



CONTACT:

Katie Monahan, (202)-590-6073, Katie.monahan@mail.house.gov (DWC)

Democratic Women's Caucus Leaders Call for Rep. Chuck Edwards to Resign Following Ethics Report Detailing Sexual Harassment of Staff

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Today, **Democratic Women's Caucus Chair Teresa Leger Fernández (NM-03)** and **Vice Chairs Emilia Sykes (OH-13)** and **Hillary Scholten (MI-03)**, released the following statement calling for Representative Chuck Edwards (NC-11) to resign after the House Committee on Ethics found that Rep. Edwards violated the House Code of Official Conduct rules on sexual harassment and creating a hostile work environment.

“The report released by the House Committee on Ethics detailing their investigation into Rep. Chuck Edwards showed a clear and outlandish pattern of sexual harassment. It's time for accountability. There must be clear and significant consequences for sexual harassment of this level.

The report describes conduct that should alarm every Member of Congress, Hill staffer, and American. He showered two young women staffers with lavish gifts, took them to intimate dinners and on trips, sent late-night personal messages, gifted the young women blue and pink hand guns, jewelry and expensive handbags, and even skipped votes to decorate one staffer's Christmas tree with her. Rep. Edwards engaged in this behavior even after the young women made it clear it made them uncomfortable.

Serving in Congress is a privilege and honor. Members are expected to act with integrity and dignity and must be held accountable when they fail to do so.

The Ethics Committee recommendation to censure Rep. Edwards has no real consequences; it just means he has to stand on the floor of the House while the censure is read. A few minutes of embarrassing CSPAN coverage, while the staffers themselves had to endure over two years of sexual harassment, is not comparable. His actions forced both of them to leave their work in the office. A censure is an insult to the young women who bravely chose to come forward and report his behavior that threatened their careers, reputations, and safety. They had to leave their jobs, so should Rep. Edwards. He should resign immediately.

Congress has a responsibility to protect the women that work here and reciting a few words of censure on the House floor doesn't protect women from retaliation and sexual harassment.

Congress needs to impose clear and significant consequences when an Ethics Committee investigation finds that a Member violated the Code of Official Conduct's ban on sexual harassment and sexual relationships with staff. As part of the bipartisan sexual misconduct reform process we are undertaking, we will be proposing legislation to provide that there be clear consequences such as stripping committee assignments or a vote on expulsion for the most egregious violations of sexual misconduct. But the victims of Rep. Edwards' sexual harassment should receive justice now, and he must resign."

###