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ONE HUNDRED ELEVENTH CONGRESS

U.S. House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON STANDARDS OF
OFFICIAL CONDUCT

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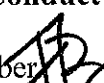
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GREGG HARPER, MISSISSIPPI
MICHAEL T. McCAUL, TEXAS

KELLE A. STRICKLAND,
COUNSEL TO THE RANKING
REPUBLICAN MEMBER

SUITE HT-2, THE CAPITOL
(202) 225-7103

MEMORANDUM FOR ALL MEMBERS, OFFICERS, AND EMPLOYEES

FROM: Committee on Standards of Official Conduct
Zoe Lofgren, Chair 
Jo Bonner, Ranking Republican Member 

SUBJECT: Annual Ethics Training Requirements for 2010

The Committee on Standards of Official Conduct (Standards Committee) is required to provide annual ethics training to each Member, Delegate, Resident Commissioner, officer, and employee of the House.¹ All new employees must complete an initial training session *within 60 days of commencing House employment.*² In addition, the Committee requires all senior staff employees to take an additional hour of specialized training at least once per Congress.³

By January 31 of each year, all House employees must certify with the Standards Committee that they completed ethics training during the preceding calendar year.⁴ To streamline the certification process for House employees, the Committee has collaborated with the House Learning Center to provide employees with an online registration process for all ethics training. As part of the new online registration process, the Committee will be able to better track House employees' compliance of the mandatory training requirement. As a result, the new mandatory online registration process will replace the Committee's previous paper-based certification process.

ONLINE REGISTRATION PROCESS

Online preregistration is now required for all ethics training. All employees must preregister online by entering their active directory (AD) username and password into the appropriate system for either the *live* or *online* ethics training. The AD username and

¹ House Rule 11, clause 3(a)(6)(A). The Committee defines an "officer or employee" as an individual who is appointed to a position of employment in the U.S. House of Representatives by an authorized employing authority and who receives a salary disbursed by the Chief Administrative Officer. It also includes such individuals who are in a leave without pay or furlough status.

² House Rule 11, clause 3(a)(6)(B)(i).

³ A "Congress" is a period of two years. The 111th Congress convened on January 26, 2009.

⁴ House Rule 11, clause 3(a)(6)(B)(ii).

password are the same username and password that employees use to access their desktop computers. The online registration process will allow employees to receive an electronic confirmation that they have completed their annual ethics training requirement.

For live ethics training: Employees must preregister at <http://registerme.house.gov/> and they must sign in on the attendance form prior to the start of the training. Even if employees preregister, they must sign in and attend the full hour to fulfill their ethics training requirement. Any late arrivals who miss the sign-in period will not receive credit. After their attendance, employees will receive email certificates, which they should preserve for their own records. The email certificates are confirmation for employees that they have satisfied the annual training and certification requirement. **Please do not send copies of the certificates to the Committee.**

The calendar of upcoming live training sessions for 2010 is available on the Standards Committee Web site: <http://ethics.house.gov>.

For online ethics training: Employees must preregister at HouseConnect: <http://houseconnect.house.gov>. Employees must complete the entire online training program to receive credit. After completing an online training program, the system will automatically log the employee as “complete.” This information is automatically transmitted to the Committee. Thus, once the system labels an employee as “complete,” the employee has satisfied the annual training and certification requirement. Employees will be able to check HouseConnect at any time to verify completion of their annual ethics training requirement.

2010 TRAINING CERTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS

Every House employee must preregister and complete the appropriate ethics training **by December 31, 2010**. In addition, Each House employee must certify to the Committee his or her completion of the 2010 annual ethics training requirement **no later than January 31, 2011**.⁵ An employee may do so in one of two ways:

- 1) By preregistering online and signing in at any live training; or
- 2) By preregistering online and completing a video training or an online tutorial.

House employees who preregister online and complete the appropriate training by December 31, 2010, will have met the certification requirement, and thus will not have to file any documentation with the Committee by January 31, 2011. After January 31, 2011, the Committee will verify compliance with the annual training and certification requirements. Should the Committee identify employees who failed to complete or certify satisfaction of the mandated training requirements, the Committee may investigate such matters. If the Committee determines that violations occurred, it may impose sanctions, as discussed below.

⁵ House Rule 11, clause 3(a)(6)(B)(ii).

TRAINING REQUIREMENTS

“New Employee” Training

All new employees *must* complete ethics training within 60 days of beginning House employment. For the purposes of the training requirement, a “new” House employee is an individual who first began employment with the House on or after November 1, 2009, and did not complete ethics training in 2009.⁶ Any former House employee who returns to House employment after a gap of more than 60 consecutive calendar days is considered to be a “new” employee.⁷ Interns paid by the House for more than 60 days also must comply with this requirement.⁸ New employees, depending on their work location, may satisfy their training requirement in the following manner.

