

February 24, 2015

Hon. Johnny Isakson, Chairman
Hon. Barbara Boxer, Vice Chairman
Senate Select Committee on Ethics
220 Hart Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Isakson and Vice Chairman Boxer:

We write to request that the Senate Ethics Committee immediately investigate Senate Minority Leader Harry Reid's apparent breach of ethics rules prohibiting the use of official Senate resources and facilities for campaign activity. Although Senator Reid has served in the Senate since 1987, he appears to have blatantly violated these basic and longstanding Senate Ethics Rules. Because those rules apply to every Senator regardless of rank, longevity, or title, we respectfully request that the Committee investigate and take appropriate action in response to his reported activities in the Capitol.

According to a report appearing in *Politico*, a copy of which is enclosed with this letter, Senator Reid "summoned dozens of staffers to the Senate's Mansfield Room Tuesday" to deliver one "clear message: He's running for reelection." See Manu Raju, *Harry Reid: I'm Running in 2016*, *Politico* (Feb. 10, 2015) [hereinafter "I'm Running"]. Senator Reid did not call the meeting to discuss an important piece of legislation, answer questions from the media about the perilous state of America's foreign policy, or address his recent filibuster of legislation to fund the Department of Homeland Security. The only reported topic was to announce, "I'm running." Even *Politico* admitted the meeting—attended by more than fifty Senate staffers—was "unusual." *Id.*

It, however, is much more than merely unusual. It is contrary to Senate Ethics Rules. As the *Senate Ethics Manual* explains, "Use of official resources to assist campaign organization—Senate space, equipment, staff time, and resources" is prohibited. *Senate Ethics Manual* at 150. The Committee's website provides further guidance in red lettering to make it absolutely clear: "No Campaign Activity in Federal Buildings." See <http://www.ethics.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/campaign-activity> (last visited Feb. 11, 2015). Lest there be any remaining doubt, Appendix J of the *Senate Ethics Manual* declares in bold type that (1) "**Rooms are only available for Senate-related business**" and (2) "**Senate space may NOT be used for any political campaign activity . . . whatsoever.**" *Senate Ethics Manual* at 496 (emphasis in original).

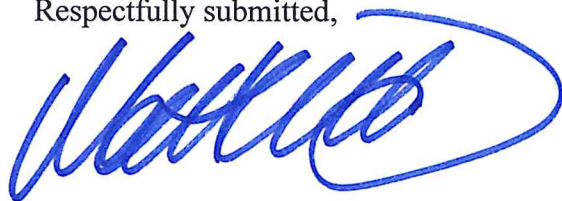
Beyond being against Senate Rules, the use of official Senate resources for campaign activity is also illegal. *See id.* at 153. “Official resources may only be used for official purposes.” *Id.* Federal law prohibits the use of official funds for any use other than that for which they were appropriated. *See id.* (citing 31 U.S.C. § 1301(a)). The Congress has not appropriated money for the day-to-day operation of the Senate for campaign use. Thus, “[i]t is . . . inappropriate to use any official resources to conduct campaign or political activities.” *Id.*

That, however, is exactly what *Politico* reports Senator Reid has done. Senator Reid held a meeting of at least fifty official Senate staffers during the work day in the Mansfield Room, “just off the Senate floor,” for the purpose of announcing that he was running for reelection. Raju, *I’m Running*. Senator Reid then conducted a brief interview with the *Politico* reporter to reiterate his message that “I’m going to run,” and discussed campaign strategy including his instruction to “his top political aide, Rebecca Lambe, to continue hiring senior-level staff, including a campaign manager.” *Id.* *Politico* did not report any other topics of discussion during the meeting. *See id.*

Senator Reid’s actions appear to make a mockery of both the Senate Ethics Rules and federal law. He reportedly announced his reelection campaign from the confines of an official Senate meeting room located mere steps from the Senate floor. Senator Reid’s actions, as reported by *Politico*, should be investigated to determine if Senator Reid violated both Senate Rule XLI, as interpreted by the *Senate Ethics Manual* and its Appendix J, and 31 U.S.C. § 1301(a).

The Senate Ethics Rules apply to every Senator. Such blatant disregard for clear-cut—and, indeed, bold-faced—ethical rules brings disrepute on both the Senate and each of its Members. This Committee serves as the guardian of the Senate’s good name. We therefore respectfully request that the Senate Ethics Committee immediately investigate and take appropriate action in response to this apparent public flouting of the Senate’s most basic ethical guidelines.

