



Written by [R. Cort Kirkwood](#) on June 18, 2021

Clyde, Gohmert Sue Over Screening. Claim: House Sergeant-at-arms Targets Republicans

Two GOP congressmen have filed a lawsuit against the House of Representatives' sergeant-at-arms and chief administrator for enforcing a chamber rule only against Republicans, and then seizing salaries and imposing ridiculous fines.

Filed by Representatives [Andrew Clyde](#) of Georgia and [Louie Gohmert](#) of Texas on June 13, the lawsuit accuses the two House bureaucrats of selective security screening on entering the House chamber. Failure to be screened is punishable with a fine. But only Republicans, the lawsuit alleges, have suffered the penalty.



Rep. Andrew Clyde (right) with his wife Jennifer and Rep. Louie Gohmert (AP Images)

As well, the screening has caused congressmen to miss votes, and so it trespasses the Constitution, Clyde and Gohmert argue.

Big Fines

Passed on February 2, House Rule 73 requires congressmen to be screened as they enter the chamber, and imposes a \$5,000 fine on congressmen who aren't. Subsequent violations are \$10,000.

Clyde and Gohmert say Sergeant-at-Arms William Walker and House Chief Administrator Catherine Szpindor are targeting Republicans while permitting Democrats to skate free.

On February 3, Clyde entered the chamber without a screening, the [lawsuit alleges](#). On February 5, he passed through the magnetometer as he should have, but did not stop for a hand-screening after his cell phone triggered the standing machine's alarm. The House fined him \$15,000 for the two infractions.

Gohmert had similar trouble, the lawsuit alleges, but his situation is even more ridiculous.

After Gohmert was screened "without incident" on February 3, he left the Chamber and went to a men's restroom through the Speaker's Lobby. The entrance to the restroom "is adjacent to the Speaker's Lobby — just feet from a security post. On that occasion, security personnel were present but did not request Congressman Gohmert to resubmit to screening prior to re-entering the House Chamber."

Next day, Gohmert did the same thing. He went to the men's room via the Speaker's lobby. On returning to the House Chamber, security personnel acted differently:

[They] requested that Congressman Gohmert submit to another screening using a hand-held wand; however, Gohmert informed them that he had already been screened, and proceeded back into the House Chamber.

Next day, Gohmert found out he owed \$5,000.



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All Congressmen Are Equal, But Some Are More Equal Than Others

The screening and fines would be bad enough if they were applied to all members. But they aren't. Democrats do what they want.

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi and Representatives Maxine Waters and Jamie Raskin violated the rule, the [lawsuit alleges](#).

- Pelosi waltzed past the magnetometer on February 4, but security officers “made no effort to force her to be screened or to restrain her from entering the chamber.”
- Waters set off a magnetometer, but officers “waved Congresswoman Waters on without further screening.”
- Raskin rushed past security officers after he set off the magnetometer.

When Democrat Nydia Velazquez set off the magnetometer, she too kept walking until a congressman next in line called her on it.

Yet the Democrat rule-breakers went unpunished.

No Vote for You

If all that weren't enough, the lawsuit alleges, the rule causes congressmen to miss votes.

Clyde missed a vote after his phone set off a magnetometer and had to be rescreened:

Upon finally being approved to enter the House Chamber. Congressman Clyde rushed to the electronic voting device. but the voting system was shut down just prior to him being able to press the voting button, and he thus missed the opportunity to vote.

Five other members have missed votes. Two more paid a fine rather than miss a vote.

Constitutional Violation

Aside from violating the [27th Amendment](#) to the Constitution, which forbids reducing a congressman's salary, which the hefty fines certainly do, the House rule violates [Article 1 Section 6](#).

It says a congressman “shall in all cases, except treason, felony and breach of the peace, be privileged from arrest during their attendance at the session of their respective Houses, and in going to and returning from the same.”

“The installation of magnetometers at the House Chamber door and the charging of a fine is a blatant attempt to bully House Members and disrupt good order for the purpose of political ‘optics,’” [Gohmert said](#):

On February 24, 2021, the Acting Chief of the U.S. Capitol Police, Yogananda Pittman, advised the Republican House Members' conference meeting stating twice that there was no intelligence from any source that any Member of the House of Representatives was a threat to any other Member of the House.

Further, the aggressive fines are not being enforced against Democrats. The fines are either dropped or never even assessed when the Speaker and other Democrats blow through the magnetometers. She has allowed no citations, no referrals to the House Ethics Committee, and no fines for her own non-compliance. There is only arbitrary and capricious



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enforcement against Republicans.

Former Virginia Attorney General [Ken Cuccinelli](#) is one of the attorneys for Clyde and Gohmert.

Hat tip: [The Daily Caller](#)



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