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ONE HUNDRED EIGHTH CONGRESS

U.S. House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON STANDARDS OF
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Statement of the Committee on Standards of Official Conduct Regarding the Complaint Filed by Representative Bell Against Representative DeLay

When, on October 6, 2004, the Committee on Standards of Official Conduct acted on the complaint filed by Representative Bell against Representative DeLay, the Committee stated that it would separately consider the question of whether the complaint contained innuendo, speculative assertions or conclusory statements in violation of Committee Rule 15(a)(4).

Today the Committee determined that the complaint did contain such objectionable materials, and a letter that specifies the materials in the complaint that violate this Committee rule has been sent to Representative Bell. Copies of the letter are being released along with this statement. As the letter notes, because this complaint was one that Representative Bell signed and transmitted directly to the Committee under Committee Rule 14(a)(1), he is responsible for those violations. The letter also notes that this provision of the Committee Rules is an important one, the purposes of which, quite clearly, are to maintain a level of decorum in Committee proceedings and to discourage use of the Committee for political purposes.

By the release of this statement and letter, all Members are on notice that inclusion of such objectionable material in a complaint is a basis for summary rejection of the complaint by the Committee, and depending on the circumstances, it may also be the basis for initiation of disciplinary action against a Member who makes the filing.

This action is not intended to inhibit any Member from filing a complaint that he or she believes in good faith warrants consideration by the Committee, and this action should not have any such effect. Instead, the effect of this action should be to prompt any Member who is considering filing a complaint to review its contents carefully, and to ensure that the complaint does not contain any of the objectionable elements that are identified here.