Iowa; Mr. Phelps, Illinois; Mr. Lucas, Kentucky; and Mr. Thompson, California.

Committee on Appropriations: Mr. Obey, Wisconsin; Mr. Murtha, Pennsylvania; Mr. Dicks, Washington; Mr. Sabo, Minnesota; Mr. Dixon, California; Mr. Hoyer, Maryland (When Sworn); Mr. Mollohan, West Virginia (When Sworn); Ms. Kaptur, Ohio; Ms. Pelosi, California; Mr. Visclosky, Indiana; Mrs. Lowey, New York; Mr. Serrano, New York; Ms. DeLauro, Connecticut; Mr. Moran, Virginia; Mr. Olver, Massachusetts; Mr. Pastor, Arizona; Mrs. Meek, Florida; Mr. Price, North Carolina; Mr. Edwards, Texas; Mr. Cramer, Alabama; Mr. Clyburn, South Carolina; Mr. Hinchey, New York; Ms. Roybal-Allard, California; Mr. Farr, California (When Sworn); Mr. Jackson, Illinois; Ms. Kilpatrick, Michigan; Mr. Boyd, Florida.

Committee on Banking and Financial Services: Mr. LaFalce, New York; Mr. Vento, Minnesota; Mr. Frank, Massachusetts; Mr. Kanjorski, Pennsylvania; Ms. Waters, California; Mrs. Maloney, New York; Mr. Gutierrez, Illinois; Ms. Velazquez, New York; Mr. Watt, North Carolina; Mr. Ackerman, New York; Mr. Bentsen, Texas; Mr. Maloney, Connecticut; Ms. Hooley, Oregon; Ms. Carson, Indiana; Mr. Weygand, Rhode Island; Mr. Sherman, California; Mr. Sandlin, Texas; Mr. Meeks, New York; Ms. Lee, California; Mr. Virgil Goode, Virginia; Mr. Mascara, Pennsylvania; Mr. Inslee, Washington; Ms. Schakowsky, Illinois; Mr. Moore, Kansas; Mr. Gonzalez, Texas; Ms. Tubbs Jones, Ohio; Mr. Capuano, Massachusetts.

Committee on the Budget: Mr. Spratt, South Carolina; Mr. McDermott, Washington; Ms. Rivers, Michigan; Mr. Thompson, Mississippi; Mr. Minge, Minnesota; Mr. Bentsen, Texas; Mr. Davis, Florida; Mr. Weygand, Rhode Island; Mrs. Clayton, North Carolina; Mr. Price, North Carolina; Mr. Markey, Massachusetts; Mr. Kleczka, Wisconsin; Mr. Clement, Tennessee; Mr. Moran, Virginia; Ms. Hooley, Oregon; Mr. Lucas, Kenducky; Mr. Holt, New Jersey; Mr. Hoeffel, Pennsylvania; Ms. Baldwin, Wisconsin.

Committee on Commerce: Mr. Dingell, Michigan; Mr. Waxman, California; Mr. Markey, Massachusetts; Mr. Hall, Texas; Mr. Boucher, Virginia; Mr. Towns, New York; Mr. Pallone, New Jersey; Mr. Brown, Ohio; Mr. Gordon, Tennessee; Mr. Deutsch, Florida; Mr. Rush, Illinois; Ms. Eshoo, California; Mr. Klink, Pennsylvania; Mr. Stupak, Michigan; Mr. Engel, New York; Mr. Sawyer, Ohio; Mr. Wynn, Maryland; Mr. Green, Texas; Ms. McCarthy, Missouri; Mr. Strickland, Ohio; Ms. DeGette, Colorado; Mr. Barrett, Wisconsin; Mr. Luther, Minnesota; Mrs. Capps, California.

Committee on Education and the Workforce: Mr. Clay, Missouri; Mr. George Miller, California (when sworn); Mr. Kildee, Michigan; Mr. Martinez, California; Mr. Owens, New York; Mr. Payne, New Jersey; Mrs. Mink, Hawaii; Mr. Andrews, New Jersey; Mr. Roemer, Indiana; Mr. Scott, Virginia; Ms. Woolsey, California; Mr. Romero-Barcelo, Puerto Rico; Mr. Fattah, Pennsylvania; Mr. Hinojosa, Texas; Mrs. McCarthy, New York; Mr. Tierney, Massachusetts; Mr. Kind, Wisconsin; Ms. Sanchez, California; Mr. Ford, Tennessee; Mr. Kucinich, Ohio; Mr. Wu, Oregon; Mr. Holt, New Jersey.

