citizens before their peers. The resolution offered by the Majority Leader allows this process to occur, and upon its conclusion, for Congress to then make a decision based on the merit of the facts. The Minority Leader's resolution reaches a conclusion before the facts have even come to court. Indeed, it reaches a conclusion before Congressman JEFFERSON is even formally arraigned.

The disrespect this resolution has for our Constitution that we have all sworn to uphold and defend by not allowing our system of justice to work its will; the absolute terrible precedent this resolution makes in establishing guilt based not on facts but politics; and by focusing on only one Member of Congress instead of seeking to reform or address the behavior of all Members of Congress, are the reasons why I cast my vote against this measure.

Mr. BOEHNER. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the previous question is ordered on the resolution.

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the resolution.

The question was taken; and the Speaker pro tempore announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

Mr. BOEHNER. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.

DIRECTING THE COMMITTEE ON STANDARDS OF OFFICIAL CONDUCT TO RESPOND TO THE INDICTMENT OF ANY MEMBER OF THE HOUSE

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 451) directing the Committee on Standards of Official Conduct to respond to the indictment of, or the filing of charges of criminal conduct in a court of the United States or any State against, any Member of the House of Representatives by empaneling an investigative subcommittee to review the allegations not later than 30 days after the date the Member is indicted or the charges are filed.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

H. RES. 451

Whereas on June 4, 2007, Representative William Jefferson was indicted on 16 criminal counts by a grand jury in the United States District Court for the Eastern District of Virginia;

Whereas recent credible media accounts indicate that the Department of Justice is investigating the conduct of other Members of the House of Representatives, and these investigations may lead to further indictments;

Whereas the One Hundred Tenth Congress, in its first day of session, strengthened the rules concerning the ethical behavior of Members of the House;

Whereas the House has approved on an overwhelming and bipartisan basis H.R. 2316, the Honest Leadership and Open Government Act of 2007, to establish strict standards and penalties concerning the relationship between lobbyists and Members; and

Whereas these actions by the One Hundred Tenth Congress demonstrate that illegal, unethical, or inappropriate conduct by Members of the House will not be tolerated: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That whenever a Member of the House of Representatives, including a Delegate or Resident Commissioner to the Congress, is indicted or otherwise formally charged with criminal conduct in a court of the United States or any State, the Committee on Standards of Official Conduct shall, not later than 30 days after the date of such indictment or charge—

(1) empanel an investigative subcommittee to review the allegations; or

(2) if the Committee does not empanel an investigative subcommittee to review the allegations, submit a report to the House describing its reasons for not empaneling such an investigative subcommittee, together with the actions, if any, the Committee has taken in response to the allegations.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. HOYER) and the gentleman from California (Mr. DREIER) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Maryland.

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, the minority leader, in closing on the resolution that will be voted on in a short time, correctly observed that every Member of the House needs to be held accountable for conduct which undermines the faith, respect and confidence that the American public has in this institution. We agree with that. In fact, we have been saying that for years and we have acted to effect that objective. This resolution, we believe, furthers that effort.

Essentially, Mr. Speaker, what this resolution says, it directs the Committee on Standards of Official Conduct to respond to an indictment of or the filing of charges of criminal conduct in a court of the United States of any State against any Member of the House by empaneling an investigative subcommittee to review the allegations not later than 30 days after the date the Member is indicted or charges are filed.

As I said in my statement with reference to the previous resolution, this will be a general process of the House so that every Member knows that this process will be employed, not on a partisan basis, but on the basis of conduct and on the basis of actions that have been taken.

It also says, however, to the committee that if they find that such an investigative committee, under the circumstances that the bipartisan committee reviews, do not feel that going forward is appropriate, they can report that back. That, I think, responds to the concerns properly raised by the gentleman from California. This resolution under this suspension is the general of what the other resolution is on the specifics.

Mr. Speaker, I said that NANCY BOYDA from the State of Kansas came here and offered legislation which essentially said that if Members were found guilty of a crime that adversely affected their service in the Congress of the United States, that their pensions would be at risk. That legislation was overwhelmingly adopted. I congratulate the gentlelady from Kansas for her focus on ensuring the ethics of this body and that the public is not subsidizing criminal or unethical behavior which subjects a Member to removal.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield such time as she may consume in support of the suspension to the gentlewoman from Kansas (Mrs. BOYDA).

Mrs. BOYDA of Kansas. Mr. Speaker, last November, voters charged a new congressional majority with a clear mandate: End the scandals and clean up Congress. At first, we embraced the voters' charge. The Democratic majority passed an ethics reform package that banned Members from accepting gifts from lobbyists, we blocked Representatives from flying on corporate jets, and we prevented Congressmen from pressuring private businesses to hire or fire for political reasons.

