

Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND REFORM

2157 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING

WASHINGTON, DC 20515-6143

MAJORITY (202) 225-5051

MINORITY (202) 225-5074

<http://oversight.house.gov>

Opening Statement

Chairman Elijah E. Cummings

Hearing on “Violations of the Hatch Act Under the Trump Administration, Part II: Kellyanne Conway”

July 15, 2019

Today, we will hear from Kellyanne Conway, Counselor to the President, about her repeated violations of federal laws.

I appreciate that Ms. Conway is here today to answer our questions. We invited her to appear voluntarily at a hearing on June 26, but she refused. The Committee then voted to authorize a subpoena to compel her to testify here today.

Since Ms. Conway joined the White House in January 2017, she has repeatedly and flagrantly abused her position of trust.

In March 2017, the Office of Government Ethics recommended that the White House discipline Ms. Conway for using her official position to promote Ivanka Trump’s private business during an interview on *Fox and Friends*. Rather than holding Ms. Conway accountable, the White House minimized the seriousness of Ms. Conway’s violation by claiming that it was made in a “light, off-hand manner.”

In October 2017, the Committee discovered that Ms. Conway wasted thousands of taxpayer dollars by traveling around the country on private jets with former Secretary of Health and Human Services Tom Price. Secretary Price paid the taxpayers back, and he then resigned. Ms. Conway refused to reimburse taxpayers and faced no disciplinary action at all from President Trump.

Most recently, on June 13, 2019, the independent Office of Special Counsel, which is led by Henry Kerner—who was appointed by President Trump—issued a report recommending that President Trump fire Ms. Conway for “persistent, notorious, and deliberate” violations of the Hatch Act.

The Hatch Act prohibits federal employees from using their official positions for partisan political purposes. The law ensures that the federal government is administered in a nonpartisan manner and that federal employees are protected from political coercion in the workplace.

Mr. Kerner testified before our Committee for more than three hours about Ms. Conway's violations of federal law. He called them "clear, repeated, and knowing violations of the Hatch Act."

He also warned that since President Trump is not taking any disciplinary action against Ms. Conway, he is sending a "false message to other Federal employees that they need not abide by the Hatch Act or that senior officials are above the law."

On May 29, 2019, Ms. Conway answered a question from a reporter about her violations by saying, "blah, blah, blah." She then stated dismissively, "Let me know when the jail sentence starts."

This illegal activity—and the ongoing effort to cover it up—must not be allowed to stand. This is bigger than just the Hatch Act or any other law. This is about holding our government to the highest standard and not allowing individuals appointed by the President to be given special treatment when they flagrantly violate the law.

Contact: Aryele Bradford, Communications Director, (202) 226-5181.