

(2) If the Committee determines after the preliminary investigation that possibly there was a violation of this title, the legislator shall be notified of the statement and allowed 15 days to file a written answer to the charges in the statement.

(3) Upon receiving the legislator's answer, the Committee may either (1) dismiss the charges, in which case the matter is closed, and the proceedings may not be made public unless the legislator, in writing, so requests; or (2) schedule a formal hearing on the charges, within 20 days after giving notice to the person who filed the statement and to the legislator.

(4) The hearing may not be open to the public. The legislator may present evidence, cross-examine witnesses, face and examine his accuser, and be represented by counsel.

(1) (1) If after a formal hearing the Committee determines that sufficient grounds exist for a question of substantial conflict of interest, the Committee shall report its findings to the branch of the legislature of which the legislator is a member, accompanied by a request that an investigating committee be established to determine if a violation of this section has occurred.

(2) The House of Delegates or the Senate, after receiving the report, may establish by resolution an investigating committee pursuant to Sections 72 through 87 of Article 40 of the Annotated Code.

(3) If the House of Delegates or the Senate decides that the legislator has violated any provision of this article or Article 40, it may, by resolution, require compliance, issue a reprimand, or censure the legislator.]

(J) EACH STATEMENT FILED OR PREPARED PURSUANT TO SUBSECTION (I) AND THE FACT THAT IT HAS BEEN FILED OR PREPARED, ANY PRELIMINARY SUMMARY PREPARED PURSUANT TO SUBSECTION (K)(3), ALL INFORMATION RELATING TO ANY PROCEEDINGS UNDER THIS SECTION EMANATING FROM THE STATEMENT INCLUDING PROCEEDINGS OF AN INVESTIGATING COMMITTEE PURSUANT TO SUBSECTION (O), AND ANY REPORTS THEREUPON ARE CONFIDENTIAL AND, EXCEPT AS PERMITTED BY THIS SECTION OR UPON THE WRITTEN REQUEST OF THE LEGISLATOR INVOLVED, SHALL REMAIN CONFIDENTIAL.

(K) (1) FOLLOWING THE FILING OR PREPARATION OF A STATEMENT PURSUANT TO SUBSECTION (I), THE COMMITTEE SHALL REVIEW THE STATEMENT AND PROCEED IN ACCORDANCE WITH SUBSECTION (L) UNLESS, AFTER EXAMINATION OF THE STATEMENT AND THE ISSUES RAISED THEREBY, IT FINDS THAT FURTHER PROCEEDINGS ARE NOT JUSTIFIED BECAUSE:

(I) THE STATEMENT IS FRIVOLOUS;

(II) THE STATEMENT AND THE ACCOMPANYING AFFIDAVIT DO NOT ALLEGE ACTIONS ON THE PART OF THE MEMBER WHICH PROVIDE REASON TO BELIEVE THAT A VIOLATION MAY HAVE OCCURRED;