

ETHICS REPORT:
CONGRESSMAN DENNIS REHBERG

May 10, 2012

Filed
Billings, MT
2012 May 10

Introduction.

During 12 years in Congress, Dennis Rehberg has never requested an independent ethics review of himself or his office. In fact, the only member of Congress who asks judges to conduct regular ethics reviews is Jon Tester

During his 12 years in Congress, however, Congressman Rehberg has been associated with numerous questionable donations, suspicious expenses and revolving-door relationships with lobbyists.

Because Congressman Rehberg has failed to hold himself accountable to Montana, here is a brief review of his questionable ethics record:



Montanans should give careful consideration to Rehberg's ethics record

1. Skirting Ethics Loopholes To Fly His Helicopter On Taxpayer Dime.



Rehberg preps a private helicopter for takeoff

Congressman Rehberg charged Montana taxpayers the cost of flying his personal helicopter around Montana. Rehberg insisted that he be reimbursed with taxpayer money for fuel, saying that he needed his helicopter to do his job.¹ Then Rehberg admitted he “forgets about work” while flying. Rehberg is still allowed to fly his helicopter due to a loophole in House ethics rules. These rules were meant to prohibit lawmakers from flying on private planes, but since it only applies to fixed-wing aircraft, Rehberg is able to fly his helicopter with no regard to House ethics rules.²

2. Rehberg's Office And K-Street: A Revolving Door.

Congressman Rehberg has let his office become a hot spot for political playmakers. In fact, eleven former employees of Rehberg's are currently lobbyists. Rehberg even has three former K-Street lobbyist on his personal staff.³ Rehberg also opposed legislation to extend the “Revolving Door” provision.⁴

¹ Helena Independent Record, 1/31/07

² Helena Independent Record, 1/31/07

³ Legistorm Pro

⁴ H.R. 4975, Roll Call Vote #119, 05/03/06

3. Quid Pro Quo With Corrupt Lobbyists.

Congressman Rehberg suggested Carter County, Mont., hire lobbyist Kevin Ring—a long-time associate of Jack Abramoff and a personal friend of Rehberg—to help secure taxpayer funding to pave Highway 323 in southeastern Montana.⁵ On the day Ring signed the contract with Carter County, Rehberg received thousands of dollars in campaign contributions from both Ring and his lobbying firm, Greenberg Traurig. Ring's illegal actions in securing the funding for Carter County were a factor in his arrest and indictments for conspiracy and fraud, for which he was found guilty and sentenced to 20 months in prison.⁶



Kevin Ring was sentenced to 20 months in jail after Rehberg helped him secure an earmark



It's disturbing to think that Congressman Rehberg may have engaged in a quid pro quo which resulted in Carter County losing thousands of dollars to Ring.⁷ Securing lucrative favors for corrupt friends in exchange for generous campaign contributions is truly the ultimate in Washington corruption, and unfortunately Rehberg may have willingly taken part.

Rehberg cuts the ribbon during the opening ceremony for Hwy 323

4. Rehberg Hid \$25,000 In Contributions From Registered Lobbyists.

Congressman Rehberg regularly calls for transparency in campaign donations, saying “every dime ought to be disclosed” and that contributions should be reported “within a 24-hour period.”⁸ But in 2011, Congressman Rehberg hid \$25,000 in campaign contributions from registered lobbyists. The Associated Press reported that many of Rehberg's unreported donors were “individuals who come from well-known Washington D.C. lobbying firms, including a policy adviser to former vice president Dick Cheney who now lobbies for Shell Oil. But the Rehberg campaign reported to federal election officials that it did not know the occupations of the donors, simply reporting that it was still working on finding the information.” Although Rehberg called for 24-hour reporting, he failed to submit his most recent fundraising report online, causing a delay in transparency.

⁵ [Missoulian](#), 10/9/05

⁶ U.S. Department of Justice, press release, [11/15/10](#)

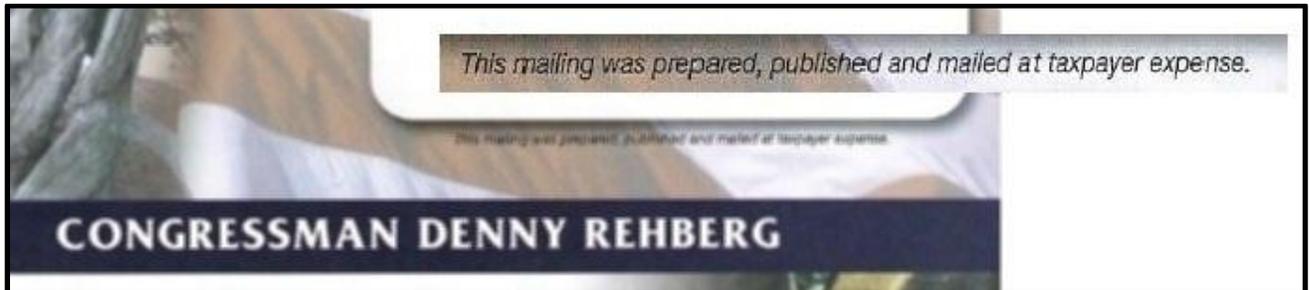
⁷ AP, 9/14/08

⁸ [Flathead Beacon](#), 01/24/12; [Voices of Montana](#), 05/04/12

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5. Promoting His Political Agenda With Taxpayer Dollars.

Congressman Rehberg has spent hundreds of thousands of taxpayer dollars to promote his political agenda.⁹ His taxpayer-funded mailers have contained blatantly political falsehoods meant to influence the electorate.¹⁰ As a career politician, Montanans expect Rehberg to be a responsible steward of taxpayer dollars. Unfortunately, he chooses to spend it on his own political campaigning. As of the end of 2011, Rehberg has spent a staggering \$320,000 on “official” taxpayer-funded mail.¹¹



Taxpayer funded mailer sent from Rehberg’s Congressional office in March 2012

Conclusion.

Whether it’s jetsetting around the world on luxury trips, doing favors for criminals, hiding campaign contributions or using his office for personal and political gain, Congressman Rehberg has fundamentally broken the trust that is necessary in an elected official. After 35 years as a politician, Congressman Dennis Rehberg believes he is no longer accountable to the people of Montana.

Clean Bill of Ethics:
DENIED

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⁹ Gannett News Service, 4/30/10

¹⁰ AP, 3/21/12

¹¹ House Statements of Disbursements, accessed [5/9/12](#)