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Description

In less than four years, House members wrote nearly 20,000 bad checks totaling almost $11 million. Now the House Ethics Committee plans to name the 19 worst offenders in the check bouncing scandal.

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"Ethics Committee to Name Worst Offenders in House Banking Scandal." Henry Champ, correspondent. 


**APA**


**CHICAGO MANUAL OF STYLE**


**Transcript**

Ethics Committee to Name Worst Offenders in House Banking Scandal

GARRICK UTLEY, anchor:

Take a moment this evening and imagine that you are a member of the US Congress and you used to write checks on the House of Representatives Bank and some of them bounced. You thought no one would mind, but they did. Now your name may be released to the public, to the voters back home. Are you worried? You bet. Here's Henry Champ.

HENRY CHAMP, reporting:

The magnitude of abuse is staggering. In just 39 months House members wrote nearly 20,000 bad checks totaling almost $11 million. Once the best of perks, the House Bank was shut down after 296 current members were discovered to have bounced at least one check. Some were simple mistakes, but not all. Yet the Ethics Committee plans to reveal the names of only 19 of the worst offenders, those who bounced checks for amounts bigger than their monthly salaries on at least eight occasions. That standard ignores one member who bounced 800 checks written for smaller amounts and some members who were overdrawn by more than $100,000. Immediately there were charges of cover-up.

Mr. JON KYL: That is something that I cannot defend. I can't defend it to my constituents.

CHAMP: The pressure for full disclosure is growing despite the high stakes.

Representative GINGRICH: I think when you go back home and you try to explain...

Off-screen voice, “Would...

Representative GINGRICH: …this kind of a scandal, if you are personally involved on this scale...

Off-screen voice, “Well, you--well, you can...

Representative GINGRICH: …it's almost impossible.

CHAMP: Even senators who are not involved worry about the backlash.

Senator GEORGE MITCHELL: The traditional American skepticism about politicians has now become widespread distrust and mistrust.
CHAMP: It cost one million dollars a year in taxpayers' money to run that bank. Many political experts are now saying full disclosure could cost 50 members their jobs in this fall's election. Henry Champ, NBC News, Washington.