

What did Rep. Comstock know and when did she know it?

Roy Moore scandal and the Virginia Republican



In this March 28, 2017, photo, Rep. Barbara Comstock, Virginia Republican, walks at the Capitol in Washington. Amid a daily deluge of stories about harassment in the workplace, female members of Congress detailed incidents of sexual misconduct involving current lawmakers ... more >

By Judson Phillips - - Wednesday, November 29, 2017

ANALYSIS/OPINION:

What did she know and when did she know it?

Several weeks ago, a faux scandal erupted. The Washington Post released a story on Alabama Republican Senate candidate Roy Moore. The “scandal” amounted to 40-year-old claims that Moore had tried to date girls in their mid-to-late teens when he was in his late 20s or early 30s.

The story came from a paper that endorsed Roy Moore’s opponent and whose journalists could accurately be described as Democrats with a byline.

The Republican establishment went into an orgy of virtue signaling. Moore had just beaten their hand picked candidate and Moore has said he would not support Senate Majority leader Mitch McConnell.

Among the loudest of the virtue signalers was Republican Congressman Barbara Comstock of Virginia. She announced Roy Moore, “should not serve in the United States Senate.”

A funny thing happened to Comstock in the middle of her virtue signaling. A new scandal broke and it is now time to ask Barbara Comstock some questions. Multiple media sources have now reported that between 1997 and 2014, the Congress paid out approximately \$15.2 million to settle sexual harassment claims against members of the House of Representatives.

Barbara Comstock, who was so eager to demand that Roy Moore step down, has been pretty silent on John Conyers, the Michigan Democrat who was apparently well known on Capitol Hill for being a serial harasser. Comstock did announce she was cosponsoring a bill to stream line the process in sexual harassment claims but there is one point she and the left wing media, who love liberal Republicans like her, failed to mention.

Barbara Comstock sits on the House Committee on House Administration. This is the committee that oversees the House of Representatives itself and is the committee that approves those kinds of payouts.

So, what did Barbara Comstock know and when did she know it?

In the last few days, Comstock has made numerous media appearances talking about this issue. In one, she said, "I can be their voice."

Really? Where was your voice when this slush fund was going on? Where were her press conferences and media appearances before this scandal broke? When did she go to the House Leadership and say, "This must stop?"

When Barbara Comstock was parading around for the national media, denouncing Roy Moore for spurious forty year old, unsubstantiated allegations, where was her cry of "I can be the voice for all of these women being harassed on Capitol Hill?"

There are two possibilities here and neither of them are good for Comstock. Either she knew about the slush fund and ongoing harassment and did nothing or she did not know, despite being on the committee that has jurisdiction over that fund.

It is hard to tell which possibility is worse.

That takes everyone back to a paraphrase of the famous Howard Baker quote. "What did Barbara Comstock know and when did she know it?"

If she knew about the slush fund and the ongoing harassment of women by a number of congressmen, whose identities are kept secret, then she has no business being in the Congress and should resign immediately.

If she did not know, that raises a more serious question. As a member of the House Administration Committee, why didn't she know. This is the committee that approves those payments.

Comstock's Facebook page is loaded with pictures of her at dinners and out at photo ops. If she did not know this was going on, then she needs to spend less time having her photo taken and more time on her job.

Barbara Comstock is not the only member of Congress who should be asked that question. But she is trying to make political points off of this scandal so it is far to ask her that all important question.

"What did you know and when did you know it?"