- New employees who work in offices in Washington, D.C., are required to attend a *live* training session.
- New employees who work in offices not in Washington, D.C., may watch the “New District Staff” training video online.⁹

New employees will *not* receive credit for attending or watching any training sessions other than those specifically designated “New Employee” or “New District Staff.”

General Ethics Training

Existing House employees must complete one hour of general ethics training during calendar year 2010.¹⁰ For purposes of the 2010 training requirement, an “existing” House employee is an individual who first began employment with the House before November 1, 2009, and was required to complete ethics training in 2009.

Existing House employees may fulfill this training requirement by:

- 1) Attending a live general ethics training session; or

⁶ For new employees hired after November 1, 2009, who complete the “New Employee” training in 2010, the “New Employee” training will also satisfy their 2010 annual training requirement. Therefore, such employees are not required to take “General Ethics” training in 2010.

⁷ However, a person who was a House employee in 2010, satisfied their 2010 training requirement, and then subsequently terminated House employment for more than 60 days before again becoming a House employee in another position does not need to repeat ethics training for 2010.

⁸ Detailees, fellows, unpaid interns, and any individuals who are employed by the House and paid for less than 60 days are not required to attend ethics training in 2010. The Standards Committee nonetheless encourages these individuals to attend training so they become familiar with the House ethics rules while working in a House office or committee.

⁹ Available on HouseConnect: <http://houseconnect.house.gov>.

¹⁰ For new employees hired after November 1, 2009, who complete the “New Employee” training in 2010, the “New Employee” training will also satisfy their 2010 annual training requirement. Therefore, such employees are not required to take “General Ethics” training in 2010.

- 2) Completing an online general ethics training session.¹¹

“Senior Staff” Training

All senior staff employees are required to take an additional hour of senior staff training at least once per Congress to satisfy their training requirements. “Senior staff” are those House officers and employees whose basic rate of pay is equal to or greater than the senior staff rate (\$119,553.60 for CY 2010) for at least 60 days during 2010.¹² Senior staff employees may fulfill their additional hour of training requirement in one of two ways:

- 1) Attending a live senior staff training session; or
- 2) Completing an online senior staff training session.¹³

The senior staff training is in addition to the one hour general or new employee ethics training required of all House employees, as described above.

FAILURE TO COMPLY WITH THE MANDATORY TRAINING AND CERTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS

It is a violation of House rules for House employees to fail to comply with the mandatory annual training and certification requirements.¹⁴ The Committee is authorized to investigate alleged violations by House employees of standards of conduct applicable to their conduct.¹⁵ The Committee may impose sanctions when it establishes that an employee has failed to fulfill the mandated annual training requirement.¹⁶ Potential sanctions include:

- 1) Dismissal from employment;
- 2) Reprimand;
- 3) Fine;
- 4) Publication of the employee’s name; or
- 5) Any other sanction determined by the Committee to be appropriate.¹⁷

If you have any questions regarding this guidance, please contact the Committee’s Office of Advice and Education at (202) 225-7103.

¹¹ Available on HouseConnect: <http://houseconnect.house.gov>.

¹² This amount is referred to as the “senior staff rate.”

¹³ Available on HouseConnect: <http://houseconnect.house.gov>.

¹⁴ House Rule 11, clause 3(a)(6)(B)(ii).

¹⁵ House Rule 11, clause 3(a)(2).

¹⁶ House Rule 11, clause 3(a)(2); Committee Rule 18(a).

¹⁷ Committee Rule 24(f).

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQs)

1. Where do I find the ethics training certification forms for 2010?

Answer: There are no training certification forms for 2010. The online registration process will replace the training certification forms. Employees must preregister and take the appropriate training before December 31, 2010, in order to certify their compliance.

2. I just completed online ethics training. How does the Committee know I completed the training?

Answer: After a House employee completes an online training session, the system will log the employee as “complete.” This information is automatically transmitted to the Committee. Thus, once the system labels you as “complete” you have satisfied the annual training and certification requirement. The system also allows House employees to check whether they have completed training at any time.

3. If I have a problem registering who should I contact?

Answer: House employees who have registration problems should contact the House Learning Center at (202) 226-3800.

4. My committee just hired an employee from a Member’s office. The employee completed training in January 2010 while employed in the personal office. Does the employee have to retake training now that he works for the committee?

Answer: No. House employees are not required to retake training after switching House offices or committees.

5. I am a senior staff employee and I completed the senior staff training in 2008 during the 110th Congress. Do I have to complete senior staff training again in the 111th Congress?

Answer: Yes. House employees may not carry over training credit from one Congress to another. Therefore, senior staff employees are required to complete a second hour of specialized “senior staff” before the end of the 111th Congress even if they completed the training in the 110th Congress.

6. Are Members required to complete annual ethics training?

Answer: No. Members are not currently required by House rules to complete annual ethics training. However, the Committee is required to provide annual ethics training to each Member, Delegate, Resident Commissioner, officer, and employee of the House. The Committee will continue to offer Member-only training sessions, and Committee staff is available for personal briefings for Members by request.