

Mr. Omar Ashmawy
Staff Director & Chief Counsel
Office of Congressional Conduct
U.S. House of Representatives
P.O. Box 895
Washington, D.C. 20515-0895

RE: Complaint and Request for Investigation into Representative Ashley Hinson (IA-02) for use of Official Position and Undisclosed Conflicts of Interest Arising from Spouse's Role at Lobbying Organization

Dear Mr. Ashmawy,

I write to request that the Office of Congressional Conduct ("OCC") immediately investigate Representative Ashley Hinson of Iowa's 2nd Congressional District for a potential violation of House Rules, the House Ethics Manual, and/or federal conflict-of-interest requirements in connection with her husband's newly discovered role as the Government Affairs Chair for the Independent Insurance Agents of Iowa. Specifically, it appears that Rep. Hinson has provided her husband and his professional association with special access to her, and other congressional offices, in violation of House standards of conduct.

I respectfully request that you commence an immediate investigation into this matter to determine whether, and to what extent, Rep. Hinson has violated House Rules, the House Ethics Manual, and clear directives from the U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Ethics. As a member of the House Committee on Ethics, Hinson especially should be held to the highest ethical standard.

I. Factual Background

Representative Ashley Hinson has served in Congress since 2021 and currently represents Iowa's 2nd Congressional District.¹ Hinson was appointed to the House Committee on Ethics on March 18, 2025, saying, "Every member of Congress – both Republican and Democrat – should be held to the highest ethical standards and serve with integrity. Since coming to Congress, I have worked to uphold the principles of public service through transparency and accountability, and I look forward to furthering my efforts to restore Americans' trust in this institution."²

¹ <https://www.congress.gov/member/ashley-hinson/H001091>

² <https://hinson.house.gov/media/press-releases/rep-hinson-serve-house-committee-ethics>

According to reporting published by NOTUS / The Washington Sun on August 27, 2026³:

- A. Representative Hinson's husband, Matt Arenholz, holds a "government affairs post at a leading insurance industry lobbying group," chairing the Government Affairs Committee at the Independent Insurance Agents of Iowa.
- B. The Independent Insurance Agents of Iowa is the state branch of the Independent Insurance Agents & Brokers of America, "an expansive national insurance trade association and lobbying group."
- C. Archived material from the Independent Insurance Agents of Iowa's website shows Arenholz took on the government affairs role with the group in 2019, two years prior to Representative Hinson's service in the United States House of Representatives.
- D. Representative Hinson has never disclosed her husband's association with the Independent Insurance Agents of Iowa despite her husband's work lobbying her, her office, and the Iowa delegation.
- E. Representative Hinson's husband "helped arrange meetings with Hinson and other Iowa congressional delegation members."
- F. Tom O'Meara, the Independent Insurance Agents of Iowa's Chief Executive Officer, "credited Arenholz for helping them gain access to Hinson and other Iowa lawmakers," writing in a magazine published by the group in 2023, "Matt was able to arrange a meeting with all four of our [House] congressional members in one large conference room."
- G. O'Meara specifically touted Arenholz's marriage to Hinson in the 2023 magazine article as a reason his state chapter was able to secure meetings with every member of the Iowa delegation, noting the surprise other chapters expressed regarding the Iowa group's lobbying success, "I was given several strange looks when I responded that we met with all six of ours from Iowa."
- H. The Independent Insurance Agents & Brokers of America has spent more than \$5 million lobbying the federal government since Hinson was elected in 2020, according to Lobbying Disclosure Act reports.

According to Representative Hinson's Financial Disclosure Report filed on August 13, 2026⁴:

- A. Arenholz retains up to \$5,000,000 in High Street Insurance Partners privately held stock.

³https://www.washingtonsun.com/congress/ashley-hinson-husband-iowa-insurance?redirected=notus_org

⁴ https://disclosures-clerk.house.gov/public_disc/financial-pdfs/2025/10076278.pdf

- B. The aforementioned insurance stock resulted in up to \$1,000,000 in dividends reported as income in 2025.
- C. Arenholz's position as the Government Affairs Chair at the Independent Insurance Agents of Iowa is not disclosed.

