

May 19, 2004

Statement of Chairman Joel Hefley and Ranking Minority Member Alan B. Mollohan

Recently it was reported in the news media that the Committee on Standards of Official Conduct has "cleared" House Members to raise funds for charitable organizations during the national political conventions later this year. That report is not correct. Members are subject to a number of rules and standards in raising funds for charity, and any Member contemplating involvement with charitable fundraising should contact the Committee for guidance addressed to his or her specific circumstances. In addition, the gift rule imposes a number of limitations on the ability of House Members and staff to accept an offer of free attendance at a charity event, and, again, Members and staff should consult with the Committee before accepting such an offer. To the extent that the Committee has responded to specific inquiries on charitable activities taking place at the conventions, it has cautioned as to the concerns that may arise from those activities taking place in that venue, and the need for Member participation to comply strictly with House rules and standards of conduct.

Further information on how the House gift rule applies to Members and staff attending one of the conventions is set out in an advisory memorandum that the Committee issued on May 13, 2004.