

the Government has to be careful how it, quote, spends its scarce resources.

Now, that is where I have a major difference with the administration. When a parent is able to keep some of the money that he or she works very hard to earn, that is not an example of the Government spending money. It is not our money, to begin with, here in Washington. It belongs to the people who earn it. We ought to cut taxes, and let us begin to do it now.

#### CREATION OF BIPARTISAN TASK FORCE TO REVIEW ETHICS PROCESSES

(Mr. ARMEY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. ARMEY. Mr. Speaker, before I begin, I would like to thank my colleagues that are waiting for their 1-minutes for their willingness to let me intercede at this time. I appreciate their grace and patience.

Mr. Speaker, over the past few months the gentleman from Missouri [Mr. GEPHARDT], the minority leader, and I have been talking about the need for a comprehensive review of the ethics process. We have had several good discussions culminating in our joint appearance before the House today to announce the creation of a bipartisan task force to conduct a review of the ethics process and to report to the bipartisan leadership on how the process might be improved.

For this review to be successful, I think we need three key elements:

First, the process must be truly bipartisan. Like the Ethics Committee, it should be composed of an equal number of Republicans and Democrats. Furthermore, and as the majority leader you will not find me saying this too often, I think this task force should be cochaired by a Member from each side of the aisle.

Second, we must have dedicated Members who will do what is right for all Members and, more importantly, for the institution of the House of Representatives.

Third, after the past few tumultuous months, I think we must have a brief cooling-off period where Members can sit back and examine where the ethics process works, where it does not and how it might be improved, and in a climate temporarily free from potential ethics charges.

After a great deal of discussion, I am pleased to announce that the distinguished minority leader and I come to the floor today to announce the creation of a 12-member bipartisan task force cochaired by a Republican and a Democrat.

Ethical review of our peers, and the process by which we conduct that review, is a constitutional responsibility. It is an important job that few Members are excited about performing. I have given a great deal of thought to whom the Republican side of the aisle should ask to do this. I want Members

who are well respected and who are committed to doing what is right and what is in the best interests of the institution.

While we have many Members who meet this criteria, I believe I have found six who will work well with Members, to be appointed by Mr. GEPHARDT.

Members are the gentleman from Louisiana [Mr. LIVINGSTON], who I have asked to be one of the cochairs, the gentleman from Florida [Mr. GOSS], the gentleman from Delaware [Mr. CASTLE], the gentleman from California [Mr. THOMAS], the gentleman from New York [Mr. SOLOMON] and the gentleman from Utah [Mr. HANSEN], who as chairman of the Ethics Committee will serve as an ex officio member of the task force.

Minority Leader GEPHARDT and I have also agreed on a moratorium on the filing of new ethics complaints until April 11. This 2-month cooling-off period will give the task force members an opportunity to meet, review and discuss how the ethics process can be improved and in a climate free from specific questions of ethical propriety.

The task force is free to look into any and all aspects of the ethics process. Some of the questions I think the task force will want to address include: Who can file a complaint and upon what basis of information, what should be the standards for initiating an investigation, what evidentiary standard should apply throughout the process, how has the bifurcation process worked, does it take too long to conduct a review, should non-House Members play a part in a reformed ethics process, should we enlarge the pool of Members who might participate in different phases of the process?

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the gentleman from Missouri for working with me to create this important task force.

I yield to the gentleman from Missouri [Mr. GEPHARDT].

Mr. GEPHARDT. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding to me.

I would agree that we believe on the Democratic side, I think, with our friends on the Republican side that there needs to be a complete review of the ethics process with a view toward recommending changes to the whole body, that the body might considerate at some point in the future.

We also agree that there should be six Members, one ex officio and five other Members. In that connection, I today am appointing the gentleman from Maryland [Mr. CARDIN] to be our cochair, the gentleman from Texas [Mr. FROST], the gentleman from Massachusetts [Mr. MOAKLEY], the gentleman from California [Ms. PELOSI] and the gentleman from Ohio [Mr. STOKES] to be part of this bipartisan task force.

We are also asking the gentleman from California [Mr. BERMAN] to be ex officio, as he will be our recommended

ranking member on the permanent Ethics Committee.

So we will be joining with the majority leader in the unanimous consent request for their appointment and for the understanding that there will not be a filing of ethics complaints for this, I believe to be, 65-day period in which this group should be doing its work.

I thank the gentleman and Members on his side for working with us on this process. I think it is an important step forward in working together to improve the ethics process for the body. I look forward to receiving recommendations from this group.

Mr. ARMEY. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman.

I should also advise Members of the body that, during this interim period, the regular work of the Ethics Committee under the leadership of the gentleman from Utah [Mr. HANSEN] and the gentleman from California [Mr. BERMAN] will continue to advise Members with respect to requests they might make about the appropriateness of courses of action they may take. That advisory function, I know, is being carried out well because I just got some advice back from the committee myself yesterday on a trip that I am looking at. So let me just say that I believe this accommodation enables every Member to feel they have a place to make their inquiries. They can get a quick, accurate, reliable response and at the same time this committee can work. Again, I want to thank the minority leader for his congenial efforts to work this out with me.

#### ESTABLISHING BIPARTISAN TASK FORCE ON REFORM OF ETHICS PROCESS

Mr. ARMEY. Mr. Speaker, in furtherance of this understanding concerning the establishment of a bipartisan task force on reform of the ethics process, I ask unanimous consent that during the period beginning immediately and ending on April 11, 1997:

First, the Committee on Standards of Official Conduct may not receive, renew, initiate or investigate a complaint against the official conduct of a Member, officer or employee of the House;

Second, the Committee on Standards of Official Conduct may issue advisory opinions and perform other noninvestigative functions; and

Third, a resolution addressing the official conduct of a Member, officer or employee of the House that is proposed to be offered from the floor by a Member other than the majority leader or the minority leader as a question of the privileges of the House shall, once noticed pursuant to clause 2(a)(1) of rule IX, have precedence of all other questions except motions to adjourn only at a time or place designated by the Chair and the legislative schedule within 2 legislative days after April 11, 1997.