Now the time has come for another step, and our actions in the next days will determine the strength of our resolve. Did we mean it last November when we said we would change Congress, or were our words just mere election-year slogans?

If we meant what we said, then it is clear what must happen next. First, the House Ethics Committee must launch investigations into public reports of congressional corruption, including accusations that Mr. WILLIAM JEFFERSON committed crimes such as racketeering, soliciting bribes and money laundering. This committee must investigate. No excuses and no delays. And if the Ethics Committee proves unable to complete this, its most basic responsibility, then Congress must create a more independent Ethics Committee, capable of the initiative and oversight that the American people deserve.

But that isn't enough. Although Mr. JEFFERSON should and must enjoy the presumption of innocence granted to all American defendants, as a Member of Congress he has a special pact with the American people. If Mr. JEFFERSON left Congress today, if he were to resign today, as I know many of us wish that he would, then tomorrow he will begin drawing a Federal pension for his service in Congress. According to the National Taxpayers Union, that pension will exceed $40,000 a year.

This, and I mean this word literally, is an outrage. Taxpayers should not fund the pensions of Members of Congress who had to resign or have resigned in disgrace, and Congress has the responsibility to end this state of affairs.

We must strip the pensions of any Member of Congress who commits a major Federal crime while in office. I offered a bill, the Pensions Forfeiture Act, to do precisely that, and it passed the House of Representatives earlier this year. A similar bill has passed the Senate, and now it must be sent to the floor as a reconciled bill that we can finally send to the President.

Let's not permit committee delays or needless procedure to interfere one more day with real, meaningful ethics reform. Let's pass the Pensions Forfeiture Act into law, and, what's more, let's end the revolving door. Let's establish an independent ethics commission, and let's begin to rebuild the trust of the American people.

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of this resolution, but I have to say that I am very, very troubled that we are where we are.

I see the distinguished chairman of the Committee on the Judiciary, my very good friend from Detroit, Mr. CONYERS, on the floor. Just before we adjourned for the Memorial Day break, he and I were in a lengthy exchange, both upstairs in the Rules Committee and then here on the House floor dealing with the issue of lobbying reform, and I was very pleased that Mr. CONYERS supported an amendment that I offered dealing with disclosure of post-employment plans for Members. It was a very thoughtful process. Concern had been raised about that, and Mr. CONYERS was very, very generous in looking at that issue, in dealing responsibly with it, and accepting the amendment that I proposed to that issue.

When we were in the midst of debate, and I will have to say when he stood there, I was somewhat concerned over the fact that we saw gross politicization from some of our colleagues on the other side of the aisle, who have continued to try to make campaign speeches on this issue of lobbying and ethics reform, talking about the message that was sent last November.

We all know that the American people want an institution, a United States House of Representatives, that is above reproach. We all know that Members of this institution should in fact be held to the highest possible standards.

But I will tell you, Mr. Speaker, what troubles me about where we are at this moment. I just today looked at a report that was issued on the great new openness and the way this institution has been run and how dramatically improved it is. And then we are given, with this resolution, with all due respect, Mr. Speaker, a very, very poorly drafted resolution. That is the reason that we have a referral process.

In the 109th Congress, we had many, many issues that we had to address. And original jurisdiction matters that were referred to the Committee on Rules in fact were addressed in hearings, were addressed in markups, and in fact were resolved.

We listened to colleagues on the other side of the aisle, Mr. Speaker, talk about all of these great reforms that were implemented on the opening day of the 110th Congress and these great changes that have taken place. Well, Mr. Speaker, I have to tell you that we also have been spending time in the 110th Congress cleaning up the poorly worded, messy language that we dealt with.

One example: In a rule that was passed by this House we self-executed a provision which actually allowed Members to once again attend charitable events. In the opening day rules package that was put into place on this issue, Mr. Speaker, there was a provision that actually denied Members, it denied Members, the opportunity to attend charitable events.

Now, that was rectified. But I use that one example, Mr. Speaker, to point to the fact that if we had handled this issue the way Mr. CONYERS had handled the issue of lobbying ethics reform, which we supported in a bipartisan way, we would not be dealing with a resolution that creates the potential, Mr. Speaker, for Members of this House who face a traffic ticket, Members who might want to protest, as I said earlier in my remarks, at the Sudanese Embassy over policies that are taking place there.

What it would mean, Mr. Speaker, is under this resolution, a Member who gets a traffic ticket, gets a ticket for littering, is arrested for protesting at the Sudanese Embassy, that that would have to be referred to the Committee on Standards.

