COOPERATION WITH OFFICE OF CONGRESSIONAL ETHICS INVESTIGATIONS

Campaign Legal Center conducted a study of members of the U.S. House of Representatives’ cooperation with ethics investigations initiated by the U.S. Office of Congressional Ethics (OCE). The findings show that members of Congress from both major political parties refuse to fully cooperate with ethics investigations, and the rate of cooperation has declined in recent Congresses.

Top Findings:

- Over a third of members investigated have not cooperated with OCE investigations. Since the 111th Congress, 23 members of Congress have failed to cooperate\(^1\) with OCE investigations (see Figure 1). This represents one third of the total number of members of Congress who have been the subject of public OCE investigations in that time frame.\(^2\)

- The rate of cooperation has declined. Since the 111th Congress, the rate of cooperation has been lower than it was the year before in every year except one. This is true for both Democrats and Republicans (see Figure 2).

- The number of OCE investigations has remained relatively constant. This number has ranged from a high of 14 to a low of 11 for every Congress from the 111th to the 115th. The 116th Congress had only eight OCE investigations (see Figure 3).

- Investigation and cooperation rates are similar across party. Of the six Congresses included in the findings, the rate of cooperation among Democrats who were investigated was higher in two, while the rate of cooperation among Republicans who were investigated was higher in three. The rate of cooperation was equal across parties in one Congress (see Figure 2). The percent of representatives by party subject to OCE investigations was fairly evenly split across the six Congresses covered: three Congresses had more Democrats subject to investigation, while two Congresses had more Republicans subject to investigation. The 116th Congress had equal numbers of Republicans and Democrats subject to OCE investigations (see Figure 4).

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1 This report includes instances where the individual failed to fully cooperate, not only those instances where the individual refused any cooperation whatsoever.

2 This study focuses on those investigations for which a report is publicly available.
Figure 1

3 Rep. Schweikert was subject to two separate OCE investigations and is therefore counted twice in the data.
Figure 2

Percent Cooperation with OCE Investigations
111th-116th Congresses

Figure 3

Total Members Investigated by OCE
111th-116th Congresses

Cooperated  Did not cooperate  Cooperation not public
Reps. Subject to OCE Investigations by Party
111th-116th Congresses

Figure 4