

may not raise questions about the behavior of the Speaker.

It is interesting to note that there has been no appointment of an ethics committee. The behavior of the Speaker cannot in any way be addressed in that body.

It is interesting to note that the ruling of the Speaker has precluded a discussion of that question here in this body.

We need the appointment of an ethics committee, because perhaps that is the only place we can address it, and we also need the appointment of a special prosecutor to inquire into matters that cannot be addressed on the House floor.

DISRUPTIVE TACTICS

(Mr. WALKER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. WALKER. Mr. Speaker, it is disappointing that what we have had is a resorting to disruptive tactics in order to keep the Contract With America from coming to the floor, and the gentleman who spoke just before me, the gentleman from Michigan, indicates that the problem is that an ethics committee has not been appointed.

The problem is the gentleman from Missouri [Mr. GEPHARDT], the minority leader, has not yet appointed the minority side of the ethics committee. It would help if the minority would cooperate with getting forward with the legislative business of the House of Representatives.

We also are disappointed that today, in an effort to stop the Committee on Rules from reporting down the rule that will bring up the unfunded mandates legislation, the House moved to adjourn. Those are the kinds of disruptive tactics, I think, we can expect from the minority.

It is clear now that they cannot discuss these ideas well and so, therefore, what they are going to do is resort to disruptive activities on the floor.

That is a disappointment, and we would hope that maybe we could get back to the legislative business of the country.

AMERICANS BELIEVE IN FUNDAMENTAL FAIRNESS

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

Mr. RUSH. Mr. Speaker, it seems now that the Republican leadership has resorted to a new low in a shallow and shameful effort to stop discussion regarding the Speaker's avaricious book deals.

The majority has succeeded in gagging the minority Members of this House. Mr. Speaker, the American people believe in fundamental fairness. The gagging of Members of the House of Representatives and the House minority flies in the face of that fundamental belief.

To gag a Member of the House of Representatives is a first step toward a dictatorship of the majority which I am afraid my Republican colleagues have brought lock, stock, and gag.

Is the Republican leadership afraid to shed light on the book deal? Are they willing to kill off open discussion in order to protect Rupert Murdoch, the Speaker, and the infamous and outrageous book deal?

THE GANG THAT WOULDN'T SHOOT STRAIGHT

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

Mr. BARR. Mr. Speaker, House Democrats, searching vainly for an issue to sidetrack the Contract With America, have now decided to attack the Speaker regarding a book he has not written yet. Instead of attacking Republicans for writing books, I suggest the Democrats write their own book. The suggested title might be "The Gang That Wouldn't Shoot Straight."

After all, Democrats are not being straight with the American people regarding their own agenda. They are not being straight on why they do not want to pass the balanced budget amendment. In fact, they want to spend more money. They are not being straight with the American people on why they opposed the unfunded mandates bill. In fact, they like unfunded mandates.

Mr. Speaker, the Democrats are the gang that will not be straight with the American people.

Republicans want to change the way Government works. Democrats want to change the subject.

WHAT HAS HAPPENED TO A BRIGHT NEW DAY?

(Ms. JACKSON-LEE asked to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. JACKSON-LEE. Mr. Speaker, I came this day to support unfunded mandates. But unfortunately it is not on the floor today.

Mr. Speaker, a crisis abounds in the House, an institution the American people look to to protect the sanctity of a Nation founded on democratic ideals.

Yet we come today facing the most egregious denial of the first amendment in a body sworn by oath to uphold it.

What has happened to a bright new day? What has happened to an open House, a direct reach to the American people to ensure their full participation?

Today we have been gagged, pierced by the sword of secrecy, keep from simply inquiring on behalf of the American people of the true facts of a pending issue, the book deal of the Speaker.

The House Committee on the Judiciary was shut down.

Mr. Speaker, when I go into a third-grade class in Houston, TX, help me, please, help me convey in good con-

science and in truth that there is no gag rule in the U.S. House of Representatives, and in fact that we do uphold the first amendment of the Constitution of the United States.

THE AMERICAN PEOPLE SENT A CLEAR MESSAGE

(Mr. CHRISTENSEN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. CHRISTENSEN. Mr. Speaker, the American people sent a clear message to us in November. They elected a Republican majority to change the way Congress does business.

After 40 years of liberal big government, big spending politics, the American people said enough is enough. They want us to start working in a bipartisan fashion to solve the problems that Americans are facing each and every day.

We need to pass the unfunded mandates legislation. We need to pass a balanced budget amendment with a three-fifths supermajority.

Some do not seem to have gotten the message. They are going on about book deals and ghost historians, but they are missing the message. I have heard the people's message. They want us to change the culture of Washington.

It is too bad that some just want to change the subject.

WHAT ARE REPUBLICANS AFRAID OF?

(Ms. MCCARTHY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. MCCARTHY. Mr. Speaker, I planned to speak today on the need for this body to amend our Constitution to require a balanced Federal budget and to urge my colleagues to support the bipartisan consensus version offered by the gentlemen from Texas and Colorado and cosponsored by a majority of House Members including me.

Instead, I have been subject to remarks by Members of this body that I am attempting to thwart balancing the budget and unfunded mandates, adopt a line-item veto and other reforms I support.

□ 1310

The committees are meeting as we on this floor are attempting to speak freely. Gagging the book deal on the House floor is not going to make it go away. It is an issue that has captured the public's attention. Why are Republicans so afraid of people talking about this? The Chair's ruling has made this the only house in the country where this issue is not being discussed.

