

# Employee Post-Travel Disclosure of Travel Expenses

Date/Time Stamp:  
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2018 JUN 19 PM 1:28

**Post-Travel Filing Instructions:** Complete this form within **30 days** of returning from travel. Submit all forms to the **Office of Public Records in 232 Hart Building**.

In compliance with Rule 35.2(a) and (c), I make the following disclosures with respect to travel expenses that have been or will be reimbursed/paid for me. I also certify that I have attached:

- ☒ The **original** *Employee Pre-Travel Authorization* (Form RE-1), **AND**  
☒ A **copy** of the *Private Sponsor Travel Certification Form* with all attachments (itinerary, invitee list, etc.)

Private Sponsor(s) (list all): Japan Center for International Exchange

Travel date(s): May 26 to June 2, 2018

Name of accompanying family member (if any): n/a

Relationship to Traveler: ☐ Spouse ☐ Child

IF THE COST OF LODGING **DID NOT INCREASE** DUE TO THE ACCOMPANYING SPOUSE OR DEPENDENT CHILD, ONLY INCLUDE LODGING COSTS IN EMPLOYEE EXPENSES. (Attach additional pages if necessary.)

## Expenses for Employee:

	Transportation Expenses	Lodging Expenses	Meal Expenses	Other Expenses (Amount & Description)
<input type="checkbox"/> Good Faith Estimate				
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Actual Amount	\$3,231.53	\$1,146.76	\$536.10	None

## Expenses for Accompanying Spouse or Dependent Child (if applicable):

	Transportation Expenses	Lodging Expenses	Meal Expenses	Other Expenses (Amount & Description)
<input type="checkbox"/> Good Faith Estimate				
<input type="checkbox"/> Actual Amount	None	None	None	None

Provide a description of all meetings and events attended. See Senate Rule 35.2(c)(6). (Attach additional pages if necessary.): Attended various meeting with leading policy experts on US-Asia relations and high-level

government, civil society and private sector leaders

6/19/2018  
(Date)

Mary Beth Vrabec  
(Printed name of traveler)

Mary Beth Vrabec  
(Signature of traveler)

## TO BE COMPLETED BY SUPERVISING MEMBER/OFFICER:

I have made a determination that the expenses set out above in connections with travel described in the *Employee Pre-Travel Authorization* form, are necessary transportation, lodging, and related expenses as defined in Rule 35.

6/19/18  
(Date)

Ron Wyzek  
(Signature of Supervising Senator/Officer)

copy

Date/Time Stamp:

## EMPLOYEE PRE-TRAVEL AUTHORIZATION

**Pre-Travel Filing Instructions:** Complete and submit this form at least 30 days prior to the travel departure date to the **Select Committee on Ethics in SH-220**. Incomplete and late travel submissions will **not** be considered or approved. This form **must** be typed and is available as a fillable PDF on the Committee's website at [ethics.senate.gov](http://ethics.senate.gov). Retain a copy of your entire pre-travel submission for your required post-travel disclosure.

Name of Traveler: Mary Beth Vrabel

Employing Office/Committee: Senate Finance Committee

Private Sponsor(s) (list all): Japan Center for International Exchange

Travel date(s): May 26, 2018 through June 2, 2018

*Note: If you plan to extend the trip for any reason you **must** notify the Committee.*

Destination(s): Japan: Tokyo & Kyoto

Explain how this trip is specifically connected to the traveler's official or representational duties:

In addition to sessions on Japan's governmental structure and policymaking, this trip will include a briefing on Japan's health care system and how Japan is addressing issues such as containing medical costs, dealing with an aging population, and maintaining quality of service. As Senior Health Counsel for the Senate Finance Committee, I focus on issues related to Medicare. As the Medicare program faces many of the same issues faced by Japan's health care system, understanding how policymakers in Japan are addressing those issues would inform my work developing and analyzing policies to strengthen the Medicare program.

Name of accompanying family member (if any): N/A

Relationship to Employee: ☐ Spouse ☐ Child

I certify that the information contained in this form is true, complete and correct to the best of my knowledge:

4/26/2018  
(Date)

Mary Beth Vrabel  
(Signature of Employee)

TO BE COMPLETED BY SUPERVISING SENATOR/OFFICER (President of the Senate, Secretary of the Senate, Sergeant at Arms, Secretary for the Majority, Secretary for the Minority, and Chaplain):

I, \_\_\_\_\_ hereby authorize \_\_\_\_\_  
(Print Senator's/Officer's Name) (Print Traveler's Name)

an employee under my direct supervision, to accept payment or reimbursement for necessary transportation, lodging, and related expenses for travel to the event described above. I have determined that this travel is in connection with his or her duties as a Senate employee or an officeholder, and will not create the appearance that he or she is using public office for private gain.

