

In 2020, the Office of Congressional Ethics found that Sanford Bishop misspent campaign funds on his own personal expenses such as golf trips, meals, travel, tuition, fuel and other expenses. He may have also used taxpayer money to pay for a Christmas party at his country club.

BACKUP:

In 2020, the Office of Congressional Ethics found that Bishop misspent campaign and tax dollars on parties, fuel, golf, travel, tuition, meals and entertainment:

***Editor's Note:** The Office of Congressional Ethics (OCE) is "an independent, non-partisan entity charged with reviewing allegations of misconduct against Members, officers, and staff of the United States House of Representatives." The OCE is responsible for referring investigations to the House Ethics Committee for further review.*

- **In 2020, the Office of Congressional Ethics found that Bishop's campaign committee had "misspent campaign funds on various personal expenses," including fuel, golf, meals, and tuition, among other expenses.** "The OCE determined that Rep. Bishop and his campaign committee misspent campaign funds on various personal expenses. Specifically, the OCE found evidence that the Sanford Bishop for Congress campaign committee likely spent tens of thousands of dollars in campaign funds on fuel, golf expenses, meals, travel, tuition, and entertainment that likely were personal in nature." ("Review No. 19-3824," [Office Of Congressional Ethics](#), 1/30/20)
- **Bishop allegedly misspent "more than \$90,000 in official funds on personal expenses, including 'fuel, golf expenses, meals, travel, tuition and entertainment.'"** "Democratic Rep. Sanford Bishop of Georgia allegedly improperly spent more than \$90,000 in official funds and campaign funds on personal expenses, including 'fuel, golf expenses, meals, travel, tuition and entertainment,' according to a newly released report from the Office of Congressional Ethics." (John Bresnahan, "Rep. Sanford Bishop Allegedly Misused More Than \$90,000 In Campaign And Official Funds," [Politico](#), 7/31/20)
 - **Sanford Bishop's campaign committee has spent over \$213,000 on gas at a number of gas stations.** "The Office of Congressional Ethics determined Bishop – along with his wife, Vivian Creighton Bishop, and daughter – may have used campaign funds to pay for personal fuel charges. Vivian would routinely fill her vehicle using campaign funds and did not log her campaign mileage, the OCE found. Since 2003, Bishop's campaign committee has spent over \$213,000 on gas including at Shell, BP, Chevron, Citgo and Exxon, FEC filings show." (Chris Marquette, "Spending on Christmas parties among allegations in ethics report on Sanford Bishop," [Roll Call](#), 7/31/2020)
 - **HEADLINE: "Top Democrat spends campaign cash at private golf club despite Ethics investigation."** (Andrew Kerr, "Top Democrat spends campaign cash at private golf club despite Ethics investigation," [Washington Examiner](#), 7/21/2022)

Top Democrat spends campaign cash at private golf club despite Ethics investigation

by Andrew Kerr, Investigative Reporter | 📧 | July 21, 2022 02:40 PM

(Andrew Kerr, "Top Democrat spends campaign cash at private golf club despite Ethics investigation," [Washington Examiner](#), 7/21/2022)

- **Sanford Bishop may have spent Members' Representational Allowance funds on a joint Christmas party, hosted by him and his wife at his country club.** "Bishop may have misspent over \$16,000 in MRA funds on joint annual holiday parties held at Green Island Country Club, the OCE report states. 'The OCE found evidence suggesting that these gatherings were annual holiday celebrations thrown by Rep. Bishop and his wife for their respective staffs,' the report states. Bishop's wife, Vivian, is the municipal court clerk for Columbus, Georgia and has a staff of around 20 people. Together, from 2015 to 2018, the couple held an annual Christmas party at Green Island Country Club using Bishop's Members' Representational Allowance." (Chris Marquette, "Spending on Christmas parties among allegations in ethics report on Sanford Bishop," [Roll Call](#), 7/31/2020)
 - **The Office of Congressional Ethics found that either Bishop or his wife asked Green Island Country Club to label an invoice as 'constituent meetings' despite a coordinator at the country club who would describe the events as 'joint staff Christmas part[ies].'** "When they got the initial copies of the bills, either Bishop or his wife called and asked the country club to label the food invoice as a 'constituents meeting,' the OCE report states. 'When asked about these annual gatherings, Rep. Bishop denied that they were holiday gatherings and insisted that they were end of the year 'constituent meetings,' the OCE found. However the country club's event coordinator described the events as 'joint staff Christmas part[ies].'" (Chris Marquette, "Spending on Christmas parties among allegations in ethics report on Sanford Bishop," [Roll Call](#), 7/31/2020)
 - **Sanford Bishop and his wife's joint Christmas parties featured a saxophonist and disk jockey equipment.** "Further, the Georgia Democrat also may have spent more than \$16,000 in taxpayer money for joint Christmas parties – featuring a saxophonist and DJ equipment – with his congressional staff and his wife's employees, according to an Office of Congressional Ethics report released Friday." (Chris Marquette, "Spending On Christmas Parties Among Allegations In Ethics Report On Sanford Bishop," [Roll Call](#), 7/31/20)
 - **Sanford Bishop repaid the U.S. Treasury for \$16,088 for using taxpayer money to pay for his Christmas parties.** "Bishop, who was first elected to Congress in 1992, admitted wrongdoing during interviews with OCE investigators. He reimbursed his campaign \$66,320 in July 2020, according to Federal Election

Commission records. That same month, he also reimbursed the U.S. Treasury \$16,088 for his improper use of taxpayer funds to host private Christmas parties. However, Bishop has not been subjected to any fines or faced any penalties for misusing campaign and taxpayer funds.” (Andrew Kerr, “Top Democrat spends campaign cash at private golf club despite Ethics investigation,” [The Washington Examiner](#), 7/21/2022)

The Office of Congressional Ethics referred the Sanford Bishop case to the House Ethics Committee for further review:

Editor’s Note: The House Committee on Ethics and the Committee on Ethics of the House of Representatives are the same entity.

- **On February 10, 2020, the Office of Congressional Ethics referred their case on Sanford Bishop to the Committee on Ethics of the United States House of Representatives.** “On February 10, 2020, the Office of Congressional Ethics transmitted a referral to the Committee on Ethics of the United States House of Representatives regarding Rep. Sanford Bishop.” (Office of Congressional Ethics, [OCE Referral Regarding Rep. Sanford Bishop](#), 7/31/2020)
- **On July 31, 2020, the House Ethics Committee announced it was further investigating the case on Sanford Bishop, as referred to them by the OCE.** “On February 10, 2020, the Committee received a referral from the Office of Congressional Ethics (OCE) regarding Representative Sanford Bishop. Pursuant to House Rule XI, clause 3(b)(8)(A), and Committee Rules 17A(b)(1)(A) and 17A(c)(1), and 17A(j) the Chairman and Ranking Member jointly decided on June 16, 2020, to extend the Committee’s review of the matter. In order to gather additional information necessary to complete its review, the Committee will review the matter pursuant to Committee Rule 18(a). The Committee notes that the mere fact of conducting further review of a referral, and any mandatory disclosure of such further review, does not itself indicate that any violation has occurred, or reflect any judgment on behalf of the Committee.” (Committee on Ethics, [Statement of the Chairman and Ranking Member of the Committee on Ethics Regarding Representative Sanford Bishop, Jr.](#), 7/31/2020)

Editor’s Note: The House Ethics Committee has not released a statement on Sanford Bishop’s case since July 31, 2020.