

Robert Walker Weighs in on the Rep. Weiner Scandal and Possible Ethics Investigation

The Hill, Politico, The Today Show
June 9, 2011

Wiley Rein's Robert Walker—an attorney in the Election Law & Government Ethics Practice and a former staff director of the House and Senate Ethics panels—was quoted discussing the latest developments in the Rep. Anthony Weiner (D-NY) scandal and the possibility of an ethics investigation into his conduct. Rep. Weiner, who in recent days has admitted to engaging in “inappropriate” conversations and relationships with several women, faces a potential investigation into whether he misused congressional resources to facilitate the relationships. However, election experts say that the ethics committee still has several pending matters before it, and any investigation into Rep. Weiner could be slow moving. “It’s not going to get resolved next week or next month,” Mr. Walker told *Politico*. “It’s got some difficulties inherent to it, but besides those, the committee itself has a kind of investigative backlog. It still has to deal with the Maxine Waters’ matter and how it’s going to resolve that. And there are other matters as well, specifically the Eric Massa matter, which has been apparently pending for some time but does not appear to have been resolved by the committee,” he added. “This is high profile, the Weiner matter, but even then it has to take its place in the queue.”

Mr. Walker also explained that the committee is not fully staffed, which could add to the delay. “I believe that the committee still remains below full staff level, including its investigative staff. That being said, here we are in June—I think it unlikely if the committee took this up now that it would resolve the matter before the end of the year,” he said to *The Hill*. “Nor do I think that it should be expected to resolve the matter before the end of the year. Six months

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in an ethics inquiry—that would be short, and that might not even be thorough. But that doesn’t mean that these matters should take forever or should take years,” he added.

Mr. Walker also appeared on *The Today Show* where he explained that the code of conduct for House Members requires that they conduct themselves in a manner that reflects credibly on the House. Over the years, this rule has been debated by members of the ethics committee as to whether it should apply to a Member’s personal conduct or only his or her professional behavior. “Were it purely personal conduct between consenting adults, that might be one thing,” Mr. Walker said to *The Hill*. “But now there are suggestions that official resources might have been used. And the pace at which information is coming out suggests that we may not know the whole story yet,” he concluded.