I have also determined that the attendance of the employee's spouse or child is appropriate to assist in the representation of the Senate. (signify "yes" by checking box) ☐

4/26/18  
(Date)

Ron Wyden  
(Signature of Supervising Senator/Officer)





135 West 29th Street, Suite 303, New York, NY 10001  
Tel: (212) 679-4130 Fax: (212) 679-8410  
URL: <http://www.jcie.org>

**Ms. Beth Vrabel  
Senior Health Counsel  
U.S. Senate Committee on Finance  
219 Dirksen Senate Office Building,  
Washington, DC 20510**


It is with great pleasure that I officially invite you to participate in the Japan Center for International Exchange's 2018 US Congressional Staff Exchange Program in Japan. This intensive weeklong study program will be held from May 27– June 2, and it will involve meetings with high-level government, civil society, and private sector leaders as well as briefings from leading policy experts in Japan.

We ask that participants arrive in Tokyo on Sunday, May 27, which requires departing from the United States on Saturday, May 26. At the end of the program, we plan for the group to leave Japan on Saturday, June 2, and arrive in Washington DC on the same day. JCIE will make all of the necessary travel arrangements. As a program participant, economy class airfare to Japan, domestic travel in Japan, lodging, meals, and all other program-related expenses will be covered by JCIE. Prior to the trip we will host a pre-departure briefing in mid- to late May.

As you know, JCIE, which is a New York-based 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, is the sponsor of the program, and the program is made possible by funding provided by the Japan-US Friendship Commission, a US federal agency.

My colleague Mercedes Trent will be in touch with you later regarding ethics forms, travel details, and similar matters. In the meantime, please do not hesitate to contact us if you need additional information. It is a very important time in US-Japan relations, and I feel that this year's program will be a particularly fascinating one. We are grateful that you can join the program and look forward to your participation.

Sincerely,



**James Gannon**  
**Executive Director**

## PRIVATE SPONSOR TRAVEL CERTIFICATION FORM

This form must be completed by any private entity offering to provide travel or reimbursement for travel to Senate Members, officers, or employees (Senate Rule 35, clause 2). Each sponsor of a fact-finding trip must sign the completed form. The trip sponsor(s) must provide a copy of the completed form to each invited Senate traveler, who will then forward it to the Ethics Committee with any other required materials. The trip sponsor(s) should **NOT** submit the form directly to the Ethics Committee. Please consult the accompanying instructions for more detailed definitions and other key information.

The Senate Member, officer, or employee **MUST** also provide a copy of this form, along with the appropriate travel authorization and reimbursement form, to the Office of Public Records (OPR), Room 232 of the Hart Building, within thirty (30) days after the travel is completed.

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1. Sponsor(s) of the trip (please list all sponsors): Japan Center for International Exchange
  2. Description of the trip: U.S. Congressional Staff Exchange to Japan: Fact-finding trip on U.S.-Japan security, economics and political relations
  3. Dates of travel: May 26 to June 2, 2018
  4. Place of travel: Japan: Tokyo and Kyoto
  5. Name and title of Senate invitees: Please see attached
  6. I *certify* that the trip fits one of the following categories:
    - ☒ (A) The sponsor(s) are not registered lobbyists or agents of a foreign principal **and** do not retain or employ registered lobbyists or agents of a foreign principal **and** no lobbyist or agents of a foreign principal will accompany the Member, officer, or employee *at any point* throughout the trip.
    - =OR=**
    - ☐ (B) The sponsor or sponsors are not registered lobbyists or agents of a foreign principal, but retain or employ one or more registered lobbyists or agents of a foreign principal and the trip meets the requirements of Senate Rule 35.2(a)(2)(A)(i) or (ii) (*see question 9*).
  7. ☒ I *certify* that the trip will not be financed in any part by a registered lobbyist or agent of a foreign principal.