My friend has just said there is a provision in here, it is the last line, item 2 in the ''resolved'' clause, which says if the committee does not empanel an investigative subcommittee to review the allegations, submit a report to the House describing its reasons for not empaneling such an investigative subcommittee, together with the actions, if any, the committee has taken in response to the allegation.

So, Mr. Speaker, this very, very poorly crafted resolution basically does state that the Committee on Standards of Official Conduct does in fact have to deal with this, even if they choose, because it was a protest or a traffic ticket or a littering ticket, they still have to deal with this issue by choosing not to empanel an investigative committee to address that.

Now, our new colleague from Kansas stood up and very proudly talked about the fact that she is dealing with this issue of pension reform. We all want to do everything that we can to make sure that Members don't have the taxpayers subsidizing these pensions of criminals, people who are imprisoned.

□ 1900

We know there was concern raised about family members, but I will say there is nothing in this resolution that we are debating right now, Mr. Speaker, that addresses the issue of ensuring that criminals who have served in this institution are not going to continue to benefit from their pensions. In this very unique case, Mr. Speaker, I will say that we are very troubled over the fact that there are co-conspirators involved in this charge; and, Mr. Speaker, they are in fact family members who potentially could become the beneficiaries of this pension.

So, Mr. Speaker, I will say again I am going to vote in favor of this resolution, but I am very, very troubled about the way it has been worded. I am very troubled over the fact that it was not referred to the Rules Committee of which I am privileged to serve as the ranking minority member. I think this is a very poor way of doing business.

Our Republican leader came forward with an appropriate privileged resolution which simply called for the Ethics Committee to expeditiously take action. We have had to wait for nearly half a year without any action whatsoever being taken to follow up on the action that was taken in the 109th Congress.

I believe everyone should in fact be deemed innocent until proven guilty beyond a shadow of a doubt. I believe that as we look at this, though, it is imperative that we have action taken as quickly as possible.

Mr. Speaker, I am happy to yield 1 minute to my very good friend from Texas, Judge GOHMERT.

Mr. GOHMERT. Mr. Speaker, I was in my office and was so encouraged to hear the majority leader earlier say, as I understood it, unethical conduct would be pursued no matter where, no matter who. And, of course, we just recently had an allegation by MIKE ROGERS regarding unethical conduct, and the majority leader moved to table that action in that pursuit.

We know the majority leader to be an honorable man. I am deeply encouraged that apparently if Mr. ROGERS will remake that resolution or motion, this time the majority leader would not move to table it, would not marshal forces to stop the pursuit of alleged unethical conduct, and we can get this body on track. And I am greatly gratified.

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the distinguished gentleman from Ohio (Mr. SPACE), who comes to the Congress replacing Mr. Ney because the people wanted honest representation.

Mr. SPACE. Mr. Speaker, I thank the majority leader for yielding me this time and for his leadership on this issue.

I rise today to support this resolution. In order to restore the integrity to this Chamber and restore America's faith in its elected officials, we must continue to undertake substantive action with regard to ethics reform.

This Congress has made huge strides in reforming itself and cleaning up Washington, as our majority leader alluded to earlier this evening, but there

is still more to be done. Our actions today will not only enhance the most fundamental principles of a democratic society, they will remind our constituents that we are a body of the people, and not above the people.

Simply put, when a Member of Congress is indicted, there should, as a matter of course, be an immediate ethics investigation.

Coming from a district whose previous Congressman became mired and then consumed by scandal, my fellow district residents and I understand all too well the perils associated with weak and loosely monitored ethics regulations. We have suffered the frustration, disappointment, and anger associated with a betrayal. We suffered from not having a Member of Congress available to attend the needs of the citizens of our district.

But we are not alone. Other districts have suffered similar tragedies, and that is inexcusable and unconscionable. The people that we serve in this body deserve a Member of Congress that is committed to representing their needs, and we cannot afford to wait any longer in addressing this issue.

The time to act is now. As Members of Congress, we have an extraordinary burden to those who have bestowed this great honor upon us. I ask my colleagues to join me in supporting this important measure.

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I would like to once again engage in a colloquy with my very good friend from Maryland, the distinguished majority leader, if I might.

As we are standing here today, I will say, unfortunately, on the House floor this has become sort of the Rules Committee original jurisdiction process. We are now doing it on the House floor because a decision was made by the majority leadership to prevent the Rules Committee from having an opportunity to even consider this resolution.

