

with regard to this resolution after 7 legislative days.

Mr. Speaker, I want to reiterate that what is at issue with House Resolution 131 is, in fact, whether the House of Representatives is going to continue to have a credible ethics process that can be effective in protecting the reputation and the integrity of this great institution. And for at least two reasons, the House will not and cannot have a credible ethics process unless the Republican-inspired rules changes made earlier this year are repealed.

First, there cannot be a credible ethics process in the House unless it is genuinely bipartisan. By definition, the Committee on Standards of Official Conduct was created as a bipartisan organization within a very partisan body, and its rules have always been fashioned through a bipartisan task force.

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Until this year, the House clearly and repeatedly recognized that bipartisanship must extend to the creating of the rules under which the Committee on Standards of Official Conduct conducts its business; and in the past, changes in those rules were made in an open, in a thoughtful, and in a genuinely bipartisan manner.

But this year, Mr. Speaker, in contrast to past tradition, the rules changes were drafted solely on the recommendation of the majority, in a partisan, in a closed, in a secret process in which no one on the Democrat side of the aisle was even consulted. So the rules were adopted on a strict party line vote: all the Republicans voting for; all the Democrats voting against.

Mr. Speaker, this is the most partisan vote we cast in the House of Representatives. Never in the history of the Committee on Standards of Official Conduct has there been an attempt to impose rules in this manner on the Committee on Standards of Official Conduct.

Mr. Speaker, the second concern about these rules changes is there has been an attempt to impose them on the Committee on Standards of Official Conduct in a very partisan way, but the rules in and of themselves are extremely damaging. The fact is that, at a minimum, these rules changes will seriously undermine the ability of the Committee on Standards of Official Conduct to perform its key responsibilities of investigating and making decisions on allegations of wrongdoing.

These rules changes fall into three categories.

First, there is the so-called automatic dismissal rule under which a complaint against a Member that is filed with the committee can be dismissed solely with the passage of time, no consideration of its merits. Under this automatic dismissal rule, that period of time can be as brief as 45 days from the date that the complaint is deemed to satisfy the procedural requirements of the rules. Previously, a complaint could be dismissed only by majority vote of the committee.

The effect of this automatic dismissal rule will be to give the committee members a means by which they can avoid their responsibility to give thoughtful, reasoned consideration to every complaint and to all of the charges in every complaint. Its ultimate effect will be to provoke partisanship and deadlock among committee members as they wait for the clock to run out. Does the majority really want this result?

Another of the rules changes is that it grants certain so-called due process rights to Members. One of those rights is the right to demand that the Committee on Standards of Official Conduct conduct a trial on a matter on which it has not even conducted a formal investigation. This so-called right would place the committee in the position of having to hold a trial on a matter in which it has not issued a single subpoena. Does the majority really want this result?

The third rule change, Mr. Speaker, is the so-called right to counsel provision which might be better characterized as the right to orchestrate testimony provision or the right to allow collusion among the accused and the witnesses. It would provide that one lawyer can represent the accused and all of the witnesses. Does the majority really want this result?

Mr. Speaker, I continue to urge my colleagues to look closely at the rules changes and the partisan manner in which they were adopted. By adoption of House Resolution 131, the House can begin to undo the damage that has been done to the ethics process, and we will be able to have once again an ethics process that commands the confidence and respect of both the Members of this body, and Mr. Speaker, most importantly, the American people, who, I believe, on a bipartisan basis want a bipartisan Committee on Standards of Official Conduct.

APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE TO UNITED STATES CAPITOL PRESERVATION COMMISSION

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. GOHMERT). Pursuant to 40 U.S.C. 188a, and the order of the House of January 4, 2005, the Chair announces the Speaker's appointment of the following Members of the House to the United States Capitol Preservation Commission:

Mr. LEWIS, California
Mr. SHUSTER, Pennsylvania.

COMMUNICATION FROM HON. NANCY PELOSI, DEMOCRATIC LEADER

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Honorable NANCY PELOSI, Democratic Leader:

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
OFFICE OF THE DEMOCRATIC LEADER,
Washington, DC, April 26, 2005.
Hon. J. DENNIS HASTERT,
Speaker of the House, House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. SPEAKER: Pursuant to (40 U.S.C. 188a), I hereby appoint Representative MARCY KAPTUR of Ohio to the United States Capitol Preservation Commission.

Best regards,

NANCY PELOSI.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, votes on motions to suspend the rules postponed earlier today will be taken tomorrow.

30-SOMETHING WORKING GROUP

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 2005, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MEEK) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Mr. Speaker, once again, it is a pleasure to be before the House along with my colleagues of the 30-something Working Group. We would like to thank the Democratic leader for allowing us, once again, to address the Members of the House and the American people on issues that are facing the 30-somethings and the entire population of the United States.

I think it is important as Members of Congress that we understand our obligation to the American people, making sure that they fully understand what happens in their house of democracy.

Many times in Washington, D.C., we are here, we are making decisions that are going to affect all of our constituents and even ourselves and our families. So I think it is important we take it very seriously.

We come back again tonight. Of course, we have the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. RYAN) and also the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ), my good friend from south Florida; and we are here to talk about Social Security. So I think we will just start off just kind of talking about some of the things and some of the events that took place today.

This was a very eventful day for Social Security and making sure that Americans are able to get what they deserve as it relates to their full benefits on Social Security and making sure that we do not gamble with their retirement.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. MEEK of Florida. I yield to the gentlewoman from Florida.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Absolutely, this was a unique day.

Apparently, we reached the 60th day that the President has been out in America trying to sell the American people on his vague outlines of his proposal to privatize Social Security; and quite honestly, at the conclusion of the