

Robert Walker Comments on Congressional Ethics Case

The Washington Post
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Robert L. Walker, former chief counsel to the House and Senate ethics committees and an attorney in Wiley Rein's Election Law & Government Ethics Practice, was quoted by *The Washington Post* for a story on a staffer for Rep. Roscoe Bartlett (R-MD), who filed papers to run for Congress to succeed his boss, despite remaining on the congressional payroll.

The Post reported that the aide in question, Alex Mooney, "also serves as chairman of the Maryland Republican Party, has been on Bartlett's staff since June, according to House payroll records, which list Mooney as a "part-time employee" who made \$2,000 that month. Mooney told MarylandReporter.com in July that he was working for Bartlett a couple of days a week as 'community outreach director.'"

The Post noted that the House Ethics Manual says that if a congressional employee is seeking to succeed his or her boss in office, "the staff member must terminate his or her employment in the congressional office upon becoming a candidate." Mr. Walker explained that the ethics rule exists because of the potential that aides could mix campaign work with official business as they deal with constituents of the congressional office they hope to fill.

"When it is a staffer [running for office], then the Ethics Committee has deemed it appropriate to address the potential for a conflict of interest by making an individual choose," Walker said. "In this circumstance, it appears that the individual has chosen."

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