Mr. Speaker, if I might just pretend as if this is a committee hearing and assume that the distinguished Chair has yielded time to me, I would like to inquire of the author of the resolution as to whether or not it is the intent to have Members of this institution who might possibly be engaging in a very, very great protest over which they feel very strongly and they are arrested, I would like to inquire is it the intention of the author of this resolution, Mr. Speaker, to have that measure, have that Member, referred with a potential huge, huge legal fee, $450 to $1,000 an hour, to action taken by the Committee on Standards of Official Conduct?

And, similarly, I ask whether or not it is the intent of the author of the resolution to have the measure if someone, a Member of this House, gets a traffic ticket and they have to face a legal challenge there, if it is their intent that the issue of a Member's traffic ticket be referred to the Ethics Committee so the Ethics Committee can decide whether or not they want to empanel an investigative group to look at this, or choose to waive it. Or, as I said earlier, for littering or any other small instance.

My concern with this very poorly crafted resolution, my concern, Mr. Speaker, is we will see a situation whereby Members are faced with that kind of challenge.

I would be happy to yield to my friend to have him respond if that is the intent of his legislation here.

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. DREIER. I yield to the gentleman from Maryland.

Mr. HOYER. I thank the gentleman for his question.

What the resolution anticipates is applying generally that which the resolution offered by the minority leader raises specifically because we believe that the Ethics Committee ought to ensure for the American public that ethical conduct which does not call in question the House of Representatives' standards of official conduct is being pursued.

But I will tell the gentleman further that I have great confidence in this Ethics Committee, led by a former member of the judiciary, I might add, who knows the law and who knows process. And I have full confidence that she and the Members of the Ethics Committee on both sides, and, as the gentleman knows, it is five Republicans and five Democrats, would summarily have a form available to them that would say if someone gets a traffic ticket that is not subject to further action. You and I would agree with that without hesitation.

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, reclaiming my time.

Mr. HOYER. I wanted to fully answer the gentleman's question in this committee hearing we are having.

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, the gentleman did say and he talked about the great colleagues we have who serve on the Committee on Standards of Official Conduct, and he did refer to the fact that this measure and the concern over a traffic ticket would, in fact, have to be referred to the Committee on Standards of Official Conduct. So I am inferring from that that it is the gentleman's intent that a measure like a traffic ticket or a protest at the Sudanese Embassy is to be referred to the Committee on Standards.

Mr. HOYER. If the gentleman would yield for a very specific response to that.

Mr. DREIER. Sure. I am happy to yield to the gentleman.

Mr. HOYER. First of all, a traffic ticket is a charge, not a conviction. It is a de minimus charge that I think the committee would summarily deal with.

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, reclaiming my time, I would just say if the gentleman were to read the resolution which he has authored, he would see there is no specificity. And, in fact, it is very possible, it is very possible that if we pass this legislation, we would be in a position where the Committee on Standards would be forced to deal with the issue of a traffic ticket, a protest, a littering ticket or any measure like that. My only question of the gentleman was that in fact his intent. He said this was authored in response to the Republican measure.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 30 seconds to the gentleman from Maryland.

Mr. HOYER. I would say to the gentleman, the intent of the resolution I think is clear. And that is to say when charges are made, and the gentleman tries to bring up de minimus charges that no American would think violates the ethics of the House of Representatives or essentially major transgressions.

I think the Ethics Committee, if that was brought before them pursuant to this resolution, would deal with them summarily as not being worthy of consideration as you and I would deem them not worth of consideration.

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, reclaiming my time, the only point I am trying to make to my very good friend from Maryland is that this is a measure that clearly should have been referred to the Committee on Rules. The gentleman has on three occasions talked about the intent, the intent of his legislation.

This is drafted. We are about to vote on it. Why is there not specificity as to how Members are treated when dealing with an issue like of a traffic ticket juxtaposed to the 16 counts we are dealing with in the case of Mr. JEFFERSON?

There is not clarity in this measure, Mr. Speaker, and I believe it is very important for us to recognize that if we are in fact in this House with a great new sense of openness and a greater deliberative nature, this is a sad commentary on where we are. As I said in my remarks, everyone wants to talk about and is a proponent of holding this institution to high ethical standards. This is not a partisan issue. Unfortunately, it was used as a very partisan issue in last November's election.

But as we have found, there are problems of corruption on both sides of the aisle. It seems to me that as we deal with an issue that is as important as holding this institution to the highest possible ethical standards, Mr. Speaker, it is very important for us to do it right.

Unfortunately, and again, while I am going to vote for this resolution, I think it was very, very poorly crafted. I think we as an institution, Mr. Speaker, can do much, much better than we did with this.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself 30 seconds.