**=AND=**

☒ I *certify* that the sponsor or sponsors will not accept funds or in-kind contributions earmarked directly or indirectly for the purpose of financing this specific trip from a registered lobbyist or agent of a foreign principal or from a private entity that retains or employs one or more registered lobbyists or agents of a foreign principal.
  8. I *certify* that:
    - ☒ The trip will not in any part be planned, organized, requested, or arranged by a registered lobbyist or agent of a foreign principal except for *de minimis* lobbyist involvement.
    - =AND=**
    - ☒ The traveler will not be accompanied on the trip by a registered lobbyist or agent of a foreign principal except as provided for by Committee regulations relating to lobbyist accompaniment (*see question 9*).



**9. USE ONLY IF YOU CHECKED QUESTION 6(B)**

I *certify* that if the sponsor or sponsors retain or employ one or more registered lobbyists or agents of a foreign principal, one of the following scenarios applies:

- ☐ (A) The trip is for attendance or participation in a one-day event (exclusive of travel time and **one** overnight stay) and no registered lobbyists or agents of a foreign principal will accompany the Member, officer, or employee *on any segment* of the trip.

**[OR]**

- ☐ (B) The trip is for attendance or participation in a one-day event (exclusive of travel time and **two** overnight stays) and no registered lobbyists or agents of a foreign principal will accompany the Member, officer, or employee *on any segment* of the trip (*see questions 6 and 10*).

**OR**

- ☐ (C) The trip is being sponsored only by an organization or organizations designated under § 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 and no registered lobbyists or agents of a foreign principal will accompany the Member, officer, or employee *at any point* throughout the trip.

**10. USE ONLY IF YOU CHECKED QUESTION 9(B)**

If the trip includes two overnight stays, please explain why the second night is practically required for Senate invitees to participate in the travel:

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11. ☒ An itinerary for the trip is attached to this form. I *certify* that the attached itinerary is a detailed (hour-by-hour), complete, and final itinerary for the trip.

12. Briefly describe the role of each sponsor in organizing and conducting the trip:

JCIE is the sole sponsor of this trip, which is part of its U.S.-Japan Political Exchange Program.

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13. Briefly describe the stated mission of each sponsor and how the purpose of the trip relates to that mission:

JCIE promotes U.S.-Japan dialogue on foreign policy and in areas of common concern, and this program

is designed to provide senior staffers with a deeper understanding of the U.S.-Japan relationship and the  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 dynamics of Japanese policymaking.

Briefly describe each sponsor's prior history of sponsoring congressional trips:

JCIE has sponsored over 20 Congressional Staff Exchange trips to Japan and its U.S.-Japan

14. Briefly describe each sponsor's prior history of sponsoring congressional trips:

JCIE has sponsored over 20 Congressional Staff Exchange trips to Japan and its U.S.-Japan

Parliamentary Exchange has brought more than 280 Congressional and Diet members to each others'

countries over the last 40 years.

Sponsor Certification - Page 2 of 4

15. Briefly describe the educational activities performed by each sponsor (other than sponsoring congressional trips):

JCIE is involved in various policy dialogues and research activities to promote analysis and discussion of critical issues facing Japan and the U.S.

16. Total Expenses for Each Participant:

	Transportation Expenses	Lodging Expenses	Meal Expenses	Other Expenses
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Good Faith estimate	\$3,095	\$1,210	\$564	N/A
<input type="checkbox"/> Actual Amounts				

17. State whether a) the trip involves an event that is arranged or organized *without regard* to congressional participation or b) the trip involves an event that is arranged or organized *specifically with regard* to congressional participation:

This program is arranged specifically with regard to Congressional participation.

18. Reason for selecting the location of the event or trip

Tokyo offers the best access to leaders from the Japanese government and from various sectors of society.  
Kyoto has played a key role in global sustainability efforts & provides an outside the beltway perspective.

19. Name and location of hotel or other lodging facility:

Tokyo: Hotel New Otani  
Kyoto: Kyoto Nikko Princess Hotel

20. Reason(s) for selecting hotel or other lodging facility:

Tokyo: affordable price, best suited for meetings with Japanese Diet Members & staff  
Kyoto: affordable price and accessible to site visits

21. Describe how the daily expenses for lodging, meals, and other expenses provided to trip participants compares to the maximum per diem rates for official Federal Government travel:

The expenses fall below the maximum per diem rates for Tokyo and Kyoto as of 4/23/2018 as put forth on the State Department website.

