of the House of Representatives is amended
6 by striking “applicable Federal law” and inserting “appli-
7 cable Federal law for employees of the Federal Govern-
8 ment who are not Members, officers, or employees of the
9 House of Representatives”.

10 (d) REQUIRING ADVANCE AUTHORIZATION FOR
11 COSTS EXCEEDING PUBLISHED PER DIEM RATES FOR
12 OTHER FEDERAL EMPLOYEES.—Notwithstanding any
13 other rule or regulation of the House of Representatives,
14 the total amount which may be expended for travel de-
15 scribed in section 3(a) by a Member, officer, or employee
16 of the House of Representatives on a day may not exceed
17 the published per diem rate applicable for employees of
18 the Federal Government who are not Members, officers,
19 or employees of the House of Representatives unless the
20 Member or officer involved authorizes the expenditure of
21 a greater amount prior to the occurrence of the travel.

22 (e) REQUIRING ADVANCE AUTHORIZATION FOR ALL
23 OFFICIAL TRAVEL PAID BY PRIVATE SOURCES.—

24 (1) IN GENERAL.—No Member, officer, or em-
25 ployee of the House of Representatives may accept

1 any travel described in section 3(a)(3) (other than
2 travel for which payment is made by the Federal
3 Government) unless the Committee on Standards of
4 Official Conduct has authorized the acceptance of
5 the travel prior to the commencement of the travel.

6 (2) SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS FOR AUTHORIZA-
7 TION FOR EMPLOYEE TRAVEL.—In the case of travel
8 of an employee, the advance authorization required
9 under paragraph (1) shall include—

10 (A) the name of the employee;

11 (B) the name of the person who will reim-
12 burse the employee for the travel;

13 (C) the time, place, and purpose of the
14 travel; and

15 (D) a determination that the travel is in
16 connection with the duties of the employee as
17 an officeholder and would not create the ap-
18 pearance that the employee is using public of-
19 fice for private gain.

20 (3) STANDARDS FOR REVIEW.—In determining
21 whether to authorize a Member, officer, or employee
22 to accept travel under paragraph (1), the Committee
23 on Standards of Official Conduct shall examine—

24 (A) whether the person paying for the
25 travel has a direct interest in any Federal legis-

1 lation and (if so) whether the acceptance of the
2 travel will have an adverse impact on the integ-
3 rity of the legislative process, taking into con-
4 sideration public perceptions; and

5 (B) whether the acceptance of the travel is
6 prohibited under this resolution (or the amend-
7 ments made by this resolution) or is otherwise
8 prohibited under the Rules of the House of
9 Representatives.

10 (4) CONFORMING AMENDMENT RELATING TO
11 GIFT BAN.—Clause 2 of rule LI of the Rules of the
12 House of Representatives is amended—

13 (A) by amending paragraph (a)(1)(A) to
14 read as follows:

15 “(A) meets the applicable requirements for ad-
16 vance authorization under the rules of the House of
17 Representatives, and”; and

18 (B) by striking paragraph (b).

19 **SEC. 6. REGULATIONS.**

20 Not later than 90 days after the adoption of this reso-
21 lution, the Committee on House Oversight, in consultation
22 with the Committee on Standards of Official Conduct,
23 shall issue regulations to carry out this resolution, to-
24 gether with guidelines for activities undertaken by Mem-
25 bers, officers, and employees while on official travel, in-

1 cluding recommendations on the appropriate balance of
2 time spent on official and non-official business and on ap-
3 propriate meetings and activities while traveling in foreign
4 nations.

5 **SEC. 7. EFFECTIVE DATE.**

6 This resolution shall apply with respect to calendar
7 quarters beginning after the expiration of the 30-day pe-
8 riod which begins on the date of the adoption of this reso-
9 lution, except that the requirement that a Member, officer,
10 or employee of the House of Representatives file the infor-
11 mation described in section 3(b)(2)(B) shall apply with re-
12 spect to calendar quarters beginning after the first taxable
13 year which begins after the date of the adoption of this
14 resolution.

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