Mr. Speaker, clearly what the gentleman is trying to do in a debating framework is trying to say we didn't mention every specific instance,

whether very serious, moderately serious, or extraordinarily serious.

The gentleman is correct. I have responded to the gentleman that the Ethics Committee clearly, we believe, can make those judgments; and we believe and are confident that the committee will make such judgments and will not treat de minimus assertions as seriously calling for investigative subcommittees or further action by the committee.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. MCNERNEY).

Mr. MCNERNEY. Mr. Speaker, the bribery and corruption charges against Congressman JEFFERSON are serious. They go to the very heart of our ability as a representative government to do its job. It is fundamental that the people trust their elected representatives to act in the people's interest, not in their own. The very appearance that these allegations create is damaging to the image of this institution.

In the coming days, Congressman JEFFERSON will answer in a court of law to the 16 charges on which he was indicted. Congressman JEFFERSON is entitled to the presumption of innocence in the allegations against him, including bribery, racketeering, money laundering and obstruction of justice.

However, the Congress should be held to the highest standards. Earlier today, I called for the Ethics Committee to initiate its own investigation into the charges against Congressman JEFFERSON.

I support this resolution which calls for the automatic initiation of an Ethics Committee investigation when a Member of this body is indicted or formally charged with criminal conduct. This principle applies not just to Congressman JEFFERSON but to any Member of this House.

In the opening days of this Congress, I rose on the floor in support of a tough new ethics package.

□ 1915

I said then that Members of Congress should be held to the highest regard by the people they represent. Illegal, unethical or inappropriate conduct by Members of the House cannot be tolerated.

I was elected to this Congress to help change the way we do business in Washington, and I will continue to do so without regard to person or party.

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, may I inquire of the Chair how much time is remaining on each side of the debate?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from California has 5 minutes remaining. The gentleman from Maryland has 10 minutes remaining.

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, I wonder if my friend from Maryland would be very generous. Most of the time that I yielded was for his very thoughtful explanations as we were going through what I consider to be the Rules Committee hearing process here.

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. DREIER. Well, 5 minutes, actually I'm going to reserve the time. If the gentleman would like to answer on his own time, the gentleman has twice as much time as I have. We have requests, and we are trying to get through the entire Rules Committee hearing here in a matter of 15 minutes. It's going to be a challenge for us, Mr. Speaker.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Does the gentleman reserve the balance of his time?

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. HOYER. The gentleman from Maryland has many people who are very interested in speaking on this issue, and I will have to yield to them and use the time to do so.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the distinguished gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. CARNEY).

Mr. CARNEY. Mr. Speaker, I thank the Leader, and I rise in support of this resolution. Ethics reform must be more than rhetorical. It simply must be real. I, like many of my colleagues, came to Congress with a promise that corruption should not be tolerated from either party. This is not about partisan politics, but this is rather about upholding strong ethical standards.

I was extremely disappointed to hear that another Member of Congress was indicted on such serious charges and this is not something that we can take lightly. A Member of Congress under such serious charges really should think long and hard about whether or not they can remain in Congress.

This is truly about justice, about doing the right things for the Member of Congress and for the Member of Congress' constituents.

Should the Member, in fighting these allegations, think hard about stepping down? Can the Member truly defend himself or herself and adequately represent the constituents of his or her district?

This is something I think that people under indictment should consider, as well I would encourage Mr. JEFFERSON to take this under advisement and encourage him to step down.

I rise in support of this resolution. Ethics Reform must be more than rhetorical—it must be real. I came to Congress with a promise that corruption should not be tolerated from either party. This is not about partisan politics; it is about upholding strong ethical standards.

I was extremely disappointed to hear that another Member of Congress is indicted on such serious charges and this is not something that can be taken lightly. A Member of Congress under serious indictment does not belong in the United States House of Representatives.

It is my hope that this situation with Congressman JEFFERSON can be resolved quickly and judiciously. However, given the serious allegations and ethical issues the indictment presents, I call on Congressman JEFFERSON to resign from the U.S. House of Representatives.

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, I'm going to reserve the balance of my time, and I really, really look forward to continuing our Rules Committee hearing process with my friend, the majority leader, after we have our line of very thoughtful speeches being made by our friends on the other side of the aisle. He said he had a whole lot of them, so I'm going to reserve my time if I might, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. HOYER. I thank the gentleman. He will observe that our speakers have all been from districts where this was a compelling issue in the November election, and that is why they are so interested in speaking about it.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. PERLMUTTER).

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Mr. Speaker, my position is similar to that of the gentleman from Pennsylvania.

