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No. 18

## House of Representatives

The House met at 12:30 p.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore [Mr. EWING].

### DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC,  
January 30, 1995.

I hereby designate the Honorable THOMAS W. EWING to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

NEWT GINGRICH,  
*Speaker of the House of Representatives.*

### MORNING BUSINESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 4, 1995, 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 leader limited to not to exceed 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Colorado [Mrs. SCHROEDER] for 5 minutes.

### TIME TO END THE FREEBIE CULTURE

Mrs. SCHROEDER. Mr. Speaker, I come to the floor today to try and get some answers to a new policy that was announced today in the National Journal's Congressional Daily. In that daily, it says that the Speaker will now be allowing Members of Congress to sleep in their office. This is a new policy and I have a lot of questions as to what is transpiring.

We are now going through this period where we are seeing draconian cuts in all sorts of social service programs, and

I find it a little interesting that at a time we are cutting out some of the poorest of the poor, we have now said that we have to extend compassion to Members of Congress because they are only making \$133,000 a year and cannot possibly afford to live in Washington, DC. At least people in my district would find that a little startling in they do not find that that is a poverty wage and are a little shocked by that discrepancy as to what is poor and what is not.

But the other thing that I keep wondering about as apparently we are engaging in this new congressional slumber party, things that we do not know:

Is the House restaurant going to do room service? Are we going to rename the office buildings the House office buildings and dormitories? Does this qualify under the gift rule? Is this a gift from the Speaker to Members who use this? Will there be bed checks? Will staff be allowed to come or is this going to be income tested? Do you have to make at least as much as a Member to be this impoverished? Do we have to report this on our income tax?

Mr. Speaker, as you know, the Members in the last term decided that we would be taxed on our cars, where we park our cars, because that was the only fair thing to do and to treat ourselves like the private sector.

In the private sector, I assume that the IRS would tax us if we were given free room and board. So will the IRS tax us here? And since we are already paying taxes if we have an assigned parking place, what if we sleep in our car? Does that then come in under that? Or do we get a new IRS ruling?

I find this new announcement very confusing, and I hope that we get a clarification as to what all of this is going to entail as we start this new bunk-in-the-House program.

I also hope maybe it gets reconsidered, because I think the average

American feels that if you are making what a Member of Congress makes, you can probably afford a little place around here.

Furthermore, most people are paying their staff a whole lot less and they are able to live in Washington, DC, so I do not think it quite passes the straight-faced test.

Mr. Speaker, I also am not too sure that it is the kind of image and decorum that we would like to show for this House and the respect that it has had for over 200 years. It is kind of amazing to me that for over 200 years we have gotten by without Members having to sleep in their office and, suddenly in 1995, things have gotten so tough for Members that this has to be extended.

But I think it also falls into part of the whole gift rule debate that we have been trying to have on this House floor. Suddenly we get this gift, and being able to have free housing here apparently, because the IRS has not spoken, but apparently we are going to be given this gift, but we still do not have time to deal with the gift rule as to what kind of gifts we can get from lobbyists.

Mr. Speaker, I think it is time to end the freebie culture. I think the American people think it is time to end the freebie culture. I think they thought it was time to end it last term when we passed it over and over again, and I hope that we could take time out to get to some of the real core issues before we see even more gifts being dispensed and more perks being dispensed to Members of Congress.

I find it amazing that a lot of people would get very upset about an ice bucket being delivered to different rooms and still not being upset about Members then converting them into an apartment.

Are people going to be able to bring families to the House? If you have your family in Washington, can you convert

□ 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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