

BIPARTISAN ETHICS COMMITTEE IS WORKING IN 111TH CONGRESS

“I have met with the chairwoman and ranking member of the Committee on Standards of Official Conduct ... Those meetings reinforced my initial impression: This is the best-functioning ethics panel in a long time, and Lofgren and Bonner are the first ethics leaders since Reps. Howard Berman (D-Calif.) and Joel Hefley (R-Colo.) who are eager and willing to work together in a bipartisan (or nonpartisan way) as well as determined to use the process to secure and reinforce the reputation of the House of Representatives.” – Norman Ornstein, Roll Call, [8/5/09](#)

The House has two bipartisan mechanisms in place to conduct investigations of alleged ethics violations by House Members. This year, the two committees have issued several reports outlining their work. These reports show how vigorous these committees are in their search for truth and fairness on ethics issues. The House voted to establish these bipartisan committees for those reasons, so it is important to allow them to complete their work.

Committee on Standards of Official Conduct (House Ethics Committee): The Committee on Standards of Official Conduct releases semi-annual reports to keep Members and the public informed:

- *September 15, 2009* → Report on [investigations](#).
- *July 17, 2009* → Issues [report](#) regarding the activities of the Committee for the first half of the first session of the 111th Congress.

Office of Congressional Ethics (OCE): The House voted to create the OCE on March 11, 2008 in order to bring transparency to the ethics process. Speaker Pelosi and Republican Leader Boehner appointed the eight-members on July 24, 2008. The OCE began reviewing alleged ethics violations in February and issues reports on a quarterly basis:

- *July 13, 2009* → Issues Second Quarter 2009 [Report](#)
- *April 14, 2009* → Issues First Quarter 2009 [Report](#)

Proper Investigations Take Time

“According to records maintained by the House ethics committee’s Web site, similar investigations in the past decade have spanned a scant two months to more than two years.” – Roll Call, [3/18/09](#)

“An investigation with multiple focuses increases the number of witnesses to talk to, increases the kinds and numbers of relevant documents the committee would need to obtain and review ... That certainly can complicate an investigation and can cause it to take more time.” – Rob Walker, Former Chief Counsel of the House Ethics Committee and Senate Ethics Committee, [3/18/09](#)

Committee on Standards of Official Conduct Is Doing Its Work

February 10, 2009 → [Announces](#) that it is continuing its investigation of Rep. Rangel.

December 9, 2008 → [Announces](#) that it is expanding the jurisdiction of its investigation of Rep. Rangel.

September 24, 2008 → Establishes an investigative subcommittee to launch an investigation into Rep. Rangel’s financing to determine whether he violated ethics rules.

July 17, 2008 → Rep. Rangel asks House Ethics Committee to investigate allegations of wrongdoing.