I had the opportunity the last 2 days to be down in the gulf coast, to be in New Orleans today, and quite frankly, Mr. JEFFERSON is entitled to a presumption of innocence. That is the way of our judicial system and our code in this country.

Mr. Speaker, first, I rise in support of this resolution. An investigation needs to be conducted. We need to have the Ethics Committee take a look at this.

But I would also suggest to this House that when someone, anyone, is under indictment, it's a difficult position for him to do justice to himself or herself and to also do justice for their particular district, and those concerns were raised by people in New Orleans today, as well as in the newspaper.

So, as with Mr. CARNEY, I would suggest that the Ethics Committee take a good long look at this, that Mr. JEFFERSON obviously is going to take a good long look. I would suggest that he do justice to himself, prepare his defense, and that his district have someone else.

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, I'm going to continue to reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes, with the possibility of an additional minute, to my good friend from the State of Florida, Mr. TIM MAHONEY.

Mr. MAHONEY of Florida. Mr. Speaker, no party's immune from corruption. Democrats and Republicans alike share the blame for outrageous ethical lapses that have occurred in Congress. In order to rebuild the trust of the American people and restore integrity to this great House, it is clear that we need to change the way ethics rules are enforced.

While I am pleased that the House will consider legislation tonight to strengthen enforcement of ethics rules, I would like to reiterate the need to create an independent ethics office.

We need independent ethics enforcement to prevent the kind of rampant corruption that was condoned in the last Congress and hold all Members accountable for questionable and illegal behavior.

Creating an independent ethics office with the authority to blow the whistle

on questionable behavior would introduce the impartiality and accountability that has been missing from the enforcement of House ethics rules. It would depoliticize ethics enforcement and get the fox out of the hen house once and for all.

We have seen the costs of corruption. It erodes the trust of the American people, hurts our constituents and damages our ability to solve the critical challenges facing our great Nation.

In order to offer real solutions to the many challenges facing our country, we need a solid foundation. I'm committed to supporting efforts to hold all Members of Congress to higher standards of ethics and integrity, but it is time for this body to listen to the will of the American people and establish once and for all an independent ethics office.

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, may I inquire of my very good friend, the distinguished majority leader, how many speakers he has remaining on his side?

Mr. HOYER. I think that we are concluded with our speakers and I will close.

Mr. DREIER. Okay. Mr. Speaker, may I inquire how much time we have remaining on each side?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from California has 5 minutes remaining, and the gentleman from Maryland has 6 minutes remaining.

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume, and I'd like to during this period of time engage my friend in a colloquy.

And let me say as we begin this process, that I'm very troubled that we have this 40 minutes of debate, and we are in a position right now where we had to hear a whole line of campaign speeches that were, as the gentleman from Maryland said, a very important part of last November's process, the election, and we had to listen to those speeches again rather than trying to clean up this very, very poorly crafted legislation.

Now, I asked my friend to yield earlier, and he refused to yield to me, Mr. Speaker. And as I made that request, I was struck with the fact that the report that was just issued today continued to talk about this great sense of civility, openness and bipartisanship that exists in this institution. So I will say that I was somewhat troubled by that.

Mr. Speaker, I have just been informed that the distinguished majority leader has another speaker from which we're going to hear, and before I engage in my colloquy with him, and I hope he might be generous with whatever time is remaining so that we can try to clean up this legislation or at least the intents of it, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself 30 seconds.

Mr. Speaker, we believe this resolution is well-crafted, and it's well-crafted to effect the end that it seeks. And the end that it seeks is very simple, that when issues are raised, the Ethics Committee will pursue them and that they will give confidence to the American public that we are taking seriously the allegations and/or the transgressions that might undermine the integrity of this House.

We think that's what the American people want. That's what we are pursuing. We think this legislation is very clear on that issue.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the distinguished gentlewoman from New York (Mrs. GILLIBRAND).

Mrs. GILLIBRAND. Mr. Speaker, I thank the majority leader.

I rise today to speak on the issue of ethics. This body must focus its attentions on ethics and accountability. In the last election, the American people demanded such, and I think this resolution offered by Mr. HOYER is something that will begin to address that concern.

The Ethics Committee must begin to respond to allegations of wrongdoing by this House. I think a mandatory 30-day return time makes an extraordinary amount of sense.

As a member of the freshman class who cares a lot about ethics and accountability, we also hope to eventually have an independent ethics counsel which will also provide recommendations to the House Ethics Committee.

I think this is the first step in the progress of making sure that the American people can begin to have faith and confidence in its government and its elected leaders.

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, may I inquire again how much time is remaining?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from California has 4 minutes remaining. The gentleman from Maryland has 4½ minutes remaining.

