



U.S. Department of Justice

Criminal Division

Washington, D.C. 20530

JUL 16 2009

Ms. Melanie Sloan
Executive Director
Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington
1400 Eye Street, NW, Suite 450
Washington, DC 20005

Dear Ms. Sloan:

This responds to your letter of July 9, 2009, addressed to Attorney General Eric Holder, regarding payments from United States Senator John Ensign to a former employee. You request that the Department of Justice investigate whether Senator Ensign engaged in criminal violations of the federal campaign finance laws in connection with his severance payments to Cynthia Hampton, a former employee of his campaign committee and political action committee. You also advise that you have filed complaints regarding this matter with the United States Senate Select Committee on Ethics and the Federal Election Commission.

If you believe that you have evidence of a violation of federal criminal law, you should provide that information to the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI). The FBI is the investigative arm of the Department of Justice and will determine whether a federal investigation may be warranted. If appropriate, the FBI will refer the matter to a United States Attorney or the Criminal Division for a final determination regarding legal action. The appropriate FBI office for this matter is located at 601 4th Street, NW, Washington, DC 20535, telephone number (202) 278-2000.

We appreciate your writing to express your concerns and hope that this information will be of assistance.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "William M. Welch II".

William M. Welch II
Chief
Public Integrity Section