Committee on Government Reform (and Oversight): Mr. Waxman, California; Mr. Lantos, California; Mr. Wise, West Virginia; Mr. Owens, New York; Mr. Towns, New York; Mr. Kanjorski, Pennsylvania; Mr. Condit, California; Mrs. Mink, Hawaii; Mrs. Maloney, New York; Mrs. Norton, District of Columbia; Mr. Fattah, Pennsylvania; Mr. Cummings, Maryland; Mr. Kucinich, Ohio; Mr. Blagojevich, Illinois; Mr. Davis, Illinois; Mr. Tierney, Massachusetts; Mr. Turner, Texas; Mr. Allen, Maine, Mr. Ford, Tennessee.

Committee on House Administration: Mr. Hoyer, Maryland (When Sworn).

Committee on International Relations: Mr. Gejdenson, Connecticut; Mr. Lantos, California; Mr. Berman, California; Mr. Ackerman, New York; Mr. Faleomavaega, American Samoa; Mr. Martinez, California; Mr. Payne, New Jersey; Mr. Menendez, New Jersey; Mr. Brown, Ohio; Ms. McKinney, Georgia; Mr. Hastings, Florida; Ms. Danner, Missouri; Mr. Hillard, Alabama; Mr. Sherman, California; Mr. Wexler, Florida; Mr. Rothman, New Jersey; Mr. Davis, Florida; Mr. Crowley, New York; Mr. Hoeffel, Pennsylvania.

Committee on the Judiciary: Mr. Conyers, Michigan; Mr. Frank, Massachusetts; Mr. Berman, California; Mr. Boucher, Virginia; Mr. Nadler, New York; Mr. Scott, Virginia; Mr. Watt, North Carolina, Ms. Lofgren, California; Ms. Jackson-Lee, Texas; Mrs. Waters, California; Mr. Meehan, Massachusetts; Mr. Delahunt, Massachusetts; Mr. Wexler, Florida; Mr. Rothman, New Jersey; Ms. Baldwin, Wisconsin; Mr. Weiner, New York.

Committee on National Security: Mr. Skelton, Missouri; Mr. Sisisky, Virginia; Mr. Spratt, South Carolina; Mr. Ortiz, Texas; Mr. Pickett, Virginia; Mr. Evans, Illinois; Mr. Taylor, Mississippi; Mr. Abercrombie, Hawaii; Mr. Meehan, Massachusetts; Mr. Underwood, Guam; Mr. Kennedy, Rhode Island; Mr. Blagojevich, Illinois; Mr. Reyes, Texas; Mr. Allen, Maine; Mr. Snyder, Arkansas; Mr. Turner, Texas; Mr. Smith, Washington; Ms. Sanchez, California; Mr. Maloney, Connecticut; Mr. McIntyre, North Carolina; Mr. Rodriguez, Texas; Ms. McKinney, Georgia; Ms. Tauscher, California; Mr. Brady, Pennsylvania; Mr. Andrews, New Jersey; Mr. Hill, Indiana; Mr. Thompson, California.

Committee on Resources: Mr. George Miller, California (When Sworn); Mr. Rahall, West Virginia; Mr. Vento, Minnesota; Mr. Kildee, Michigan; Mr. DeFazio, Oregon; Mr. Faleomavaega, American Samoa; Mr. Abercrombie; Hawaii; Mr. Ortiz, Texas; Mr. Pickett, Virginia; Mr. Pallone, New Jersey; Mr. Dooley, California; Mr. Romero-Barcelo, Puerto Rico; Mr. Underwood, Guam; Mr. Kennedy, Rhode Island; Mr. Smith, Washington; Mr. Delahunt, Massachusetts; Mr. John, Louisiana; Ms. Christian-Green, Virgin Islands; Mr. Kind, Wisconsin; Mr. Inslee, Washington; Ms. Napolitano, California; Mr. Udall, New Mexico; Mr. Udall, Colorado; Mr. Crowley, New York.

Committee on Rules: Mr. Moakley, Massachusetts; Mr. Frost, Texas; Mr. Hall, Ohio; Mrs. Slaughter, New York.