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

As we've been sitting here listening to what frankly have been a flow of campaign speeches, we've been trying to sort of study and analyze and scrutinize what the majority leader, for whom I have highest regard, describes as well-crafted legislation.

So I'm going to with the remaining time that I have continue to try and inquire about this legislation which should have been referred to the Rules Committee, that should have been an original jurisdiction hearing.

A question that has just come to my attention, Mr. Speaker, and I would be happy to yield to my friend for an answer on this, is whether or not a Member who conceivably receives a traffic ticket, and again, the language here says, ''be it Resolved, That whenever a Member of the House of Representatives, including a Delegate or Resident Commissioner to the Congress, is indicted or otherwise formally charged with criminal conduct.''

Now, my question to my friend would be, if a Member were to get a speeding ticket, and I was just informed by one of our crack staff people here who is aware of the fact that in the State of Virginia, if someone exceeds the speed limit by 10 miles an hour, they could be out here on the George Washington Parkway, there is in fact a criminal charge leveled against them. If that were to happen to a Member, is that Member under this resolution that we are going to be voting on compelled to actually inform the Committee on Standards of Official Conduct that that person faces that criminal charge?

And I'd be happy to yield to the majority leader to clarify this bit of confusion that we have in this legislation, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, would the gentleman from California yield?

Mr. DREIER. I'm happy to yield to my friend.

Mr. HOYER. I thank my friend for yielding.

My friend continues to focus on traffic tickets. He tries to—

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, if I could reclaim my time, when the gentleman says I'm just focusing on traffic tickets, if in fact someone is arrested for a protest at the Sudanese Embassy, is it the intent that that Member be compelled to inform the Committee on Standards of Official Conduct of this action?

These are the questions we want to have answered, and I'm underscoring, Mr. Speaker, the fact that there is a lot of confusion about this resolution. I'm happy to further yield to my friend.

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, would the gentleman from California yield?

Mr. DREIER. I'm happy to yield.

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, it is a short resolution. The gentleman may not think it's well-written, but nor has he well-read it. There is nothing in there that says the Member is compelled to do anything.

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, if I could reclaim my time, that is the reason we need to have that clarified. Let me read the resolution on which we're about to vote.

It says, ''otherwise formally charged with criminal conduct.'' That is the language that is here. If that happens, then the Committee on Standards of Official Conduct is expected to take action, whether or not they choose to empanel an investigative committee or choose to waive it. The Committee on Standards of Official Conduct is compelled to take action, whether it be a traffic ticket, an arrest at the Sudanese Embassy or a littering ticket.

And I'm happy to yield to my friend if he wants to further clarify the confusion and explain to us what ''otherwise formally charged with criminal conduct'' is, and Mr. Speaker, the reason I'm doing this is to simply underscore the fact that this measure should have been referred to the Committee on Rules so that we could have held an original jurisdiction and done what we've already had to do in this Congress so far, and that is clean up on issues like the charitable events attending, we had to clean that up

through a self-executed measure in a rule that was passed last month.

□ 1930

That's why we have a chance to do it. I believe it should be done.

I am happy to yield to my friend.

Mr. HOYER. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

I will tell the gentleman that this resolution that we are now considering does not seek to trivialize the issue. I suggest that the gentleman is trying to trivialize this issue. This issue does not deal with traffic tickets.

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, if I could reclaim my time, I am not trivializing. I am not trivializing this issue at all.

Mr. HOYER. If the gentleman wants an answer, then he ought to give me the time to answer.

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, I am not trivializing this issue at all. There is nothing trivial about this issue.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman's time has expired.

Mr. DREIER. My time has expired? Will the gentleman from Maryland yield me time to respond?

Mr. HOYER. How much time do I have?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Maryland has 4½ minutes remaining.

Mr. HOYER. I yield the gentleman from California 1 minute.

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, let me say there is absolutely nothing trivial about this issue. We are here on the floor because of the fact that we have faced a very serious attack with an indictment against one of our colleagues. That Member happens to be a Democrat.

We have all discussed the fact that this is a bipartisan issue, and there is a goal to ensure that this institution is held to the highest possible ethical standards. We have before us a resolution, which, based on my experience in this House, is very poorly crafted. It is a resolution which creates the potential for all kinds of havoc.

I have been spending the last 40 minutes making a feeble attempt at trying to create some kind of legislative history as to how Members of this institution in the future are going to be treated, as our friends on other side of the aisle have rushed to the floor and tried to politicize this very, very important substantive issue.

They have done it. They have done it through the campaign process last fall, and I believe that we need to do what we can to put this measure before the Committee on Rules so we can, in fact, have a decent hearing on it.

