



United States
of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 105th CONGRESS, SECOND SESSION

Vol. 144

WASHINGTON, TUESDAY, APRIL 28, 1998

No. 49

House of Representatives

The House met at 12:30 p.m.

MORNING HOUR DEBATES

The SPEAKER. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 21, 1997 the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning hour debates. The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties, with each party limited to not to exceed 30 minutes, and each Member except the majority and minority leaders and minority whip limited to not to exceed 5 minutes.

SPEAKER TROUBLED BY PARTISAN BEHAVIOR DURING CAMPAIGN FINANCE INVESTIGATION

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Ms. PRYCE of Ohio). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 21, 1997, the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. GINGRICH) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. GINGRICH. Madam Speaker, I rise with concern and sadness to report to the House on a letter I am sending the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. BURTON), Chairman of the Committee on Government Reform and Oversight, today. I want to read the letter and then I want to explain why I am sending it and the background of sending it.

"Dear Chairman BURTON: I was deeply troubled by the partisan Democrat behavior shown last week during the vote on granting immunity, to which even the Justice Department is not opposed, to four key witnesses in your campaign finance investigation.

"This is the exact opposite of previous congressional investigations, in which Republican Members worked in a diligent and bipartisan manner with Democrats to uncover the truth. According to David Dorsen, the assistant chief counsel of the Senate Watergate Committee, the 'Watergate Committee

voted consistently and unanimously for immunity.' In fact, even during Iran-Contra the Congressional investigative committees voted unanimously to grant a limited form of immunity to Oliver North, John Poindexter and Albert Hakim. There is no logical reason for the Democrats' stonewalling and sharply partisan actions. Again, even the Department of Justice has clearly stated in writing that they have 'no opposition to the committee granting immunity.'

"The Democrats' efforts to block immunity, despite their own administration's willingness to accept it, cannot withstand the public's demand for the truth. For this reason, I encourage you to vote again on the immunity issue. It is obvious that these four witnesses would provide a great deal of clarification and a better understanding of the illegal campaign finance irregularities that took place in the 1996 election cycle.

"The American people have a right to know exactly what happened during the last election cycle. The very foundations of a democracy are a well-informed populace with the right to know the truth and a rule of law ensuring that all are equal in the eyes of justice. Therefore, at this time I strongly urge you to hold a second vote on granting immunity to the four key witnesses who were denied it last week."

My hope is that by next week the Committee on Government Reform and Oversight could vote. I urge every Democrat who voted no, and it was 19-0, 19 against immunity, to reconsider their vote.

I want to report to the House. Here is what the vote was about. The Department of Justice had cleared, for the purposes of giving testimony, three witnesses, and had cleared for the purposes of testimony in an executive session a fourth witness. Let me report to the House who they are:

Irene Wu, Johnny Chung's office manager and primary assistant at

Automated Intelligent Systems, already immunized by the Department of Justice, testified before a grand jury. Instrumental in better understanding Chung's relationships with foreign nationals with whom he attended political fund-raising events, formed corporations, and from whom he received money.

Nancy Lee, an engineer at Automated Intelligent Systems, Inc. Witnesses say Lee solicited contributions to Clinton/Gore '96 from her colleagues and then reimbursed them. That is, of course, illegal. Already immunized by the Department of Justice; testified before a grand jury.

Larry Wong, close friend of Nora and Gene Lum. Believed to have relevant information regarding conduit contributions, that is, contributions that were not really from the person who made them technically, but they came from somebody else, in this case probably foreign money, made by the Lums and others.

And then under a special arrangement, Kent La, president and registered agent of Loh Sun International. Believed to have direct knowledge of Ted Sioeng's activities. At a minimum, La and Sioeng traveled, attended social functions and at least one fund-raiser, and transacted business together. The Department of Justice does not oppose granting congressional immunity with the understanding that the committee will only depose La in executive session at this time.

I am submitting for the RECORD the letters from the Department of Justice, all of them saying, and I would just read one of them because they are repetitive:

"Dear Mr. BENNETT: I am writing in response to your letter of April 7, 1998, requesting the Department of Justice's position on the granting of immunity to Irene Wu. The Department of Justice has no opposition to the Committee granting immunity to Ms. Wu. We

□ This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., □ 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.



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