I think every American, including people like myself who opposed the armed invasion of Haiti and entangling military occupation, are hoping that we will leave enough in Haiti for Haitians to build on; that a few years down the road we will not be faced with the same crisis all over again, starting with a great refugee crisis into Florida.

Frankly, I am not convinced that is happening, though. I hope every American will write their Congressman or Congresswoman and demand a full accounting of spending on United States and United Nations operations in Haiti by this administration. We are asking all Americans to tighten their belts still another notch. They deserve to know whether or not they are getting a reasonable return on the $2 billion-plus investment of their tax dollars that the Clinton administration has spent in that small Caribbean nation.

Mr. Speaker, where has all that money gone? And what did the U.S. taxpayer get for it? That is the question that deserves an answer.

SO MUCH FOR OPEN RULES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of May 12, 1995, the gentlewoman from Colorado [Mrs. SCHROEDER] is recognized during morning business for 5 minutes.

Mrs. SCHROEDER. Well, well, well, well, here we go again, Mr. Speaker. The Rules Committee has really become the first line of defense for sacred cows. Today we are going to be taking up another rule that once again shuts out all sorts of amendments that would knock out sacred cows around this place.

Let us talk about that a little further. When we bring up the legislative branch appropriations bills, many of us thought that it was very important to have a ban on gifts to staff and Members. Once and for all, get the lobbyists' gifts out of here. It taints the whole place. People are tired of that. You know what? In this group that pledged open rules, we are not allowed to offer that amendment. That amendment has been denied. Keep the gifts coming. Boy, is that wrong.

We also have two major committees that do nothing. They have no legislative jurisdiction. There were amendments to try and go after these. One has a staff of over $6 million a year; the other is over $3 million a year. The one that has the over $6 million, the last thing it did was a 300-page report defending the right of billionaires to be able to give up their U.S. citizenship and move offshore to avoid paying taxes. Now, that is not something I feel like funding, thank you.

Not only that, we have two tax committees that have legislative jurisdiction. Why do we need this third one that is really nothing but a select committee?

Why am I angry? Well, we did away with all the other select committees, ones that dealt with children and families, the one that dealt with hunger, and the one that dealt with the elderly. Those are gone. Those were people ones, but when you talk about taxes you cannot have enough staff up here protecting billionaires. No, no. no, we have to preserve them. So we have the Rules Committee denying any amendments to take those out, because if those amendments came to the floor, they are afraid people might vote for them. Well, so much for open rules.

I must say this saddens me very, very much. People may remember at the end of the 100 days I suppose I misbehaved. I climbed up on the top of this dome and I hung out a sign that said ''Sold,'' because I feel I am watching this place being sold right under my eyes. It is like sold to the highest bidder; sold to the highest gift-giver. We are becoming a major, major coin-operated legislative machine.

There are ways to prevent that. There are ways to prevent that with campaign finance reform, with the gift ban, with doing away with committees that are just defending the super-rich who have their lobbyists up here protecting their special interest in the Tax Code. There are ways we can do that. But we cannot do that if we are denied the right to even bring these up as real amendments on the floor.

So far they have not denied my right to come here and at least talk about it. I suppose that is next. But we cannot do anything meaningful about it because the process has been shut down.

Now, I think for Americans this is a very serious issue, a very serious issue. We know that lobbyists can come in here and turn things around. We know they have been here a long time. But we now know we are seeing them in a magnitude greater than we have ever seen.

I was for the gift ban before they moved in with this magnitude. But for heaven's sakes, I think before the cynicism just gets so deep that we all drown in it we need to get to these basic House cleaning rules.

We really need to clean all this stuff up. We need to make the Tax Code look like it is working for the average person rather than working on the average person. We should be focusing much more on issues and how they affect children and families. Instead, we did away with the one committee that monitored that type of thing.

We ought to be standing up against hunger. That has been one of the great things that this country has done traditionally, is fed the world with this great breadbasket we have. No, we did away with that committee.

But, by golly, today we will not even have the chance to save $10 million and do away with the one that is protecting the billionaires over there on the Joint Committee on Taxation and do away with the Joint Economic Committee.

Have you ever seen an economist that has come out with anything that is on target yet? Why do we keep buying more and more and more of those, especially when we do not look at these other issues that are so critical?

So I rise with great sadness, and I hope many people think, very, very long and hard before they vote for this rule, because when you vote for this rule, remember, you have totally shut out the ability of being able to bring up these kind of amendments once more.

If you rememeber, last week when we did the defense bill, we had a rule that prevented us from bringing the defense number down to what the Pentagon wanted. This must stop. Think about that when you vote for the rule and vote ''no.''

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. There being no further requests for morning business, pursuant to clause 12, rule I, the House will stand in recess until 10 a.m.

Accordingly (at 9 o'clock and 13 minutes a.m.) the House stood in recess until 10 a.m.

□ 1000

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker at 10 a.m.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Rev. James David Ford, D.D., offered the following prayer:

Remind us always, O God, that honest communication between people demands that we not only speak but we also listen, that we not only express our ideas and feelings but we also heed the words and feelings of others, that we not only hear the sounds of conversation but actually contemplate the meaning intended by such words. May we, gracious God, appreciate that before we can act faithfully, we must also listen faithfully to that which others say to us. So let us truly commit ourselves to listen to others—in word and thought and meaning and purpose. In Your name, we pray. Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House his approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER. The Pledge of Allegiance will be led by the gentlewoman from Texas [Ms. JACKSON-LEE].

Ms. JACKSON-LEE led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.