LET US REFORM THIS CONGRESS

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

Mr. TATE. Mr. Speaker, why are the Democrats scared of discussing the real issues of the day? Why are the Democrats scared to engaged in a real discussion about the issues of importance to the American people—like the balanced budget amendment and unfunded mandate legislation.

The American people sent a clear message to us in November to clean up Congress. We are working hard to do just that. Republicans will keep their promise to the American people to change the culture of Washington.

I'd say to my Democrat colleagues, start working to change Congress, and stop working so hard to change the subject.

FREEDOM OF SPEECH

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

Mr. EDWARDS. Mr. Speaker, while there is no scheduled business on the floor of this House today, I can think of fewer issues more important to discuss here than freedom of speech. I believe debate on this floor should be conducted with respect and dignity. Yet if this House were to impose a gag rule on free and open debate, it would be a genuine tragedy for our democracy.

Mr. Speaker, this is the people's House and the people have the right to have their voice heard through their elected Representatives.

If Members of this House were to fear that honest expressions of fact and philosophy might be denied on this floor, then we will have done our democracy and the freedom of speech so deeply embedded in our Constitution a great disservice.

ARGUE SUBSTANCE, NOT SMOKESCREEN

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

Mr. KINGSTON. You know, if you cannot argue substance, attack the person; if you cannot argue substance, you make outrageous and frivolous claims; and if you cannot argue substance, you throw out smokescreens and red herrings. That is what seems to be the tack of the Democrat Party today.

You know, we need your help, we need it on the balanced budget amendment. You cannot balance the budget by frequent flyer points. We need your help on unfunded mandates. Granted, most of them came from your party. The mayors and the county commissioners across America want relief. We need your help on ethics. Maybe you can find time to talk to Mr. GEPHARDT to get your side of the aisle moving on ethics. We need your help on welfare reform. Maybe you have some ideas, you have great rhetoric. We are now interested in your ideas. I hope you will put your ideas in front of your party

interests and work for the betterment of America.

WE COULD HAVE VOTED TODAY ON SUBSTANTIVE LEGISLATION

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

Mr. DEFAZIO. Mr. Speaker, referring to a couple of speakers before us, they somehow claim that we are delaying the activities of the House. The House is in pro forma session today. That means those of us who flew across the United States to attend this session, there will be no recorded votes or there should be only procedural matters. There is no substantive legislation before us. The unfunded mandates bill is not before us, because it has been delayed by the majority. The majority told us all bills will come before the House with open rules. Well, if you want to bring your unfunded mandate bill up with an open rule, what is the problem? We could be in session right now doing unfunded mandates, but you have us waiting for the Rules Committee because they want to restrict debate on unfunded mandates.

Where is the balanced budget amendment, the balanced budget amendment we were promised you would come forward with?

I am a cosponsor of a bipartisan version. Where is it? It is hung up by the majority because they want to insist on a super majority for taxes in that proposal. It is your holdup, not ours.

WHERE IS THE BEEF?

(Mr. LIVINGSTON asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. LIVINGSTON. Mr. Speaker, I have come late to this debacle on the floor today, but I cannot resist commenting on the irony of the concern about the much-vaunted Speaker's nonbook deal.

Now, find me one American citizen who has turned down \$4.5 or \$3 million, perhaps, or even \$1 million when they might have gotten such a good deal. The fact is Speaker GINGRICH turned it down, and yet to avoid confronting the issues important to the American people that they voted for in the last election, the minority party—excuse me, the minority party—has now said that this is the most important thing that must be discussed. No comment about Speaker Wright's problems with his sales of his book to lobbyists; no comment about the Vice President's very lucrative book deal, but let us concentrate on this that is a nonbook deal. There has been no money here.

Where is the beef, folks? Get real.

FREEDOM OF SPEECH IN CONGRESS

(Mr. MENENDEZ asked and was given permission to address the House

for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. Speaker, I am not quite sure under your ruling that I can even refer to the Speaker in any respect, but as someone who came to the floor today to vote when the vote was called, I did not expect to speak. But as someone whose family has fled from oppression in search of freedom and democracy, I am appalled at what could happen in the greatest hall of democracy in the world. But I have seen it today.

You can question the motives of a whole group of people, put their motives in question, but you cannot question the motive of an individual who is in a leadership position and determines the agenda of this House.

You can pass a Congressional Accountability Act, yet you cannot call for the accountability of an individual who leads the House and seek its disclosure. This is not about an individual's book deal who may be paid by royalties and the \$4 million is coming. But it is about public licenses, public airwaves. It is about our national treasures, and you are denying one of the greatest national treasures, the ability of Members to speak in this House freely.

WE HAVE BEEN GAGGED

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

Mr. WISE. Mr. Speaker, today, in 14 years of legislative work that I have done in State and Federal out of legislatures, is the saddest day I have ever seen. I feel effectively gagged.

Let me ask a question, Mr. Speaker: If anyone was reported to have signed a \$4.5 million deal to write a book, if any Member was reported to have met with an interested party who possibly had interests affected by the Congress, if any Member had had legitimate questions raised in the public media and in editorials about his or her conduct, should it not be discussed on this floor?

But now we have to tell the American people, "Read your newspapers, watch your television, they can tell you what is happening. They can ask questions about the conduct of any Member of this House, including its Speaker. Follow your media, they can tell you what your elected House Members," myself included, "cannot tell you because the Republican gag rule says that we are out of order."

WE ARE FOLLOWING THE RULES OF THE HOUSE

(Mr. SENSENBRENNER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. SENSENBRENNER. Mr. Speaker, yes, today has been a debacle, and a debacle because I think of people not the reading the rules that we have been living under for as long as I have been