

U.S. House passes rival ethics measures

by UPI

WASHINGTON -- The U.S. House of Representatives passed two ethics bills from opposite sides of the aisle brought on by the investigation of Rep. William Jefferson, D-La.

A bill brought to the floor by Minority Leader John Boehner, R-Ohio, instructs the ethics committee to examine Jefferson's case and decide whether his expulsion is merited, The Washington Post reported Wednesday.

The measure passed by a 373-26 vote, with 13 members of the legislative body -- including some from the ethics committee -- voting "present."

Jefferson was indicted Monday on 16 counts of bribery and corruption.

A second resolution, proposed by Majority Leader Steny Hoyer, D-Md., orders the ethics committee to investigate any member who is indicted or arrested on criminal charges, The Hill reported Wednesday. The resolution passed 387-10, with 15 "present" votes.

Rep. Steven LaTourette, R-Ohio, voted against both measures, saying an ethics investigation could interfere with a criminal probe.

"These competing resolutions contribute to the dumbing down of the House," said LaTourette, who has served on the ethics committee in the past.

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