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United States Senate

CHARLES E. GRASSLEY

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-1501

March 2, 2018

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader
United States Senate
317 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Leader McConnell:

I write today to urge that the Senate take up the *Congressional Accountability Act of 1995 Reform Act*. This bill, which recently passed the House of Representatives, and which I introduced in this chamber, would update and strengthen current law relating to workplace misconduct and sexual harassment on Capitol Hill.

Two decades ago, I led the effort to ensure that Congress is subject to the same workplace safety and civil rights laws that impact Main Street businesses. Congressional employees enjoyed none of the workplace protections that apply to the private sector and executive branch employees until I championed passage of the Congressional Accountability Act of 1995 (Pub. L. No. 104-1). That statute called for Congress to follow the same civil rights, labor, workplace safety, and health laws to which other employers are subject.

If it were up to me, the original Congressional Accountability Act would have passed as a one-page measure clarifying that Senators and Representatives are subject to the same employment protection laws as everyone else. We simply could have applied to Congress the same enforcement remedies that extend to the executive branch and private entities. But some of my colleagues in the 104th Congress thought that this law was unnecessary and balked at making Congress follow the same common-sense policies to which the rest of the government is subject, citing separations of powers concerns. Eventually, we were able to negotiate a bipartisan solution that became the Congressional Accountability Act.

In the past several months, I have pushed for additional reforms. Last year, I led the effort in the Senate to require mandatory sexual harassment training for all Senate employees. And now I have introduced the *Congressional Accountability Act of 1995 Reform Act*. This bill would renew and strengthen the employment protections in the Congressional Accountability Act (1995 statute), bringing greater transparency and accountability to Capitol Hill.

Committee Assignments:

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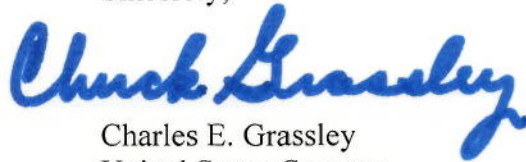
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Among its major reforms, this proposal would require Members of Congress to reimburse the Treasury Department for any settlements or awards paid out as a result of harassment complaints stemming from their personal misconduct. It would modernize and streamline the process for filing a complaint. It would require automatic referrals of alleged Congressional Accountability Act violations to the Committee on Ethics when a final award or settlement against a Member is reached. It would also promote transparency by requiring the congressional Office of Compliance to publicly, regularly disclose when a congressional office pays a harassment-related award or settlement.

It is my firm belief that Congress should live by the laws it passes, and this bill is a step in the right direction. The House of Representatives has already passed these reforms, and it is now time for the Senate to do the same. I respectfully request that my bill be brought to the Senate floor for a vote as quickly as possible.

Sincerely,



Charles E. Grassley
United States Senator