

A Senate staffer may have violated rules when he gave sensitive information to a prominent member of the Russia collusion hoax and received a free report in return, says a letter from Empower Oversight to the Senate Select Committee on Ethics.

In the [letter](#), Empower Oversight, a nonprofit anti-corruption and independent oversight group, implored the select committee to investigate whether Senate Armed Services Committee members or staff violated the “Gift Rule” by acquiring investigative research services into the Alfa Bank “[covert server](#)” allegations for free.

The “Gift Rule” prohibits providing free professional services or other gratuities that constitute a gift to Senate employees exceeding \$100 annually. Gifts under \$50 annually are allowed as long as they do not come from a registered lobbyist, foreign agent, or private entity.

The letter says that according to recent court filings, in 2017, a staffer of the Armed Services Committee provided The Democracy Integrity Project, which is heavily linked to the bogus “Steele dossier,” and Daniel J. Jones with information the committee had obtained regarding “DNS look-ups” between servers at the Moscow-headquartered Alfa Bank and Trump Organization servers.

According to that same filing, the letter says, The Democracy Integrity Project’s research involved hiring “computer science” experts at no cost to the committee and evaluating data for alleged connections between Trump and Russia. The “free” research continued for more than a year.

Watchdog group calling on Senate Ethics to investigate whether Senate Democratic staffers violated ethics rules by having Soros-funded operative investigate the Alfa-Trump allegations <https://t.co/WqQxv7RBDa>

— Chuck Ross (@ChuckRossDC) [October 11, 2021](#)

Jason Foster, founder and president of Empower Oversight and former chief investigative counsel to the Senate Judiciary Committee, said the filing raises suspicion.

“It’s not unusual for outside groups to offer information to congressional investigators to influence a committee’s inquiry, but what happened here looks very different,” Foster said.

“According to the court filing, it looks more like an outside group paid for a year’s worth of expert analysis at the committee’s request and provided a comprehensive nonpublic report at no charge — like what a paid outside contractor might normally do. Only here, there’s less transparency since no committee funds were involved, and it’s unclear which other Members or staff of the committee were even aware of the arrangement,” Foster continued. “That’s why the Ethics Committee should get the facts and get to the bottom of it.”

The narrative of the alleged connection between the Russian Bank and the Trump Organization servers began in 2016 with a [couple](#) of [articles](#) published in Slate Magazine, which reported that intelligence officials possessed information indicating a back “channel of communication” between the two entities.

On Sept. 16, Special Counsel John Durham announced that Hillary Clinton campaign [attorney](#) Michael Sussmann had been indicted by the grand jury for allegedly lying to the FBI regarding his efforts to advance the Alfa Bank-Trump Organization claims, which the FBI also debunked and Special Counsel Robert Mueller believed to be “[not true](#).”

It remains unclear whether that data described in Durham’s indictment is the same data the committee obtained and gave to Jones and The Democracy Integrity Project for analysis.

Because of these facts, Empower Oversight said in its letter that “it is important for the Senate and the public to have a more complete understanding of whether the committee’s activities constituted ‘improper conduct which may reflect upon the Senate’ or violated any Senate rules.”

If the committee concludes that the facts in the letter do not constitute a violation of Senate rules, then Empower Oversight says clarifying guidance must be issued to prevent similar suspicions being raised in the future.

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Source: [Anti-Corruption Group Seeks Senate Ethics Probe Of Debunked Alfa Bank-Trump Server Research](#)