Committee on Science: Mr. Brown, California; Mr. Hall, Texas; Mr. Gordon, Tennessee; Mr. Traficant; Ohio; Mr. Costello, Illinois; Mr. Roemer, Indiana; Mr. Barcia, Michigan; Ms. Johnson, Texas; Ms. Woolsey, California; Mr. Hastings, Florida; Ms. Rivers, Michigan; Ms. Lofgren, California; Mr. Doyle, Pennsylvania; Ms. Jackson-Lee, Texas; Ms. Stabenow, Michigan; Mr. Etheridge, North Carolina; Mr. Lampson, Texas; Ms. Lee, California; Mr. Larson, Connecticut; Mr. Udall, Colorado; Mr. Wu, Oregon.

Committee on Small Business: Ms. Velazquez, New York; Mr. Sisisky, Virginia; Ms. Millender-McDonald, California; Mr. Davis, Illinois; Mrs. McCarthy, New York; Mr. Pascrell, New Jersey; Mr. Hinojosa, Texas; Ms. Christian-Green, Virgin Islands; Mr. Brady, Pennsylvania; Mr. Udall, New Mexico; Mr. Moore, Kansas; Ms. Tubbs Jones, Ohio; Mr. Gonzalez, Texas; Mr. Phelps, Illinois; Ms. Napolitano, California.

Committee on Standards of Official Conduct: Mr. Berman, California; Mr. Sabo, Minnesota; Mr. Pastor, Arizona; Mr. Fattah, Pennsylvania; Ms. Lofgren, California.

Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure: Mr. Oberstar, Minnesota; Mr. Rahall, West Virginia; Mr. Borski, Pennsylvania; Mr. Lipinski, Illinois; Mr. Wise, West Virginia; Mr. Traficant, Ohio; Mr. DeFazio, Oregon; Mr. Clement, Tennessee; Mr. Costello, Illinois; Ms. Norton, District of Columbia; Mr. Nadler, New York; Ms. Danner, Missouri; Mr. Menendez, New Jersey; Ms. Brown, Florida; Mr. Barcia, Michigan; Mr. Filner, California; Ms. Johnson, Texas; Mr. Mascara, Pennsylvania; Mr. Taylor, Mississippi; Ms. Millender-McDonald, California; Mr. Cummings, Maryland; Mr. Blumenauer, Oregon; Mr. Sandlin, Texas; Ms. Tauscher, California; Mr. Pascrell, New Jersey; Mr. Boswell, Iowa; Mr. McGovern, Massachusetts; Mr. Holden, Pennsylvania; Mr. Lampson, Texas; Mr. Baldacci, Maine; Mr. Berry, Arkansas; Mr. Shows, Mississippi; Mr. Baird, Washington; Ms. Berkley, Nevada.

Committee on Veterans' Affairs: Mr. Evans, Illinois; Mr. Filner, California; Mr. Gutierrez, Illinois; Ms. Brown, Florida; Mr. Doyle, Pennsylvania; Mr. Peterson, Minnesota; Mrs. Carson, Indiana; Mr. Reyes, Texas; Mr. Snyder, Arkansas; Mr. Rodriguez, Texas; Mr. Shows, Mississippi.

Committee on Ways and Means: Mr. Rangel, New York; Mr. Stark (When Sworn); California; Mr. Matsui, California; Mr. Coyne, Pennsylvania; Mr. Levin, Michigan; Mr. Cardin, Maryland; Mr. McDermott, Washington; Mr. Kleczka, Wisconsin; Mr. Lewis, Georgia; Mr. Neal, Massachusetts; Mr. McNulty, New York; Mr. Jefferson, Louisiana; Mr. Tanner, Tennessee; Mr. Becerra, California; Ms. Thurman, Florida; Mr. Doggett, Texas.

Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence: Mr. Dixon, California.

Mr. FROST (during the reading). Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be considered as read and printed in the RECORD.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Texas?

There was no objection.

The resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

ELECTION OF MINORITY MEMBER TO CERTAIN STANDING COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

Mr. FROST. Mr. Speaker, by direction of the Democratic Caucus, I offer a privileged resolution (H. Res. 8) and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 8

Resolved, That the following named Member is, and is hereby, elected to serve on standing committees as follows:

Committee on Banking and Financial Institutions: Mr. Sanders.

Committee on Government Reform (and Oversight): Mr. Sanders.

The resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

HOUSE GIFT RULE AMENDMENT

Mr. HANSEN. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to section 3 of House Resolution 5 and as the designee of the majority leader, I offer a resolution (H. Res. 9) amending clause 5 of rule XXVI, and ask for its immediate consideration in the House.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 9

Resolved, That subparagraph (1) of clause 5(a) of rule XXVI is amended—

(1) by inserting ''(A)'' before ''A Member''; and

(2) by adding at the end the following new subdivision:

''(B) A Member, Delegate, Resident Commissioner, officer, or employee of the House may accept a gift (other than cash or cash equivalent) that the Member, Delegate, Resident Commissioner, officer, or employee reasonably and in good faith believes to have a value of less than $50 and a cumulative value from one source during a calendar year of less than $100. A gift having a value of less than $10 does not count toward the $100 annual limit. Formal recordkeeping is not required by this subdivision, but a Member, Delegate, Resident Commissioner, officer, or employee of the House shall make a good faith effort to comply with this subdivision.''.

Mr. HANSEN (during the reading). Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be considered as read and printed in the RECORD.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Utah?

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to section 3 of House Resolution 5, the gentleman from Utah (Mr. HANSEN) and the gentleman from California (Mr. BERMAN) each will control 30 minutes as the designee of their respective leaders.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Utah (Mr. HANSEN).

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of this resolution which would amend the House gift rule so as to conform to the gift rule that has been in effect in the Senate since the beginning of 1996.

Specifically, this resolution would amend the rule so as to allow Members and staff to accept any gift having a value of less than $50 and a cumulative value from any one source in the calendar year of less than $100. Gifts having a value of less than $10 would not count toward the annual $100 limit. Formal recordkeeping is not required by the provision, but Members and staff are required to, in a good faith effort, comply with the provision.

As chairman of the Committee on Standards of Official Conduct for the past 2 years, I have learned more than I ever wanted to know about the gift rule that the House approved in 1995.

□ 1630

Based on my experience, I am entirely convinced of the need of the House to make this change, and I think just about everyone else who has had to deal with this rule would feel the same way.

The purpose of this resolution is straightforward. It is to simplify the gift rule and to make it clear and easier to apply, while still prohibiting the acceptance of gifts that raise genuine ethical concerns. The complexity of the current rule is apparent on its face, especially by comparison with the previous House gift rules. The current rule contains about 50 clauses and covers about 14 pages in the official House rules book. In contrast, the previous gift rule had only one clause.

In my judgment, the most serious flaw in the current gift rule is this: The fact is that under the current rule, modest and inexpensive gifts, the gifts that raise the least ethical concern, are governed by the most vague and complex provision of the rule. I think all of us have had this experience. Someone gives you something or sends you some small thing, like a pen, a framed picture, a box of candy, and the first question that pops in your mind is, can I accept this under the gift rule?

The gift rule sets out roughly 23 categories of acceptable gifts, but the problem is that all of these are descriptive categories. None of them is keyed to a particular dollar amount. What is more, many of these categories include multiple requirements, including many things that call for a subjective judgment. For example, depending on the number of circumstances, a member or staffer can violate the rule by accepting a free hamburger or hot dog at an event. Other provisions of the rule require Members and staff to make a recent determination on, for example, whether an item offered is ''nominal value'' or ''commemorative in nature,'' or whether a gift has been offered to them on the basis of a personal friendship, rather than because of one's position with the House.

The overall result of the current rule is that Members and staff spend a grossly disproportionate amount of time and effort trying to decide whether these relatively modest, inexpensive gifts are acceptable under the rule. I think all of us, Members as well as staff, have a whole lot more important things to do than sit around deciding whether or not a gift of a pie or a can of popcorn is acceptable.

Furthermore, inadvertent violations of these provisions of the gift rule are practically inevitable, and it is only a matter of time before someone will be hauled before the Committee on Standards of Official Conduct for violating one of these principles when they are totally innocent.

The committee and its staff have always been available to answer questions on the gift rule. We have given briefings on the rule, we have issued pink sheets, and the committee staff has taken literally thousands and thousands of calls on the gift rule over the last few years. Also, in the last Congress alone, the Congress issued over 1,500 private advisory opinions to Members and staff and others dealing with the gift rule.

