



November 29, 2017

Dear Representative,

On behalf of our more than one million members nationally and hundreds of supporters in your district working to hold power accountable, Common Cause strongly encourages you to support legislation that would prohibit congressional offices from using Members' Representational Allowances (MRAs), the Office of Compliance, the House Employment Counsel, or any other "hush fund" to pay for sexual harassment settlements. The American public deserves to know that their hard-earned tax dollars are not being used to protect sexual harassers.

We call on the office of Speaker Paul Ryan, the office of Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi, and the Committee on House Administration to publicly disclose the names of Members of Congress and congressional staff who have used their offices' MRA or any other account to pay sexual harassment or misconduct settlements. In doing so, victims' identities must be protected, unless they decide to reveal their names, and the date on which the settlement took place must be kept private to protect victims. While the resolution being considered today to require all Members and staff to undergo sexual harassment training is a step in the right direction, Americans deserve transparency and accountability in knowing how their tax dollars are spent.

The opacity of how Congress handles harassment claims has enabled continued repulsive behavior to occur by Members and staff. As the *Washington Post* reported earlier this month, over the last 20 years, the Office of Compliance has paid out \$17.2 million to settle 264 complaints of sexual harassment and other Capitol Hill workplace violations, about which the public is largely kept in the dark. Ultimately, if congressional budgets were more transparent, heightened attention to harassment and misconduct settlements may have helped prevent some of these heinous acts.

The "People's House" must create a workplace environment where everyone feels safe and protected so that all congressional offices can continue to address the myriad challenges our country faces. Please prohibit taxpayer funds from being spent to settle sexual harassment suits and instead ensure that MRAs are used to do the people's work.

Sincerely,

Karen Hobert Flynn  
President  
Common Cause

Cc: Committee on House Administration

*Since 1970, [Common Cause](http://www.commoncause.org) has been working to hold power accountable through lobbying, litigation, and organizing. Our non-partisan, pro-democracy work has helped pass dozens of reforms at the federal, state, and local levels. We now have more than one million members around the country who are working to strengthen our democracy.*