

## Office of Congressional Conduct

May 2, 2025

The Honorable Mike Johnson

Speaker of the United States House of Representatives H-232; The Capitol

Dear Speaker Johnson,

We write to express my deep concern about the continued delay in appointing the full bipartisan board of the Office of Congressional Conduct (OCC), formerly known as the Office of Congressional Ethics (OCE). This delay, which is now entering its fourth month of the 119th Congress, not only undermines the integrity of this body but threatens to erode the trust that the American people place in our capacity to hold ourselves accountable.

As you know, OCC was established in 2008 as an independent, nonpartisan office designed to review allegations of misconduct against Members of the House, officers, and staff. It was created in direct response to a series of high-profile ethics scandals that had severely damaged public trust in Congress. Its mission is clear: to serve as an impartial watchdog, ensuring transparency, ethical compliance, and public accountability. While the OCC does not have the power to sanction Members, it conducts preliminary reviews and refers credible complaints to the House Ethics Committee. In doing so the OCC acts as a critical mechanism to restore confidence in the integrity of this institution.

For OCC to operate, its board must be reconstructed each Congress with up to six members, three appointed by each party. Despite Democrats having submitted their appointees, OCC remains stalled due to the absence of Republican nominees and your final appointment. Notably, two former GOP members of the board, former Representative Lynn Westmoreland and former House Clerk Karen Haas, have reportedly agreed to return. Yet, as of today, you have not taken the necessary steps to read appointees' names into the record, which would allow the board to be formally seated and OCC to resume its full operations.

The failure to do so has left the office paralyzed. Without a seated board, it cannot initiate or advance new investigations, regardless of their merit.

While it may continue limited work on previously approved matters, OCC is effectively sidelined from its core mission of ethical oversight. This inaction only fuels the perception that Congress is unwilling to police its own.

This pattern of obstruction is not new. Since OCC's inception, it has faced repeated attempts to weaken or dismantle it. For instance, the most recent rules package adopted at the start of the 119th Congress has made it even harder for the OCC to function by requiring the board to be fully seated before staff could be reappointed. These changes, layered atop the current delay, have made the situation exponentially more difficult.

To rectify this oversight, we urge you to move swiftly to appoint the Republican members of the OCC board when Congress returns for this work period. This simple step does not require a vote of the full House; it requires only the formal announcement of names during a pro forma session. If the Republican Party shares a commitment to good governance, transparency, and restoring public faith in Congress, then ensuring OCC can operate effectively should not be a partisan issue.

Thank you for your consideration. We stand ready to work with you to ensure OCC is restored and allowed to carry out its mission without delay.

Sincerely,