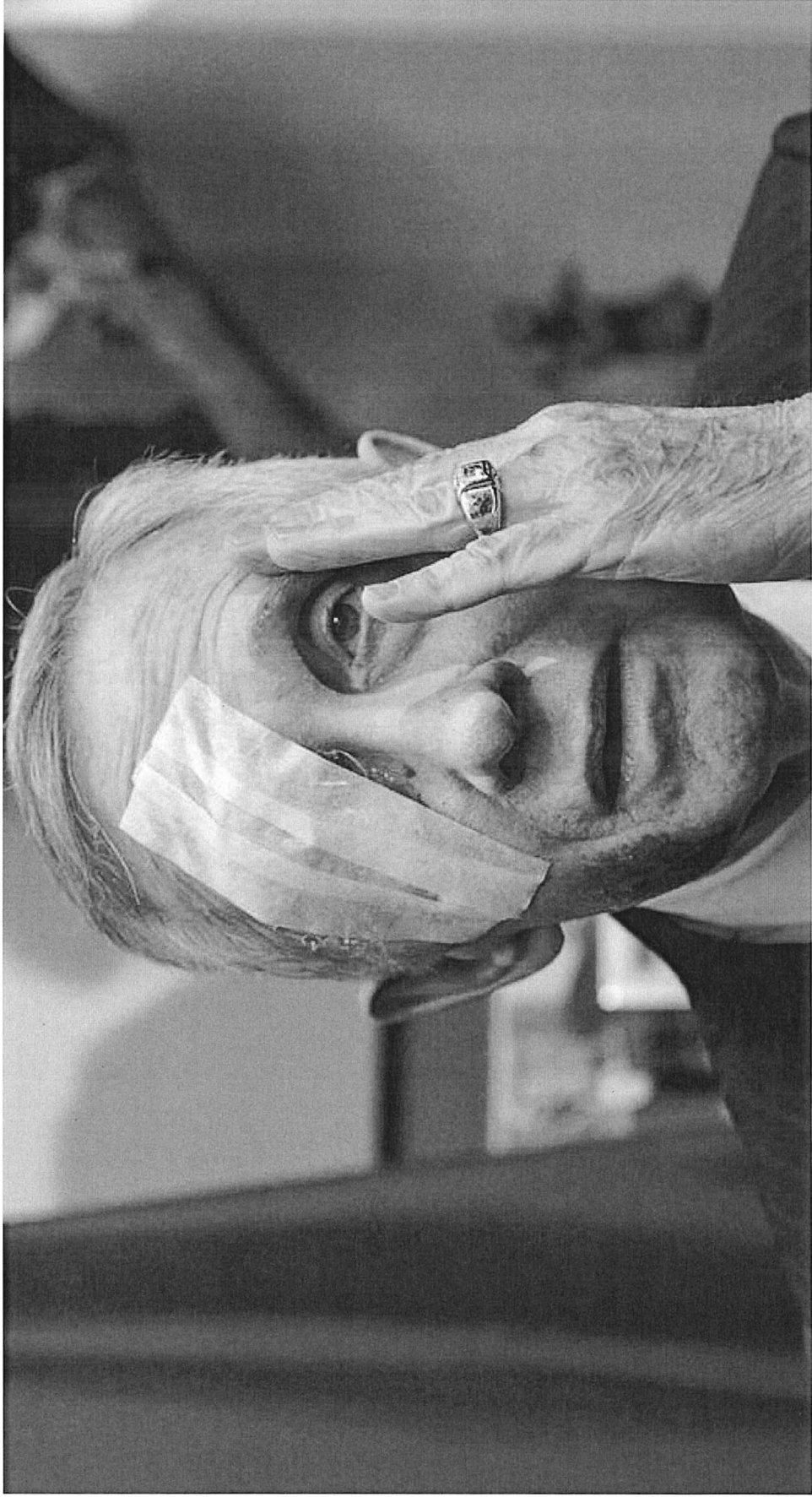
Respectfully submitted,



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Enclosure

POLITICO



AP Photo

Harry Reid: 'I'm running' in 2016

The injured Senate minority leader summoned his staff to tell them the news.

By **MANU RAJU** | 2/10/15 12:12 PM EST

Sen. Harry Reid summoned dozens of staffers to the Senate's Mansfield Room Tuesday and delivered a clear message: He's running for reelection next year.

The comments are in part aimed at putting to rest growing speculation inside the Senate that the 75-year-old Nevada Democrat — badly hurt from a painful injury to his right eye — would call it quits after nearly three decades in the chamber. The Senate minority leader faces what could be a difficult reelection race next year, plus his would-be successors are ready to run the Democratic Caucus the moment he calls it quits.

But Reid told roughly 50 aides at an unusual all-staff briefing just off the Senate floor that he is definitely running in 2016, prompting a round of applause, according to attendees. And in a brief interview with POLITICO, Reid made clear that he's directed his top political aide, Rebecca Lambe, to continue hiring senior-level staff, including a campaign manager.

"I talked to Rebecca this week, they are still interviewing people, the answer is yes," Reid said when asked if he was 100 percent committed to running.



DRIVING THE DAY:

Is Mitch McConnell cruising for a bruising?

Asked if there was anything that could change his mind, Reid said: "I'm running. You asked a question that has no answer. I'm going to run."

Reid's unequivocal comments are a change since a news conference last month when he said that he planned to run "at this stage."

Reid, of course, has ample time to decide if he wants to ultimately retire at the end of this Congress. He's already been one of the longest-serving Democratic leaders, with some in the party eager for fresh blood, plus he would likely have to mount a vigorous campaign to win a sixth term. Republicans are trying to field a top-tier candidate against him, with GOP Gov. Brian Sandoval at the top of the list of potential candidates, though few believe the governor will mount a bid.

It also remains to be seen how Reid's recovery progresses.

Reid, who has a large white bandage covering his right eye and a deep purple bruise on his jaw, is slated to undergo a second eye surgery Wednesday in an attempt to help him regain sight in his injured eye. The freakish accident occurred on New Year's Day at his home outside of Las Vegas, where a rubber resistance band Reid was using to exercise snapped, sending him crashing into cabinets in his bathroom, breaking bones around his eye and smashing four of his ribs. He has missed much of the first several weeks of the new Congress as he's recovered at his condo at the Ritz-Carlton in Washington.

After his second surgery Wednesday, Reid's office said, the senator will spend the rest of the week absent from the Senate. He's expected to return once the Senate reconvenes Feb. 23 following a Presidents Day recess.

Reid is acting like the eye injury has not altered his plans — or his sense of humor.

As he walked by a reporter in the halls of the Capitol, he pointed to his eye and said, "I'm keeping my eye on you."

