

UNITED STATES OFFICE OF
GOVERNMENT ETHICS



January 4, 2018

The Honorable Joseph Crowley
United States House of Representatives
1035 Longworth House Office Bldg.
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Jackie Speier
United States House of Representatives
2465 Rayburn House Office Bldg.
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Representatives Crowley and Speier:

This letter responds to your letter dated December 13, 2017, encouraging the U.S. Office of Government Ethics (OGE) to investigate claims against the President of past, inappropriate sexual conduct.

At the outset, we agree that public officials, including those at the top levels of government such as the President, must be held to high standards of behavior. For this reason, OGE has consistently held that a President should conduct himself “as if” he or she was bound by the same conflict of interest laws and standards of conduct applicable to executive branch employees.

We also believe that it is critical for all leaders, including the President, to set an example of ethical behavior. That is why OGE has made it a point to encourage agency heads and senior leaders to exercise ethical leadership and to demonstrate their commitment through their behavior. Doing so is vital to maintaining the public’s trust in their government.

However, while we agree sexual harassment is an urgent issue that must be taken seriously, this issue is outside of OGE’s purview. OGE has no authority to either investigate the President or sexual misconduct allegations generally.

Sincerely,


David J. Apol
Acting Director

