

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for holding this hearing. Today, I want to call attention to an important reform that I believe will make Congress more effective and transparent. Under current House Rules, there is little effective constraint or oversight on the source of funding for congressional fellows. This system is ripe for abuse. We need better protections to ensure that companies, or even countries, worried about congressional action can't also pay for fellows to be placed in congressional offices. This would be a clear conflict of interest.

Even now, Facebook sponsors a program that places fellows on Capitol Hill, while at the same time drawing the ire of many Members of Congress for actions on their platform. This obvious conflict of interest should at the very least have clear disclosure requirements. There are also numerous instances of fellows who were funded and paid by foreign governments. Issues like this underscore the importance of knowing who actually pays fellows. If fellows are on the payroll of foreign governments, the American people deserve to know about it.

My bipartisan proposal will bring needed transparency to Congress. It requires that Congressional offices report to the Ethics Committee on the outside income sources of the individuals working in their office. While it will shine a light on conflicts of interest for all employees, it more importantly ensures that offices allowing fellows from outside organizations are aware of the source of funding and who sent them. When we give people full access to the legislative process and taxpayer funded resources, the American people deserve to know who pays them.

My proposal, H.Con.Res.62, introduced in the 116th Congress, is simple and bipartisan. It passed by a voice vote when I introduced it as an amendment to H.R. 1 in the 116th Congress and it was retained in H.R. 1 in the 117th. It simply requires that any outside income for people work in Congressional offices for a significant period of time be disclosed. Taxpayers deserve to know when someone in a congressional office is actually being paid by someone else. My bill ensures that we know when this is happening and where the money is coming from.

Thank you again for your efforts to help Congress better serve the American people. My hope is that, like me, you see this proposal as a way to meaningfully improve this important institution.