

January 9, 2022

Mr. Omar Ashmawy
Chief Counsel and Staff Director
Office of Congressional Ethics
U.S. House of Representatives
P.O. Box 895 Washington, DC 20515

Re: Request for Investigation Regarding Representative George Santos Use of House Resources for Political Purposes

Dear Mr. Ashmawy:

I respectfully request that the Office of Congressional Ethics (“OCE”) initiate a preliminary review into Representative George Anthony Devolder-Santos (“George Santos”), who was recently elected Representative in New York’s 3rd Congressional District,¹ and has violated U.S. federal law and House Ethics Committee rules by seeking to use House rooms and offices for campaign and politically-related activities.

Federal law requires elected officials, including Members of Congress, to abide by ethics rules to uphold public trust and legitimacy. Some of these standards are further inscribed in the U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Ethics rules, which aim to ensure that House Members conduct themselves in a manner that reflects creditably on the House, work earnestly and thoughtfully for their salary, and do not seek to profit from their public office.²

Mr. Santos’s blatant disregard of those important standards—especially as he faces scrutiny for several other ethics related inquiries—is particularly alarming for someone who has been elected to serve in the House of Representatives. I respectfully request that you investigate this matter to determine the extent of these violations and take appropriate action as soon as possible.

Federal law states that it is unlawful for any person to solicit or receive a donation of money or other thing of value in connection with a Federal, State, or local election from a person who is located in a room or building occupied in the discharge of official duties by an officer or employee of the United States.³ The law specifically prohibits Members of Congress from soliciting or receiving donations while they are in any room or building related to the discharge of their official duties.⁴ The penalty for a violation of this section is a fine of not more than \$5,000, imprisonment of not more than 3 years, or both.⁵

¹ See FEC, Candidate Information of George Anthony Devolder-Santos, https://www.fec.gov/data/candidates/?q=HONY03083&is_active_candidate=true&has_raised_funds=true (last accessed Jan. 3, 2023).

² See H. Comm. on Ethics, *House Ethics Manual 2022 Print* (2022), <https://ethics.house.gov/sites/ethics.house.gov/files/documents/2022/House-Ethics-Manual-2022-Print.pdf>.

³ 18 U.S.C. § 607.

⁴ *Id.*

⁵ *Id.*

The House Ethics rules derived from this law state that since House buildings, rooms, and offices are supported with official funds, they are considered official resources and therefore may not be used for the conduct of campaign or political activities.⁶ A recent Ethics Committee memorandum released on November 29, 2022 clarified that Members-elect may use their principal campaign committee funds to pay for the costs of a reception or similar event for their constituents in connection with their swearing-in, even if the reception is held in their office or another House room, but *only* if the event is *not* political in nature.⁷ The Committee clarifies in its guidance that an event limited to campaign contributors would be considered political, and therefore cannot be held official House space.⁸

On December 29, 2022, reports emerged that Devolder Santos for Congress, Santos's principal campaign committee, sent invitations to his swearing-in event that included a fundraising appeal, as shown in Exhibit A.⁹ The email stated that individuals who contributed \$100 as an attendee or \$500 as a VIP would get a roundtrip bus from New York to Washington, D.C. and be able to participate in a luncheon, the Congressman's swearing-in ceremony, and a "Team Santos" tour of Capitol Grounds. Soliciting funds in connection with a swearing-in event held on Capitol grounds is a blatant violation of both U.S. federal code and House Ethics rules.

In order to safeguard the integrity of federal ethics laws, I respectfully request that you immediately undertake a full investigation of this matter.

I understand that 18 U.S.C. § 1001 applies to the information I am providing. To the best of my knowledge and ability, all evidence submitted was not obtained in violation of any law, rule, or regulation.

Thank you for your prompt attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



End Citizens United
Tiffany Muller
PO Box 66005
Washington, DC 20035

⁶ See *House Ethics Manual 2022 Print* at 127, 160.

⁷ See H. Comm. on Ethics, Member Swearing-in Events at 1 (November 29, 2022), <https://ethics.house.gov/sites/ethics.house.gov/files/documents/FINAL%20Member%20Swearing-In%20Events.pdf>.

⁸ *Id.*

⁹ See Mark Chiusano, *Santos wants a donation to watch him take the congressional oath*, *Newsday* (December 29, 2022), <https://www.newsday.com/opinion/columnists/mark-chiusano/george-santos-long-island-congress-third-wmy0nyit>.

EXHIBIT A



*You are cordially invited to the
swearing-in celebrations of:*

**CONGRESSMAN-ELECT
GEORGE SANTOS**

**Tuesday, January 3, 2022
Washington, D.C.**

Contribution Levels:

Attendee: \$100

VIP: \$500

**Includes: Roundtrip Bus from NY to DC,
Luncheon, Swearing-In Ceremony,
& Team Santos Tour of Capitol Grounds**



Paid For By Devolder Santos For Congress.

