

Democratic Governors Association: GOP Rep. Mike Gallagher violates ethics rules with shady reimbursements for expensive meals

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For someone who says he wants to [drain the swamp](#), Rep. Mike Gallagher is knee-deep in the mud after [violating House ethics rules](#) by reimbursing his official Congressional staffer for non-travel-related campaign expenses.

Between August 2019 and December 2020, the likely WI GOP candidate for governor reimbursed a staffer for [\\$1,147 in campaign expenses](#).

Gallagher's campaign [reimbursed the aide](#) for \$243 in catering expenses at The Capitol Hill Club, a [GOP dining establishment](#) that serves the "nation's most influential people." The [reimbursement](#) also included \$278 for meeting expenses at The Brig, a Washington, D.C. [beer garden](#).

Congressional staffers are [forbidden](#) from making contributions to their bosses' campaigns, even if promptly reimbursed. The Gallagher campaign's suspicious spending is nothing new for the GOP. In 2019, Republican Rep. Bill Huizenga of Michigan was [exposed](#) for similar payments from staff.

Gallagher is "all talk and just a typical Washington politician," said Elena Kuhn, a Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee spokeswoman. "Gallagher must explain to Wisconsinites why his taxpayer-funded congressional staff are focused on illegally footing the bill for meals at exclusive D.C. political clubs."

Read more about Rep. Gallagher's shady ethics violations below:

Milwaukee Journal Sentinel: [Bice: U.S. Rep. Mike Gallagher says staffer erred by picking up \\$565 in campaign expenses](#)

Oops.

U.S. Rep. Mike Gallagher has been all about draining the swamp and changing the way members of Congress do business.

But the Allouez Republican's campaign may have violated a longstanding House ethics rule by reimbursing his chief of staff for covering various non-travel-related expenses — including catering, meeting and shipping costs — between August 2019 and December 2020. In all, the Gallagher aide paid for and was later reimbursed for \$1,147 in expenses by the Gallagher campaign, including \$565 in campaign costs unrelated to travel.

That's pretty small change, but congressional staffers are generally forbidden from making contributions to the campaigns of their boss, even if the staffers are promptly reimbursed.

Other members of Congress, including former Republican Rep. Jimmy Duncan of Tennessee and Republican Rep. Bill Huizenga of Michigan, have come under fire for similar payments from staff.

Told of the payments, Elena Kuhn, spokeswoman for the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee, said they show Gallagher is "all talk and just a typical Washington politician."

"Gallagher must explain to Wisconsinites why his taxpayer-funded congressional staff are focused on illegally footing the bill for meals at exclusive D.C. political clubs," Kuhn said.

Jordan Dunn, a spokesman for Gallagher, acknowledged the mistake.

"Upon realizing that a small number of campaign outlays were made by a staff member in error and reimbursed by the campaign, actions were taken to correct the matter immediately," Dunn said. "This was inadvertent and steps have been taken to ensure that these errors do not occur again."

Federal election records show that Gallagher's campaign reimbursed Taylor Andreae after he paid \$243 for catering expenses at The Capitol Hill Club and \$278

for meeting expenses at The Brig on Dec. 17, 2020. Andreae has been Gallagher's top congressional aide since November 2018.

The Capitol Hill Club is a GOP dining establishment that counts the "nation's most influential people" as its members, according to The Associated Press. The Brig is a Washington, D.C., beer garden that serves Bavarian fare and offers German and local drafts.

Andreae was also reimbursed after picking up \$44 for mailing expenses at FedEx, and an Uber and a cab ride earlier in the year.

Gallagher officials said those reimbursements were made in error and steps were taken to make sure they did not recur. For example, once Gallagher officials were told of the Capitol Hill Club charge, the campaign updated the credit card on file so Andreae would not be charged in the future.

Andreae was also reimbursed \$582 for travel costs by the Gallagher campaign during late 2019. Gallagher said it believes those payments are permissible under House ethics rules.