22. Describe the type and class of transportation being provided. Indicate whether coach, business-class or first class transportation will be provided. If first-class fare is being provided, please explain why first-class travel is necessary:

Economy class airfare on commercial flights

23. ☒ I represent that the travel expenses that will be paid for or reimbursed to Senate invitees do not include expenditures for recreational activities, alcohol, or entertainment (other than entertainment provided to all attendees as an integral part of the event, as permissible under Senate Rule 35).

24. List any entertainment that will be provided to, paid for, or reimbursed to Senate invitees and explain why the entertainment is an integral part of the event:

N/A

25. I hereby *certify* that the information contained herein is true, complete and correct. (For trips involving more than one sponsor, you *must* include a completed signature page for each additional sponsor):

Signature of Travel Sponsor: 

James Gannon, Executive Director

Name and Title:

Japan Center for International Exchange (JCIE/USA)

Name of Organization:

135 West 29th Street, Suite 303, New York, NY 10001

Address:

212.679.8410

Telephone Number:

212.679.8410

Fax Number:

jgannon@jcie.org

E-mail Address:



JCIE Congressional Staff Exchange Program

Names and Titles of Senate Invitees

Senate Invitees

Beth Vrabel, Senior Health Counsel, Senate Finance Committee

Jeyben Castro, Outreach Director, Senate Finance Committee Hispanic Affairs Task  
Force

Nathan Robinson, Professional Staff, Senate Committee on Appropriations

Mathew Fuentes, Legislative Aide, Office of Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer

03/25/2025 10:00 AM



Japan Center for International Exchange (JCIE)

## US Congressional Staff Exchange Program

### 2018 Delegation to Japan

May 26–June 2, 2018

#### SCHEDULE

##### Saturday, May 26

12:35 Depart Washington Dulles International Airport [UA803]

##### Sunday, May 27

15:25 Arrive at Narita Airport

16:15-17:45 Travel to Tokyo by bus, check in to Hotel New Otani

18:15- 20:30 **Orientation dinner** [Restaurant Satsuki, The Main Building, Hotel New Otani]

Hideko Katsumata, Executive Director & COO, Japan Center for  
International Exchange (JCIE/Japan)

Hifumi Tajima, Chief Program Officer, JCIE/Japan

James Gannon, Executive Director, JCIE/USA

*Briefing on the program, key trends in the Japanese policy debate and US-  
Japan relations, and expectations for participants*

##### Monday, May 28

8:40 Meet in the lobby (“Garden Tower Lobby”)

8:45-8:55 Bus from hotel to JCIE office

9:00-9:30 **Program Overview** [JCIE]

Akio Okawara, President, Japan Center for International Exchange

*Welcome and brief background on the week’s meetings, resource people, and  
key issues in US-Japan relations likely to be raised.*

9:30–10:30 **The Japanese Way of Politics** [JCIE]

Gerald Curtis, Burgess Professor Emeritus, Columbia University; Senior.  
Fellow, JCIE

*Background on the Japanese political system, top issues in the domestic  
political debate, and the implications for US-Japan relations by the most  
prominent American expert on Japanese politics*

10:30-11:45	<b>Japan's Foreign Policy Priorities</b> [JCIE] Hitoshi Tanaka, Senior Fellow, JCIE; Chairman, Institute for International Strategy (IIS), Japan Research Institute, Ltd; Former Deputy Foreign Minister of Japan  <i>Discussion with one of Japan's leading foreign policy strategists on Japan's          foreign policy priorities as well as on his personal experiences conducting          high-level negotiations with North Korea</i>
11:45-12:00	Travel by bus to restaurant
12:00-13:15	<b>Briefing by Ministry of Foreign Affairs – “The US-Japan Alliance and          Economics Ties”</b> [Japanese Restaurant Kioicho Kichiza]  Takehiro Funakoshi, Deputy Director-General, North American Affairs Bureau Hiranao Tanaka, Deputy Director, Second North American Division Natsuko Ito, First North American Division  <i>Lunch discussion with senior officials from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs’          North American Bureau on US-Japan security relations, trade, security, and          other areas of bilateral cooperation</i>
13:15-13:30	Travel by bus to JR Central Tokyo Station Control Center
13:30-15:30	<b>Briefing on Japan's High Speed Rail &amp; Guided Tour of Tokyo Station          Control Center</b>  Takahisa Suzuki, General Manager, International Department, Central Japan Railway Company Hideki Sakai, Manager, General Control Center, Shinkansen Operations Division, Central Japan Railway Company Shigeki Suwa, International Department, Central Japan Railway Company  <i>Briefing on Japan's railway system and guided tour of the train control          center at Tokyo Station, one of Japan's biggest train stations and the          terminus for all bullet trains to Tokyo</i>
16:00-16:30	Return to hotel
17:00-18:00	Optional visit to Asakusa area
18:30-20:00	Dinner in Asakusa area [Ocomo Okonomiyaki Restaurant]
20:00	Return to hotel by taxi



