



Written by [Brian Koenig](#) on July 25, 2011

## Rep. David Wu Sex Scandal a Diversion From Debt Talks?

Another political sex scandal has surfaced, as U.S. Rep. David Wu (D-Ore., left), has been exposed for indulging in illicit relations with an unidentified 18-year-old woman, only a few weeks after Rep. Anthony Weiner was caught sending lewd photos to young women on Twitter ? and only a week before the U.S. default deadline.



According to [The Oregonian](#), the incident occurred last November, and the woman is the daughter of one of Wu's longtime friends. Wu's victim was reported to be "distraught" and "breathing heavily" when she called his Portland office this spring, accusing him of an aggressive and "unwanted sexual encounter." Wu acknowledged the incident, but insisted that the encounter was consensual. "This is very serious, and I have absolutely no desire to bring unwanted publicity, attention or stress to a young woman and her family," the Congressman said.

Wu claims his behavior was a culmination of mental health problems in 2008, stemming from marital issues and an eventual separation from his wife. But troubling behavior is nothing new for the Congressman, as his actions have reportedly been so bizarre at times that aides have had to cancel meetings and public appearances.

*Politico* [reports](#):

This episode is the latest in a long list of troubling incidents for Wu, including a previous allegation of sexual assault lodged against him by a former girlfriend when they were both attending Stanford University in 1976. Wu was not charged with a crime, but he was made to see a counselor and was disciplined by the university.

This incident was reported by *The Oregonian* shortly before the 2004 elections. Wu admitted to "inexcusable behavior on my part" when confronted about the allegations.

"As a 21-year-old, I hurt someone I cared very much about. I take full responsibility for my actions and I am very sorry," Wu said in a statement to *The Oregonian*. "This single event forever changed my life and the person that I have become."

Shortly before the 2010 elections, Wu began behaving erratically, according to *The Oregonian* and other news outlets. Wu sent a bizarre picture of himself in a tiger costume to his staffers, and some of them urged him to seek psychiatric help. More than a half dozen staffers and campaign consultants quit as Wu bombarded them with troubling phone calls and emails.



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Naturally, calls for Wu's resignation are surfacing, as State Rep. Brad Witt, who is running against Wu in the Democratic primary next spring, [commented](#), "I'm saddened to hear this news. David owes the citizens he represents a detailed explanation. If this accusation proves to be true, it's time for David Wu to resign and get the help he needs." Labor Commissioner Brad Avakian, another one of Wu's spring opponents, suggested, "I think any 56-year-old man, especially a 56-year-old Congressman, that asserts himself like this on an 18-year-old girl, has got no business serving Congress. There is nothing that can be explained that makes this situation right. He's got to resign."

Among other senior Democratic leaders in Washington, House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi spoke with Wu by telephone on Saturday, but later declined to say whether her colleague should resign. "I don't have any comment on that at this time," she [told](#) reporters. "I just really don't know that much about it; I heard that there was some article in the paper." Pelosi assured reporters that she would make a statement on the subject at a later date, but that "right now, we're so completely, totally immersed" in debt-limit negotiations.

Indeed, the fiscal shape of the United States takes precedence, but undoubtedly, Wu's behavior will generate hot media coverage over the next few weeks, and the looming debate over his resignation will likely take a front row seat right next to the August 2 debt limit deadline.



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