



## **H.R. 4822, the Congressional Accountability Act of 1995 Reform Act**

- Strengthens the Dispute Resolution Process and Protections of Employee Rights under the Congressional Accountability Act
- Hold Members Personally Responsible
- Increases Transparency of Member Conduct, Awards, and Settlements through the Office of Compliance (OOC)
- **Protects employees:**
  - Provides House employees with immediate access to a dedicated advocate who will provide legal consultation, representation, and assistance in proceedings before the OOC and Committee on Ethics;
  - Provides opportunities for employees to work remotely or request paid leave without fear of retribution;
  - Ensures confidentiality of processes;
  - Directs the OOC to conduct climate survey of employees every two years that would include surveying attitudes on sexual harassment in the workplace; and
  - Ensures every House Office has an anti-discrimination/anti-harassment policy.
- **Streamlines and strengthens the dispute resolution and reporting processes:**
  - Eliminates the mandatory counseling and mediation provisions allowing an employee to proceed to an investigation or to file in federal court;
  - Directs the OOC General Counsel to make one of three findings: 1) reasonable cause for claim; 2) no reasonable cause for claim; and 3) no findings of reasonable cause can be made before any hearing on the merits can be held; and
  - Maintains opportunities for the employee to engage in mediation.
- **Members held personally responsible for any sexual harassment award or settlement:**
  - Holds Members personally accountable for their conduct and requires awards or settlements to be repaid by the Member to the Treasury account within 90 days;
  - Ensures Members who leave office will still be responsible for repaying the Treasury, including garnishing annuities to ensure full repayment;
  - Requires claims to be automatically referred to the Committee on Ethics when there is a final award or settlement reached against a Member;
  - Ensures due process by allowing a Member to protect their interest;
  - Clarifies that Member-on-Member harassment is a violation of the Official Code of Conduct; and
  - Requires the Member or Employing Office to certify that no Members' Representational Allowance (MRA) or official House funds are used to pay a settlement in connection with conduct prohibited under the Congressional Accountability Act.
- **Strengthens transparency:**
  - Requires the OOC to report and publish online every six months information on awards and settlements. Reports must include: the employing office; the amount of the award or settlement; the violation claim(s); and, when a claim was issued against a Member, whether the Member has personally repaid the Treasury account.