The point here is not the way the ethics rules should work. One should not need to have a lawyer at one's side at the time to tell us what is and what is not allowable under the gift rule. Each of us has a solemn obligation to know and adhere to the ethics rules and standards of the House, and this is no matter how complex these rules and standards may be. Each of us also has an obligation to see that our staff know and adhere to the rules.

But I suggest that we collectively also have an obligation to ourselves and our staff to make sure that the rules and standards are, to the extent possible, clear, understandable, and reasonable.

The resolution now before us is an important step in adding clarity and certainty to the House gift rule. With this change, we would not need to bother with all the complex and technical gift rule provisions that I have referred to. On any gift that one is offered, including a meal or a ticket to an event, one only needs to ask two questions. One, is the gift value less than $50; and two, have I accepted anything else from this source this year?

The 23 exceptions to the gift rule that now exist would continue in force, but the effect of this amendment would be to regulate those provisions to secondary importance, at least insofar as relatively inexpensive meals and other gifts are concerned.

As I noted in the beginning of this statement, the gift rule provision reflected in this resolution has been in effect in the Senate for the past 3 years. The information available to us is that the Senate gift rule is working well and that compliance is being attained.

Our understanding is that the Senate Members and the staff are being cautious to ensure that the clear dollar limits in this provision are not exceeded. We expected that if this resolution is approved, the experience of the House will be the same.

In implementing this gift rule provision over the past 3 years, the Senate Select Committee on Ethics has developed a number of rules of construction. The intention of this resolution is that the same rules of construction will apply in the House as well, unless and until the Committee on Standards of Official Conduct elects to make any changes in them. There are five rules of construction that are especially important.

First, a gift received from an individual affiliated with an organization such as a member of a law firm or an employee of a new corporation counts against the annual gift limitation of both the individual and the organization. So if an employee of a lobbying firm buys a staffer a $15 lunch, both the employee and the firm will be considered the ''source'' of the meal and the staffer's annual gift limit for both will be reduced accordingly.

Second, a Member or staffer may not buy down the value of a gift to bring it within the dollar limitation of the provision. So, for example, an individual who is offered a gift with a value of $55 may not accept the gift simply by paying the offerer $6. However, when an individual is offered a gift that is ''naturally divisible'' such as tickets to an event, he may accept one item less

than $50 and either pay market value or decline the others.

Third, where a Member or staffer is offered multiple items at any one time, each of which is worth less than $50 individually, the gift being offered is deemed to be the aggregate of all of the items.

Fourth, for the purpose of simplicity, tax and gratuities are excluded in determining the value of any gift.

Finally, to repeatedly accept gifts valued at under $10 from a source would violate the spirit of the rule and hence be impermissible.

Even with the adoption of this resolution, there will be some differences in the provisions of the House and the Senate. However, the remaining differences are relatively minor, so I see no real need to attempt to reconcile these differences.

There are also some areas where the Committee on Standards of Official Conduct has decided gift rule questions differently from the Senate. For example, on the valuation of tickets to a sky box or an executive suite, we have said that as a general rule, these tickets are to be valued at the face price of the highest individually priced ticket for the event. In contrast, the Senate committee has allowed a lower value in at least some circumstances.

These differences between the House and Senate will also continue until one or both committees makes a change.

But with the passage of this resolution, the major difference between the House and Senate gift rule will be eliminated. This is a common-sense approach. It will add some much-needed clarity and certainty to the gift rule. In my judgment, it will also reduce the possibility that a Member or staffer will be subject to disciplinary action for what amounts to failing to be familiar with the roughly 50 clauses of the current rule.

Mr. Speaker, I urge the adoption of this resolution, and I reserve the balance of my time.

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

My friend and esteemed colleague, the chairman of the committee, the gentleman from Utah (Mr. HANSEN), has described in detail the effects and provisions of this amendment that he and I are sponsoring to the existing rules, and along with the leadership of both of our parties in this House. I only wanted to add a couple of points.

Under this proposal, the rule provides a limit on gifts from any one source of $50 individually, $100 cumulatively. I ask the Members to recall that 2 years ago, the rule was at the indefensibly high level of $250, and we allowed individual gifts of up to $100. It excluded all limits on local meals and all personal hospitality. Setting limits at the Senate standard of $50 and a cumulative value from any source of $100, is a vast improvement, and groups like Common Cause and Public Citizen said in November of 1995 just that when the Committee on Rules first proposed that the House adopt the Senate standard.

