

There is lots of pressure from the press, academia, and various political organizations to turn ethics considerations over to an outside panel. As a former Member of the House Ethics Committee during the Abscam years and a Co-Chairman of the Committee to Revise the Rules of Procedure on Ethics in the mid - '90's, I wish to inject in the strongest possible terms my professional and personal feelings that the House will be making a horrible mistake if it were to abdicate it's Constitutional Responsibility to determine its own rules and judge its own Members accordingly.

All outside panels will inevitably be composed of human beings whom have not experienced the pressures of becoming elected to or maintaining high office. Whether in the political, professional, academic, or business world, those Non-Members will be guided by biases that will ultimately be swayed by politics, personality, envy or other influences that are foreign to Members of the House. Sooner or later, an investigatory panel will engage in witch hunts that will virtually destroy the integrity of the House of Representatives. This is an unconstitutional idea that should die in the crib. It cannot and will not work over time.

Sincerely,

Robert L. Livingston
Member of Congress (Retired)