

I think she was committee staff. Whether she did anything or not is something else, but at least she was physically present, which met the statute.

Mr. LATTA. From what I read, she went fishing and she was still on the payroll up until very recently, until Mr. Pepper's committee got into this thing. My question is, when you found out she has gone fishing, and I put that in quotes, why did you not do something about that?

Mr. BURLESON. Well, it may have been a long fishing trip. [Laughter.]

But the statute says the employee shall be in the Member's office here in Washington or in his district or in the State.

So if she were here 1 day she could meet the statutory requirement, technically speaking.

Mr. LATTA. You mean 1 day during a month would qualify?

Mr. BURLESON. As far as the law is concerned, it does, and our attention was called to that by the General Accounting Office when we made inquiry as to the reimbursement of these funds.

But it did meet the statute. We assume technically, if she walked in the door 1 day a month, or 1 day a year, it technically meets the requirement.

Mr. LATTA. Have you given any thought to tightening that up?

Mr. BURLESON. Yes, we have. I introduced this resolution that would carry a penalty. Under the present statute there is no penalty. We should make a penalty for a violation. I think that should be a part of any reform legislation.

The CHAIRMAN. Mr. O'Neill?

Mr. O'NEILL. No questions.

The CHAIRMAN. Mr. Young?

Mr. YOUNG. Mr. Chairman, and Mr. Burleson, one thing that worries me a great deal is that it seems to me if this committee, and if the House in turn, places the authority and responsibility with your committee, which obviously you are not seeking, and that is understandable, I am just afraid that your committee will have taken on an enormous responsibility, one that no committee in this Congress has ever faced before.

Ever since we have been having these hearings we have seen your committee maligned, either in the press or out of the press, by statements that the committee either cannot or will not do its job, putting an X on you before you ever start.

I do not know how you go about doing all these things, and my frank opinion is that I think this business of the corruption of Congress is grossly overrated.

I think first of all you may be seeking something that is not necessarily there, and secondly, it has been brought out clearly around this table here by the testimony and by the questions, the great task of setting up a code of conduct that, in effect, is a keeper of a man's conscience which is the difficulty.

So I think it would be the most courageous thing in the world and, if you can, do something with it. I said the other day, and I am not going to belabor the point, that the quickest way to take something away from the American people is to make it bipartisan. If the House