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May 16, 2025

By: Email: conduct@mail.house.gov

Office of Congressional Conduct
U.S. House of Representatives
P.O. Box 895
Washington, DC 20515-0895

Re: Ethics Complaint Against Representatives Rob Menendez, Bonnie Watson Coleman, and LaMonica McIver for Alleged Misconduct During Altercation at ICE Detention Facility in Newark, New Jersey

Dear Members of the Office of Congressional Ethics:

Judicial Watch, a non-profit organization dedicated to promoting transparency, accountability, and integrity in government, submits this formal ethics complaint against Representatives Rob Menendez (NJ-08), Bonnie Watson Coleman (NJ-12), and LaMonica McIver (NJ-10) for their conduct during an altercation at the Delaney Hall Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) detention facility in Newark, New Jersey, on May 9, 2025. Based on credible reports, including statements from the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), video evidence, and media accounts, we allege that the Representatives' actions violated House ethics rules, federal law, and standards of conduct expected of Members of Congress.

Background

On May 9, 2025, Representatives Menendez, Watson Coleman, and McIver arrived unannounced at the Delaney Hall ICE detention facility, claiming to exercise congressional oversight authority. According to DHS, as a bus carrying detainees entered the facility's security gate, the Representatives, along with a group of protesters, "stormed the gate and broke into the detention facility," bypassing security protocols. DHS reported that Rep. LaMonica McIver assaulted a federal ICE officer, with body camera footage allegedly showing her "barreling unprovoked through law enforcement near the gate." The incident also involved the arrest of Newark Mayor Ras Baraka for trespassing, charged after reportedly ignoring warnings to leave the facility's premises.

The Representatives have disputed DHS's characterization, asserting they were exercising their legal right to conduct unannounced oversight visits under federal law and denying allegations of assault or improper entry. However, DHS maintains that the lawmakers' actions endangered law enforcement agents and detainees, describing the

incident as a “bizarre political stunt” and noting that a formal tour would have been facilitated had the Representatives requested one. DHS spokesperson Tricia McLaughlin further indicated that additional arrests of the Representatives remain “on the table,” citing evidence of assault against ICE officers.

Alleged Violations

We respectfully request that the Office of Congressional Ethics investigate the following potential violations of House Rules, the Code of Official Conduct, and federal law:

- **Conduct Unbecoming a Member of Congress (House Rule XXIII, Clause 1)**
House Rule XXIII, Clause 1, states that a Member “shall behave at all times in a manner that shall reflect creditably on the House.” The Representatives’ alleged actions—storming a secure federal facility, engaging in physical altercations with federal officers, and contributing to a chaotic scene that endangered law enforcement and detainees—appear to violate this standard. Specifically, DHS’s claim that Rep. McIver assaulted an ICE officer, supported by body camera footage, suggests conduct that undermines the dignity and integrity of the House. Even if the Representatives believed they were exercising oversight authority, their failure to coordinate with ICE officials and their alleged disregard for security protocols reflect poorly on their roles as public servants.
- **Potential Violation of Federal Law (18 U.S.C. § 111 – Assaulting a Federal Officer)**
DHS has accused Rep. McIver of assaulting an ICE officer, with video evidence purportedly showing her pushing past law enforcement personnel. Additionally, DHS alleges that all three Representatives engaged in actions that could constitute interference with federal operations. Such conduct may violate 18 U.S.C. § 111, which prohibits assaulting, resisting, or impeding federal officers in the performance of their duties. While the Representatives deny these allegations, the existence of body camera footage and DHS’s public statements warrant an investigation to determine whether their actions crossed legal boundaries.
- **Misuse of Congressional Oversight Authority**
While Members of Congress have the legal right to conduct unannounced oversight visits to ICE facilities, this authority does not grant license to disrupt operations, bypass security, or engage in physical confrontations. DHS reports that the Representatives failed to request a formal tour, which would have been accommodated, and instead rushed through security gates during a detainee

transfer, creating a dangerous situation. This conduct suggests a possible abuse of their oversight privileges for political purposes, potentially violating House ethics standards that require Members to act in good faith and within the bounds of their authority.

- **Endangering Public Safety**

The Representatives' actions reportedly jeopardized the safety of ICE agents, detainees, and protesters. DHS stated that their unauthorized entry "put the safety of our law enforcement agents and the detainees at risk." By contributing to a chaotic scene involving physical confrontations, the Representatives may have breached their duty to uphold public safety, a core expectation of elected officials. This is particularly concerning given the presence of a bus carrying detainees, which heightened the sensitivity of the situation.

Requested Action

Judicial Watch urges the Office of Congressional Ethics to conduct a thorough investigation into the conduct of Representatives Menendez, Watson Coleman, and McIver during the May 9, 2025, incident at the Delaney Hall ICE detention facility. We request that the Office:

Review all available evidence, including DHS body camera footage, witness statements, and communications between the Representatives and ICE officials.

- Issue a formal request to all involved agencies and individuals to preserve all relevant evidence, including surveillance video, body camera footage, internal communications, visitor logs, and official correspondence related to the incident.
- Review all available evidence, including DHS body camera footage, witness statements, and communications between the Representatives and ICE officials.
- Determine whether the Representatives' actions violated House Rule XXIII, federal law (e.g., 18 U.S.C. § 111), or other ethical standards.
- Assess whether the Representatives misused their oversight authority for political purposes, thereby undermining public trust in Congress.
- Recommend appropriate disciplinary measures, including but not limited to expulsion, censure, fines, and referral to law enforcement authorities, if violations are substantiated.

Conclusion

The conduct of Representatives Menendez, Watson Coleman, and McIver during the altercation at the Delaney Hall ICE facility raises serious questions about their adherence to House ethics rules, federal law, and the standards of conduct expected of Members of Congress. Their alleged actions not only disrupted a secure federal facility but also endangered law enforcement personnel and detainees, potentially for political gain. Judicial Watch respectfully requests that the Office of Congressional Ethics investigate these allegations to ensure accountability and uphold the integrity of the U.S. House of Representatives.

Should you require additional information or documentation, please contact Judicial Watch at (202) 646-5172 or via email at info@judicialwatch.org.

Sincerely,



Tom Fitton
President

cc: House Committee on Ethics, Uploaded to <https://ethics.house.gov/file-a-complaint/>