## Tuesday, May 29

7:55 Meet for breakfast

8:00–9:15 **Breakfast Roundtable with Up-and-Coming Leaders in the Diet**  
[Room Yamabuki, Garden Tower Banquet Floor, Hotel New Otani]

Hon. Yukihiisa Fujita, Member, House of Councillors (Democratic Party for the People - DPFP)

Hon. Shinichi Isa, Member, House of Representatives (Komeito)

Hon. Hitoshi Kikawada, Member, House of Representatives (Liberal Democratic Party - LDP)

Hon. Takao Ochi, State Minister of the Cabinet Office; Member, House of Representatives (LDP)

Hon. Keisuke Suzuki, Member, House of Representatives (LDP)

Hon. Yuichiro Tamaki, Member, House of Representatives; Co-leader, Democratic Party for the People (DPFP)

Hon. Kiyohiko Toyama, Member House of Representatives (Komeito)

Hon. Miki Yamada, Member, House of Representatives (LDP)

*Roundtable discussion with Diet members, many of whom are in their 40s and 50s, on how Japanese legislators view US-Japan relations and what they feel the key priorities need to be. One of the members, Takao Ochi, is currently serving in the Cabinet as state minister (deputy minister), and another, Yuichiro Tamaki, is head of one of the two major opposition parties.*

9:20-10:00 Travel by bus to Meguro Air Base

10:00-11:30 **Site Visit to Air Staff College & Briefing on Japan's Security Policy and the Self Defense Forces**

[Air Staff College-Meguro Airbase]

Lt. Gen. Jun Nagashima, Commandant, Air Staff College/Meguro Air Base; Commander, Meguro Air Base, Japan Air Self Defense Force

Lt Col. Seiji Manabe, Air Staff College  
+ Other SDF officers

*The Air Staff College educates senior officers in the Air Self Defense Forces and carries out research activities in support of the SDF. The commandant of the college will give an overview of Japanese security policy, including issues such as the capabilities relevant for a contingency on the Korean Peninsula and US-Japan defense relations*

11:30-12:00 Travel by bus to JCIE Office

12:00-14:00

**Roundtable on US-Asia Relations with Foreign Policy Experts [JCIE]**

Nobumasa Akiyama, Professor, Graduate School of Law and School of International Public Policy, Hitotsubashi University

Shoichi Itoh, Manager, Senior Analyst, Global Energy Group 2, Strategy and Industry Research Unit, Institute of Energy Economics, Japan

Mie Oba, Professor, Faculty of Engineering, Liberal Arts, Tokyo University of Science

Ryo Sahashi, Professor of International Politics & Director, Center for Asian Studies, Kanagawa University

Tsuneo Watanabe, Senior Fellow, Sasakawa Peace Foundation

*Roundtable discussion on regional relations in East Asia with mid-career experts on US-Japan relations, as well as relations with Korea, China, and Taiwan.*

14:30-15:30

**Healthcare Systems & Financing – Japan’s Experience [JCIE]**

Hideki Hashimoto, Professor of Mental Health, School of Public Health, University of Tokyo

*Briefing on Japan’s healthcare system and ways in which policymakers address various issues such as containing medical costs, dealing with an aging population, and maintaining quality of service*

15:30-15:50

Travel by bus to US Embassy; proceed through security

16:00-17:15

**US Embassy Briefing on US-Japan Relations**

[US Embassy]

Rob Rapson, Political Minister-Counselor

Clay Adler, Deputy Consul General

Brittany Banta, Commercial Officer

Jim Town, Economic Officer

*Briefing on issues in US-Japan relations including military bases in Japan, the role of the US-Japan alliance in terms of policy towards North Korea and China, trade relations, etc.*