I thank my friend for yielding.

Mr. HOYER. The gentleman is welcome.

The pain of accountability is evident. What this resolution says, and I am pleased that the gentleman from California is going to vote for it, is that the American people are going to have confidence that when a criminal act is committed by a Member, whatever that act, that the Ethics Committee will look at it.

I said earlier in the course of this debate that I have full confidence that the Ethics Committee will dismiss summarily, summarily, the examples that the gentleman from California raises. That's not what the American public are concerned about.

Yes, perhaps it's politicized. But when Duke Cunningham takes $2.5 million of bribes to put earmarks in bills and calls the Defense Department and says, give Mr. Wade a contract, the American people knows that's something they want looked at. They want action taken. That Member was not expelled until conviction.

When Mr. Abramoff takes trips with a lot of people to Scotland for free, the American people knows that's not a traffic ticket. It's not demonstrating in front of the Embassy of Sudan to say stop the genocide in Darfur. The American public knows the difference.

When a gentleman gets $5,000 in chips to put in his pocket and pay his bills with, they know that's not a traffic ticket, particularly when legislative action is taken shortly thereafter on this floor. They know the difference.

I would hope that every Member would vote for this, because I believe that every Member in this House wants an ethical House, Republican and Democrat. Why? Because unethical conduct, yes, criminal conduct, reflects on every one of us, because the American public too readily assumes, well, if one does it, all do it.

That is not the case. I believe that I am privileged to serve with those of you on the Republican side and those on the Democratic side with some very ethical members of our society who have been chosen by your neighbors to represent them in this body.

All we are saying in this resolution is that, ladies and gentlemen of America, we are going to hold accountable each and every one of us if we do not act in accordance with your justifiably high expectations. I hope every Member of this body votes for this resolution and says to our constituents, this body will be an ethical, honest body representing your interest.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. HOYER) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 451.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, proceedings will resume on questions previously postponed.

Votes will be taken in the following order: motion to suspend the rules on H. Res. 397, by the yeas and nays; motion to suspend the rules on H. Res. 422, by the yeas and nays; motion to suspend the rules on H. Res. 430, by the yeas and nays; motion to suspend the rules on H. Res. 451, by the yeas and nays; adoption of H. Res. 452, by the yeas and nays.

The first electronic vote will be conducted as a 15-minute vote. Remaining electronic votes will be conducted as 5-minute votes.

CONDEMNING VIOLENCE IN ESTONIA AND ATTACKS ON ESTONIA'S EMBASSIES IN 2007

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The unfinished business is the vote on the motion to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 397, as amended, on which the yeas and nays were ordered.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. LANTOS) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 397, as amended.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 412, nays 0, not voting 20, as follows:

[Roll No. 426]

YEAS—412

Abercrombie
Ackerman
Aderholt
Akin
Alexander
Allen
Altmire
Andrews
Arcuri
Bachmann
Bachus
Baird
Baker
Baldwin
Barrett (SC)
Barrow
Bartlett (MD)
Barton (TX)
Bean
Berkley
Berman
Berry
Biggert
Bilbray
Bilirakis
Bishop (GA)
Bishop (NY)
Bishop (UT)
Blackburn
Blumenauer
Blunt
Boehner
Bonner
Bono
Boozman
Boren
Boswell
Boucher
Boustany
Boyd (FL)
Boyda (KS)
Brady (PA)
Brady (TX)
Braley (IA)
Brown (SC)
Brown, Corrine
Brown-Waite, Ginny
Buchanan
Burgess
Burton (IN)
Butterfield
Buyer
Calvert
Camp (MI)
Campbell (CA)
Cannon
Capito
Capps
Capuano
Cardoza
Carnahan
Carney
Carson
Carter
Castle
Castor
Chabot
Chandler
Clarke
Clay
Cleaver
Clyburn
Coble
Cohen
Cole (OK)
Conaway
Conyers
Costa
Costello
Courtney
Cramer
Crenshaw
Crowley
Cubin
Cuellar
Culberson
Cummings
Davis (AL)
Davis (CA)
Davis (IL)
Davis (KY)
Davis, David
Davis, Jo Ann
Davis, Lincoln
Davis, Tom
Deal (GA)
DeFazio
DeGette
Delahunt
DeLauro
Dent
Diaz-Balart, L.
Diaz-Balart, M.
Dicks
Dingell
Doggett
Donnelly
Doolittle
Doyle
Drake
Dreier
Duncan
Edwards
Ehlers
Ellison
Ellsworth
Emanuel
Emerson
Engel
English (PA)
Eshoo
Etheridge