

111TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. RES. 1255

Raising a question of the privileges of the House.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

APRIL 15, 2010

Mr. FLAKE submitted the following resolution

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By motion of the House, referred to the Committee on Standards of Official
Conduct

RESOLUTION

Raising a question of the privileges of the House.

Whereas, the Committee on Standards of Official Conduct initiated an investigation into allegations related to earmarks and campaign contributions in the Spring of 2009;

Whereas, on December 2, 2009, reports and findings in seven separate matters involving the alleged connection between earmarks and campaign contributions were forwarded by the Office of Congressional Ethics to the Standards Committee;

Whereas, on February 26, 2010, the Standards Committee made public its report on the matter wherein the Committee found, though a widespread perception exists among corporations and lobbyists that campaign con-

tributions provide a greater chance of obtaining earmarks, there was no evidence that Members or their staff considered contributions when requesting earmarks;

Whereas, the Committee indicated that, with respect to the matters forwarded by the Office of Congressional Ethics, neither the evidence cited in the OCE's findings nor the evidence in the record before the Standards Committee provided a substantial reason to believe that violations of applicable standards of conduct occurred;

Whereas, the Office of Congressional Ethics is prohibited from reviewing activities taking place prior to March of 2008 and lacks the authority to subpoena witnesses and documents;

Whereas, for example, the Office of Congressional Ethics noted that, in some instances, documents were redacted or specific information was not provided and that, in at least one instance, they had reason to believe a witness withheld information requested and did not identify what was being withheld;

Whereas, the Office of Congressional Ethics also noted that they were able to interview only six former employees of the PMA Group, with many former employees refusing to consent to interviews and the OCE unable to obtain evidence within PMA's possession;

Whereas, Roll Call noted that "the committee report was five pages long and included no documentation of any evidence collected or any interviews conducted by the committee, beyond a statement that the investigation 'included extensive document reviews and interviews with numerous witnesses.'" (Roll Call, March 8, 2010);

Whereas, it is unclear whether the Standards Committee included in their investigation any activities that occurred prior to 2008;

Whereas, it is unclear whether the Standards Committee interviewed any Members in the course of their investigation; and

Whereas, it is unclear whether the Standards Committee, in the course of their investigation, initiated their own subpoenas or followed the Office of Congressional Ethics' recommendations to issue subpoenas: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That not later than seven days after the
2 adoption of this resolution, the Committee on Standards
3 of Official Conduct shall report to the House of Represent-
4 atives, with respect to the activities addressed in its report
5 of February 26, 2010, (1) how many witnesses were inter-
6 viewed, (2) how many, if any, subpoenas were issued in
7 the course of their investigation, and (3) what documents
8 were reviewed and their availability for public review.

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