According to Representative Hinson's FEC reports, the Independent Insurance Agents & Brokers' national and Iowa PACs and the Council of Insurance Agents & Brokers PAC, which represents her insurance stock holdings⁵, contributed nearly \$140,000 to her campaigns:⁶⁷

- A. Between 2019 and 2025, Representative Hinson, including her Leadership PAC and Victory Committee, accepted a total of \$67,500 from the Independent Insurance Agents & Brokers of America PAC.
- B. Between 2019 and 2025, Representative Hinson, including her Leadership PAC and Victory Committee, accepted a total of \$67,500 from the Council of Insurance Agents & Brokers PAC.
- C. In September 2024, the Council of Insurance Agents & Brokers listed High Street Insurance Partners as a Platinum Partner.

These facts raise serious questions about whether Representative Hinson's official actions were, or reasonably appeared to be, influenced by her spouse's financial relationship and/or official position with a regulated industry and lobbying group, and whether that relationship was adequately disclosed as required by the Ethics in Government Act, House Rules, and directives from the U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Ethics.

II. Legal Analysis

The House Code of Official Conduct⁸ prohibits a Member from receiving any compensation, or allowing any compensation to accrue to the Member's beneficial interest, from any source as a result of an improper exercise of official influence. Moreover, the Code of Ethics for Government Service, ¶15,⁹ provides that officials may not accept benefits for themselves or

⁵<https://www.ciab.com/resources/news-release-the-council-announces-3-new-domestic-member-firms-ahead-of-its-2024-insurance-leadership-forum/>

⁶https://www.fec.gov/data/receipts/?data_type=processed&committee_id=C00706267&committee_id=C00718221&committee_id=C00762328&contributor_name=C00022343

⁷https://www.fec.gov/data/receipts/?data_type=processed&committee_id=C00706267&committee_id=C00718221&committee_id=C00762328&contributor_name=C00039578

⁸ House Rule XXIII, cl.

⁹ House Ethics Manual Code of Ethics for Government Service

<https://wordpress-1275988-6249768.cloudwaysapps.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/Dec-2022-House-Ethics-Manual-website-version.pdf>

their families “under circumstances which might be construed by reasonable persons as influencing the performance” of official duties.

The House Ethics Manual¹⁰ recognizes that “[t]he income received by a spouse from employment usually accrues, albeit indirectly, to a Member’s interest,” and notes that these provisions are triggered if “a Member or staff person exerts influence or performs official acts in order to obtain compensation for, or as a result of compensation paid to, his or her spouse.” It appears that Rep. Hinson provided special access to a trade association in which her husband participates, for the benefit of his business interests – which would ultimately benefit her, as well.

Further, the Code of Ethics for Government Service, ¶5, prohibits a government official from “discriminat[ing] unfairly by the dispensing of special favors or privileges to anyone, whether for remuneration or not.” Moreover, Members may not use congressional resources, such as staff time, “on behalf of any private enterprise, including a spouse’s professional activities.” House Ethics Manual at 254. Again, Hinson appears to have violated these provisions by granting special favors to her husband, including having her staff set up meetings for her husband’s association with other members of the Iowa congressional delegation.

III. Request for Action

I respectfully request that you commence an immediate investigation into this matter. Immediate action is necessary to ensure Rep. Hinson complies with House Rules, the House Ethics Manual, and guidance from the Committee on Ethics, on which Rep. Hinson sits.

In accordance with 18 U.S.C. § 1001, I affirm that, to the best of my knowledge and ability, all evidence submitted was not obtained in violation of any rule, law, or regulation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "B. M. Lemek".

Brian Lemek
Defend The Vote
Executive Director

¹⁰ House Ethics Manual
<https://wordpress-1275988-6249768.cloudwaysapps.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/Dec-2022-House-Ethics-Manual-website-version.pdf>