17:15-17:30

Return to hotel by bus

18:15

Depart by bus for dinner in Shibuya

18:30-21:00

Dinner in Shibuya

21:00

Return to hotel



## Wednesday, May 30

7:55 Meet for breakfast

### 8:00-9:00 **Opposition Party Views on the Japanese Policy Agenda**

[Room Kiku, Banquet Floor, Garden Tower, Hotel New Otani]

Hon. Tetsuro Fukuyama, Secretary –General, Constitutional Democratic Party; Member of the House of Councillors (CDP)

*The Japanese opposition has split into two main parties, the Constitutional Democratic Party (CDP) and the Democratic Party for the People (DPFP). One of the CDP's top leaders, Sen. Tetsuro Fukuyama will discuss the direction of the Constitutional Democratic Party's policy initiatives and the influence of minority parties in Japanese policymaking.*

9:35-9:45 Travel by bus to the Cabinet Office

### 9:45-11:00 **Japan's Trade Policy and Prospects for TPP Expansion**

[Cabinet Office]

Atsuyuki Oike, Deputy Chief Negotiator of Governmental Headquarters for the TPP

*Briefing on Japan's trade policy, the contents and strategic implications of the TPP-11 trade deal, and the prospects for expanding it to include the United States, Korea, and other countries.*

11:00-11:30 Travel by bus to Japan Business Federation Headquarters

### 11:30-13:30 **Japanese Business Perspectives on US-Japan Economic Relations**

[Room 404, Keidanren Kaikan 4F]

Junichiro Hashimoto, Manager, Government & External Relations Division, Mitsubishi Electric Corporation

Tomohisa Kanaida, General Manager, Government & External Relations Dept., Tokio Marine & Nichido Fire Insurance Co.

Ippei Matsumura, International Affairs Bureau, Japan Business Federation (Keidanren)

Katsuro Nemoto, Managing Director, Japan Business Federation

Hirofumi Noda, Acting Director General, Japan-US Business Council

Takashi Okura, Senior Manager, International Policy Division, Government & External Relations Group, Hitachi

Saki Sakuma, International Affairs Bureau, Japan Business Federation

Akihiko Sato, Corporate Planning Division, Economic Research Office, MUFG Bank, Ltd.

Meguru Shinoda, General Manager, Corporate Planning Dept, Sumitomo Mitsui Banking Corporation







11:20-11:40 Travel by van to Hotel Nikko Princess Kyoto to drop off luggage

12:00-13:45      **Briefing and Site Visit on Urban Sustainability and Local Economic Revitalization**  
[Kamishichiken Kurosuke Restaurant]

*Luncheon briefing by the head of a citizen's group that has let a city-wide initiative to save Kyoto's traditional 'machiya' style buildings and help businesses and residents renovate them for modern use in order to preserve the city's historic legacy and spur community revitalization. This will take place inside of a restaurant that has been opened in one of the buildings rescued and restored under the Kyoto Machiya Revitalization Project.*

**14:00-16:00      Briefing on Japanese Cultural Diplomacy by Urasenke Tankokai Federation**  
[Urasenke Headquarters]

Soichi Yamamoto, Deputy Tea-master, Urasenke Konnichian

Hideharu Sekine, Director General, Urasenke Foundation

~~16:00-17:00 Meeting with former Foreign Minister Seiji Maehara & site visit to District Diet Office (CXL-ed at last minute due to the Representative's need to return to Tokyo for a surprise Diet vote on labor reform)~~

*Rep. Seiji Maehara has been a key figure in the opposition camp for the last two decades, have served as foreign minister and, before that, as the leader of the Democratic Party of Japan. He will speak about the key issues that*

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# United States Senate

## SELECT COMMITTEE ON ETHICS

May 16, 2018

Mary Beth Vrabel  
Committee on Finance  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Ms. Vrabel:

This responds to your recent correspondence concerning an invitation you received to travel to the *2018 U.S. Congressional Staff Exchange Program*, in Tokyo and Kyoto, Japan, on May 26-June 2, 2018, sponsored by the Japan Center for International Exchange (JCIE). JCIE certified to the Select Committee on Ethics (the Committee) that it will pay the *necessary expenses*<sup>1</sup> related to the travel and that it is neither a lobbyist, nor lobbying firm, nor agent of a foreign principal, and it is not otherwise acting as a representative or agent of a foreign government. JCIE has also certified that it does not retain or employ a registered lobbyist or agent of a foreign principal and that no registered lobbyist will accompany you at *any point throughout your trip*.<sup>2</sup>

