

Texas Democrat Indicted For Taking Bribes

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By [Walt Rasinger](#)

Another Democratic member of Congress has been indicted by the Department of Justice for allegedly taking bribes.

The Justice Department announced a 28 counts indictment against Henry Cuellar, a Texas Democrat in the House of Representatives, and his wife on Friday. It accuses Cuellar of allegedly taking nearly \$600,000 in bribes from the government of Azerbaijan and a bank based in Mexico City.

The Washington Examiner [reported](#), “Allegations against Cuellar began circulating in 2022, when his home and campaign offices in Laredo, Texas, were raided in January that year as part of the DOJ’s investigation into Azerbaijan and businessmen connected to the nation. In April of that year, Cuellar’s lawyer told several news outlets that the congressman was informed he was not the target of the investigation.

Now, Cuellar and his wife, Imelda, are each charged with 14 counts: two counts of conspiracy to commit bribery, two counts of bribery of a federal official, two counts of conspiracy to commit honest services fraud, two counts of violating a ban on public officials acting as foreign agents, one count of conspiracy to commit concealment money laundering, and five counts of money laundering. The charges carry a maximum sentence of more than 200 years in prison for both the congressman and his wife, but sentencing in the Cuellars’ case would likely not result in the maximum penalties.”

The Democratic congressman has maintained his innocence, saying that “everything I have done in Congress has been to serve the people of South Texas.”

Cuellar said in his statement that actions he took in Congress were “in the interest of the American people” and vowed to continue his bid for reelection in November. The congressman also defended his wife, saying that, “The allegation that she is anything but qualified and hard working is both wrong and offensive.”

“The actions I took in Congress were consistent with the actions of many of my colleagues and in the interest of the American people,” Cuellar said.

CNN [reported](#) that “in exchange for bribe payments from the Azerbaijan oil company, Cuellar “agreed to perform official acts in his capacity as a Member of Congress, to commit acts in violation of his official duties, and to act as an agent of the Government of Azerbaijan” and the bank, the indictment says.

Among those promises, prosecutors allege Cuellar agreed to influence US policy through a ‘series of legislative measures relating to Azerbaijan’s conflict with neighboring Armenia,’ by giving a pro-Azerbaijani speech on the House floor, inserting language ‘favored by Azerbaijan’ into legislation and committee reports, and advocating for ‘series of legislative measures relating to Azerbaijan’s conflict with neighboring Armenia.’

The Texas Democrat also allegedly promised to influence financial regulations in a way that would benefit the Mexican bank and its affiliates, including by working to pressure the Executive Branch on anti-money laundering enforcement practices that “threatened” their business interest and supporting revisions to the criminal money-laundering statutes.”

Democrats will always protect their own, however. Democratic House leader Hakeem Jeffries said, according to *The New York Times*, “Mr. Cuellar would take leave from his post as the top Democrat on the Homeland Security Appropriations Subcommittee while he fights the charges.

Christie Stephenson, a spokeswoman for Mr. Jeffries, described Mr. Cuellar as ‘a valued member of the House Democratic Caucus,’ and said he was ‘entitled to his day in court.’”

The F.B.I. searched Mr. Cuellar’s Laredo home in 2022, appearing to dim his prospects for re-election, but he won a close primary victory anyway over a more progressive challenger, Jessica Cisneros. The primary divided prominent Democrats; Representative Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, the New York progressive, backed Ms.

Cisneros, but senior members of leadership, including Speaker Nancy Pelosi, campaigned for Mr. Cuellar.”

Cuellar has vowed to continue his re-election campaign.

The indictments against Cuellar are the second time in a few months that a powerful Democrat has been allegedly caught taking bribes. New Jersey Senator Bob Menendez is facing potential jail time after a long public-corruption probe found that he'd been purportedly taking gold bars and cash from Egypt.

The chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, allegedly [helped Egypt lift a hold on \\$300 million in aid](#) to the country.

Menendez has [claimed](#) that he is being targeted because he's a powerful Hispanic member of the Senate and not because investigators discovered nearly half a million dollars stuffed into the pockets of clothing at his house.