



**Members of Issue One’s Bipartisan ReFormers Caucus Urge House Leadership and Ethics Committee Leadership to Conduct a Thorough Investigation into Rep. George Santos and to Codify the Office of Congressional Ethics:**

February 28, 2023

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy  
Speaker  
House of Representatives  
H-232, The Capitol  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Steve Scalise  
Majority Leader  
House of Representatives  
2049 RHOB, The Capitol  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Hakeem Jeffries  
Minority Leader  
House of Representatives  
2433 RHOB, The Capitol  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Michael Guest  
Chair — House Ethics Committee  
House of Representatives  
H-450, The Capitol  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Susan Wild  
Ranking Member — House Ethics Committee  
House of Representatives  
1027 RHOB, The Capitol  
Washington, DC 20515

We as members of Issue One’s ReFormers Caucus — a bipartisan coalition made up of nearly 200 former members of Congress, governors, and Cabinet officials — urge the House Committee on Ethics promptly to pursue a thorough investigation into newly elected Representative George Santos (R-NY) for multiple ethics and campaign finance violations.

Rep. Santos is reported to have lied about his family history, his education, his work experience, and possibly his [financial disclosures of campaign contributions](#). Ethics complaints have already been filed by Members of the House and various watchdog organizations, and investigations into Rep. Santos’ conduct are ongoing at the [Department of Justice \(DOJ\) and the Federal Election Commission \(FEC\)](#).

The disclosures of Rep. Santos’ apparent deceits and the existence of multiple serious investigations into his conduct has dramatically eroded trust in his ability to fulfill his duties, and in the institution of Congress. Santos must be held accountable for his actions.



Traditionally a bipartisan committee made up of five Republicans and five Democrats, it is the responsibility of House Ethics to monitor Member behavior within Congress, and to review financial disclosure statements filed by Members and candidates.

House Majority Leader Kevin McCarthy promised that Rep. [Santos would be removed from Congress](#) if he has “broken the law.” A swift investigation is needed to fully determine the extent of Rep. Santos’ conduct.

The Office of Congressional Ethics (OCE) has a similar duty to conduct a review of allegations about Rep. Santos and submit recommendations to the House Ethics Committee. Unfortunately, the newly adopted House Rules package made changes to the OCE which severely limit its ability to do its job. Those changes, which include an arbitrary 30-day hiring window for new staff, make it less likely that representatives will be held to the high ethical standards that the public expects.

The OCE is an essential and nonpartisan body that must be strengthened, not weakened, and the office should not be subject to the partisan whims of Congress. **Permanently codifying the OCE into law — or, at minimum, requiring both chambers to establish an independent ethics body — is a key step that Congress can take to build public trust in the legislative branch.**

Members of both parties are well aware of Americans’ [waning confidence](#) in our institutions. If Members are not investigated for alleged wrongdoing in a timely matter, it sends a message that Congress gets to play by a different set of rules. That is destructive of the public trust on which our democracy depends.

Sincerely,

The Honorable Jason Altmire (D-PA)

The Honorable Les Aucoin (D-OR)

The Honorable Brian Baird (D-WA)

The Honorable Douglas Bereuter (R-NE)

The Honorable John W. Carlin (D-KS)

The Honorable Milton Robert Carr (D-MI)

The Honorable Rodney D. Chandler (R-WA)

The Honorable Barbara Comstock (R-VA)

The Honorable Kent Conrad (D-ND)

The Honorable Lincoln Davis (D-TN)

The Honorable Susan Davis (D-CA)



The Honorable Byron Dorgan (D-ND)  
The Honorable Donna Edwards (D-MD)  
The Honorable Gene Green (D-TX)  
The Honorable Dennis Hertel (D-MI)  
The Honorable Joseph Hoeffel (D-PA)  
The Honorable Elizabeth Holtzman (D-NY)  
The Honorable Jerry Huckaby (D-LA)  
The Honorable Ronald Kind (D-WI)  
The Honorable Larry Larocco (D-ID)  
The Honorable Rick Lazio (R-NY)  
The Honorable Mel Levine (D-CA)  
The Honorable Elaine Luria (D-VA)  
The Honorable Marjorie Margolies (D-PA)  
The Honorable Patrick J. Murphy (D-PA)  
The Honorable Sue Myrick (R-NC)  
The Honorable Bill Ritter (D-CO)  
The Honorable Timothy Roemer (D-IN)  
The Honorable Roy Romer (D-CO)  
The Honorable Claudine Schneider (R-RI)  
The Honorable Patricia S. Schroeder (D-CO)  
The Honorable Philip Sharp (D-IN)  
The Honorable Chris Shays (R-CT)  
The Honorable Peter Smith (R-VT)  
The Honorable Robin Tallon (D-SC)  
The Honorable Mark Udall (D-CO)  
The Honorable Zach Wamp (R-TN)  
The Honorable Timothy Wirth (D-CO)