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**STATEMENT OF THE BOARD OF THE OFFICE OF CONGRESSIONAL ETHICS ON
THE RELEASE OF FINDINGS OF FACT REGARDING OFFICIALLY-CONNECTED
TRAVEL TO TURKEY AND AZERBAIJAN**

On May 8, 2015, the Board of the Office of Congressional Ethics (“OCE”) referred matters concerning nine Members’ privately sponsored travel to Turkey and Azerbaijan for further review by the Committee on Ethics (the “Committee”). As provided by House Resolution 895 of the 110th Congress and House Rules, each referral included both a Report and detailed Findings of Fact.

Previously, on March 4, 2015, the Committee had requested that OCE cease its investigations. Resolution 895 and House Rules contemplate a cease-and-refer request from the Committee only when the Committee is investigating a matter consistent with House Rule XI, clause 3(b). Because no such investigation had been begun by the Committee, the OCE Board declined to stop its investigations.

On July 31, 2015, the Committee released a report, “In the Matter of Officially-Connected Travel by House Members to Azerbaijan in 2013,” characterizing the Findings of Fact submitted by OCE as “supplemental information” not appropriate for release because the referral followed the OCE Board’s decision not to cease its investigations. On that basis, the Committee declined to release OCE’s Findings of Fact, also stating its concern that release might compromise any inquiry by the Department of Justice.

Under these circumstances, House Rules and House Resolution 895 require disclosure of the Findings of Fact. Respectful of the principles of transparency and accountability in the House ethics process, and with assurance that it will not prejudice any action by the Department of Justice, the OCE Board has voted to release the nine referrals, including the Findings of Fact, as permitted by section 1(f)(1)(B) of House Resolution 895.