Based on information and materials available to the Committee, and assuming the **actual** travel and travel-related expenses conform to the information and materials you provided, it appears that the proposed payment or reimbursement of necessary expenses for this trip **may be accepted** under relevant Senate Rules and the Committee's *Regulations and Guidelines for Privately-Sponsored Travel*, so long as at the time of the payment or reimbursement, JCIE is neither a registered lobbyist nor lobbying firm under the Lobbying Disclosure Act of 1995, nor an agent of a foreign principal under the Foreign Agents Registration Act (and is not otherwise acting as a representative or agent of a foreign government), and provided the travel and all required documents are disclosed to the Secretary of the Senate in accordance with the provisions of Senate Rules 34 and 35.

Under Senate Rule 35, Senate staff must receive advance authorization signed by the Member or officer under whose direct supervision the individual works in order to accept payment or reimbursement for necessary expenses related to fact-finding travel. Further, such authorization and expenses must be disclosed to the Secretary of the Senate by filing the completed *Employee Pre-Travel Authorization* and the *Employee Post-Travel Disclosure of Travel Expenses* (Form RE-1 and Form RE-2), along with a copy of the *Private Sponsor Travel*

<sup>1</sup> The term "necessary expenses" has a specific definition. See *Select Committee on Ethics' Regulations and Guidelines for Privately-Sponsored Travel – Glossary of Terms* at 8.

<sup>2</sup> The term "any point throughout your trip" has a specific definition. See *Select Committee on Ethics' Regulations and Guidelines for Privately-Sponsored Travel – Glossary of Terms* at 2.

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*Certification Form*, and all relevant attachments (e.g., the private sponsor's invitation and itinerary) **within 30 days of the conclusion of Privately-Sponsored Travel.**

The Committee has determined that § 501(c)(3) non-profit organizations that are classified as private foundations, as opposed to public charities, may not pay for transportation from the United States to a foreign country.<sup>3</sup> However, JCIE represented to the Committee that it is a § 501(c)(3) public charity, as opposed to a private foundation, pursuant to the Internal Revenue Code.<sup>4</sup>

Please be advised that the United States Constitution prohibits the acceptance of any gift, including a meal, from a foreign government without the consent of Congress. In the Foreign Gifts and Decorations Act (FGDA), Congress consented to the acceptance by federal government officials of: (1) gifts of minimal value and (2) travel or the expenses for travel taking place entirely outside the United States, from a foreign government (which includes those acting as a representative or agent of a foreign government).<sup>5</sup> The Senate has defined minimal value as \$100 or less. Further, pursuant to FGDA, there are certain reporting and procedural requirements that are imposed upon Members, officers, and employees who accept gifts from a foreign government. Please review the Committee's "Dear Colleague" letter of January 16, 2018, setting forth the items to be included in filing that report.

Finally, Senate Rule 34 requires a reporting individual,<sup>6</sup> on his or her Financial Disclosure Report, to make an annual disclosure of the receipt of payments or reimbursements under Senate Rule 35 from a private sponsor for officially-related travel expenses where, in the aggregate, travel expenses exceed \$390 from that sponsor during a calendar year. However, if a Member, officer, or employee properly reports the receipt of necessary expenses for such travel to the Secretary of the Senate within 30 days of the travel, as discussed above, the travel expenses need not be disclosed a second time on their Financial Disclosure Report.

If you have any additional questions, please do not hesitate to contact the Committee.

Sincerely,



Deborah Sue Mayer  
Chief Counsel and Staff Director

Enclosure: Travel Checklist

<sup>3</sup> See 26 U.S.C. § 4941 et seq. Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code broadly defines non-profit, charitable, tax-exempt organizations. These § 501(c)(3) organizations are then further defined or designated as "public charities" and "private foundations."

<sup>4</sup> 26 U.S.C. § 501(c)(3).

<sup>5</sup> 5 U.S.C. § 7342.

<sup>6</sup> A reporting individual is someone whose salary equals or exceeds 120% of the basic rate of pay for GS-15 (\$126,148 for CY 2018) or is a political fund designee and is required to file Financial Disclosure Reports.