

THE ETHICS PROCESS

HON. PORTER J. GOSS

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 24, 1996

Mr. GOSS. Mr. Speaker, I offer these comments in response to those submitted by my dear friend, the ranking member of the Rules Committee, Mr. MOAKLEY, late last week. Mr. MOAKLEY was continuing the dialog about our ethics process and I wish to respond directly to his comments.

I am delighted to know that members of the minority are now engaging in a productive discussion about the need to review—and consider changes to—our current ethics process. As I have said for some time, it is my view—shared by many of our colleagues on both sides of the aisle—that the process is broken and needs comprehensive reform.

Of course the existence and authority of the Ethics Committee is provided for under rule X, which is the unique province of our Rules Committee. I agree that matters relating to this committee and its functions are best addressed without partisanship and with the best interests of this institution in mind. All of my efforts to date in attempting to bring about constructive change in the current process have been made in a spirit of bipartisan cooperation.

The Rules Committee included a commitment to review the ethics process, as prescribed by House rule X, in our oversight plan for the 104th Congress. I refer interested observers to the Government Reform and Oversight Committee's report from March 1995 which incorporated the oversight plans of all committees as required by rule X(2)(d). Specifically, the Subcommittee on Legislative and Budget Process' intentions with respect to the ethics process can be found on page 169 of that report, which states that "the subcommittee intends to review the mandate of the [standards] committee as established in rule X, clause 4 as amended by the Ethics Reform Act of 1989 and the manner in which its members are chosen and required to serve." That particular oversight recommendation was made as part of our committee's overall oversight agenda, and adopted by voice vote of our committee with no complaint by the minority on February 14, 1995.

Since that time I have made several efforts to proceed with what I have always believed would be a bipartisan review of the current process, followed by a bipartisan discussion of options for reform for the next Congress. I had many conversations with our subcommittee's ranking minority member, MARTIN FROST during which he expressed continued reluctance to proceed on this subject. In fact, we conducted a lengthy written correspondence as well, and in deference to him and to the apparent wishes of the Democrat leadership, I postponed our formal review several times. I did, however, proceed in my capacity as a Member of this House in late January of this year and put forward House Resolution 346, embodying my own ideas about ways in which the process should be revised.

At that time, Chairman SOLOMON released a statement that said: "We are honoring the request of the ranking minority member on the Goss subcommittee, Mr. FROST, by not proceeding with hearings at this time. But I think

we have an obligation to begin to gather reactions and suggestions from Members and persons outside the Congress on these proposals so that we are prepared to proceed with formal hearings later this year."

It has always been clear to me that ethics process reform should be a bipartisan effort and should be based on input from all points of view. I don't think there is any disagreement on that point. In fact, during our committee's unprecedented hearings to take input from Members and outside witnesses about ideas for building upon the changes that were made to our rules in this Congress as we prepare for the 105th Congress, it became clear that many Members already have developed ideas about improving the ethics process.

The purpose of all of my efforts on this subject is to move the review process forward in a productive manner so that we do not find ourselves in the position where Members want change yet we are locked into the current process for another whole Congress. It is my view that there is advantage to having Members involved in that effort who have had frontline experience with our current process.

I look forward to working with all my colleagues on a bipartisan basis in addressing this issue.

HONORING THE HUNTINGTON
BREAST CANCER ACTION COALITION

HON. GARY L. ACKERMAN

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 24, 1996

Mr. ACKERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the extraordinary work of the Huntington Breast Cancer Action Coalition. This coalition has been instrumental in escalating our awareness about the high rate of breast cancer throughout the Huntington community.

The Huntington Breast Cancer Action Coalition conducts town meetings, provides breast exam workshops and distributes educational literature. Moreover, this important organization works with the Suffolk County Department of Health Services to provide yearly mammograms at St. Hughes of Lincoln Church in Huntington Station. The success of this independent, grassroots organization has been studied around the world. In fact, the Huntington organization has inspired the creation of the Tokyo Breast Cancer Action Coalition.

The coalition was created on October 12, 1992, by a group of women led by Karen Miller, who cared deeply about the high rate of breast cancer in their community and had been affected personally by this most serious condition. These women educated their families, friends, and neighbors about various prevention and early detection measures. By 1993, the organization had opened administrative offices. Today, the Huntington Breast Cancer Action Coalition has 1,500 active volunteers, each of whom is committed to putting an end to this serious condition. The organization has sent a woman's breast health survey to 68,000 households throughout Huntington. So far, they have compiled 26,000 responses in their computer data base. The coalition eventually wants to use these findings to help determine the cause of the high rate of breast cancer in Huntington. At a dinner on October

1, the coalition will honor the following members who truly demonstrate the selflessness and compassion of an entire organization.

Michael Miller, who is the husband of the founder of the coalition, has been an outstanding leader in our fight against breast cancer. His wife's struggle with breast cancer has led him to nearly a decade of outspoken advocacy. Mr. Miller has owned and operated the A-OK Appliance Co. for 33 years. He is also an active trustee of his synagogue. Michael Miller has lived happily on Long Island with his wife and three children since the 1960's.

Denise Kleinman, another Coalition activist, has been working toward the creation of a Breast Cancer Awareness Clinic. Her lifetime of work truly represents how one individual can make such an extraordinary difference. This former New York City teacher has been involved in both her local PTA and in her synagogue. She is also a volunteer for Island Harvest which collects excess food and distributes it to the needy on Long Island. Denise Kleinman currently resides in Dix Hills with her husband and three children.

Carol Caruso has been one of the most active members of the Huntington Breast Cancer Action Coalition. Both she and her husband have donated substantial resources from their family business in order to support this worthwhile cause. Her actions demonstrate how a local business can work alongside a volunteer organization in order to further the common interest of an entire community. Carol Caruso has also been an active volunteer in the Multiple Sclerosis Foundation. She currently lives in Oyster Bay where she enjoys the company of her six grandchildren.

The Huntington Breast Cancer Coalition truly represents the ideas of compassion, community and determination. Their selfless actions will help others overcome their struggles with breast cancer. Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring these extraordinary individuals and the outstanding work they have done for their community. The organization's dynamic leaders and dedicated volunteers should serve as a model for us all.

WE CAN NO LONGER WAIT FOR
MENTAL HEALTH PARITY

HON. PETER A. DEFAZIO

OF OREGON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 24, 1996

Mr. DEFAZIO. Mr. Speaker, Americans are tired of being discriminated against by their insurance company. Mental health parity language included in the VA-HUD appropriation bill was recently endorsed by an overwhelming majority in the House. Nearly five million men, women and children suffer from a severe mental illness. Yet, only 2 percent of the mentally ill receive insurance coverage. Unfortunately, greed seems to be the driving force behind efforts to deprive so many of our friends, relatives and neighbors of this basic care.

We cannot wait any longer to subject mental health benefits to the same annual and lifetime caps as those for physical health. Currently, private insurers place lifetime limits of \$1 million for cancer, heart disease, diabetes, and tuberculosis but lifetime limits on mental illness is typically set at \$50,000 or less. This