At that time Ann McBride, President of Common Cause, told the Committee on Rules, ''We strongly urge you to report to the floor the same gift and travel rules adopted by the Senate. Passage of this rule, which is just what we are doing now, would be an important step towards restoring the basic integrity of this institution, restoring public confidence in Congress, and curbing Washington's influence money culture.''

Also, at those same hearings, Joan Claybrook of the Ralph Nader group Public Citizen, made these comments in her testimony before the Committee on Rules on a proposal identical to the one we have before us now. ''We support the adoption of a rule identical to that approved by the Senate. We also believe that there is a significant advantage in having the same rules apply to the House and the Senate. The more differences there are between the Chambers, the more difficult it will be for lobbyists and the general public to understand what is permissible and what is not in a given circumstance.''

Not one witness at the Committee on Rules's public hearings espoused the present ''zero tolerance'' rule which was adopted by floor amendment to the Committee on Rules package. Adopting the Senate standard will greatly simplify the House rule, and I concur with Ms. Claybrook that this action will greatly increase understanding of and compliance with the rule, and that should be our objective.

The Committee on Standards of Official Conduct, which I have the privilege of being the ranking minority member of, with the gentleman from Utah (Mr. HANSEN), our chairman, unanimously voted to support this recommendation. The impacts on our committee's resources will be benefited tremendously, and we will be able to focus on the serious issues with this kind of a rules change.

I strongly urge that the House join these reform organizations, the leadership of both of our parties, and the gentleman from Utah (Mr. HANSEN) in adopting this modification.

I just want to make one final comment. Mr. Speaker, the gentleman from Utah (Mr. HANSEN), after 14 years of membership and leadership on the Committee on Standards of Official Conduct, is going off for this Congress; and while I have had a chance to work with him for only the past 2 of those years, I just want to say in the most sincere possible fashion that it has been a pleasure and an honor to work with him and under his leadership.

He has done a tremendous job, I think, in restoring the sense of bipartisan confidence in the process. I can say, never once in the year-and-a-half since the moratorium ended and our committee has been functioning did the Democrats ever have to caucus as a party on that committee. Everything was done by consensus in a bipartisan and nonpartisan fashion.

We will miss the gentleman greatly. We look forward to working with a very distinguished member of the committee these past 2 years who will be taking over as Chair, but we will see the gentleman around and cannot wait to bring you before the committee sometime.

As ranking member of the Committee on Standards, I am completely convinced that amending the House gift rule to make it conform to the Senate standard is both in the interest of sound public policy and in the interest of the effective fulfillment by the Committee of its important responsibilities.

Under the bill I have introduced with my valued colleague JIM HANSEN, the House gift rule would still be vastly more restrictive than the pre-1996 House rule. That rule set a limit on gifts from any one source at the indefensibly high figure of $250, and allowed individual gifts up to $100. Just as bad, the old rule completely excluded from the limit all local meals, and all personal hospitality.

Clearly, setting limits at the Senate standard of $50 and a cumulative value from any source of $100 is a vast improvement—as groups like Common Cause and Public Citizen said in November of 1995, when the Rules Committee first proposed that the House adopt the Senate standard.

At that time, Ann McBride, President of Common Cause told the Rules Committee, ''We strongly urge you to report to the Floor the same gift and travel rules adopted by the Senate. . . . Passage of this rule would be an important step toward restoring the basic integrity of the institution, restoring public confidence in Congress and curbing Washington's influence money culture.''

Also at those hearings, Joan Claybrook, of the Ralph Nader group Public Citizen, made these comments in her testimony before the Rules Committee: ''We support the adoption of a rule identical to that approved by the Senate. . . . We also believe that there is a significant advantage in having the same rules apply to the House and the Senate. The more differences there are between the chambers, the more difficult it will be for lobbyists and the general public to understand what is permissible and what is not in a given circumstance.''

Not one witness at the Rules Committee's public hearings espoused the present ''zero tolerance'' rule which was adopted by Floor amendment to the Rules Committee package.

Adopting the Senate standard will greatly simplify the House rule and I concur with Ms. Claybrook that this action will greatly increase understanding of—and compliance with—the rule.

And that should be our objective.

Let me put this in terms of the expenditure of time and effort by the members and staff of the Committee on Standards of Official Conduct. An enormous percentage of the Committee's resources are devoted to answering innumerable questions about the current gift rule.

In many cases, those questions are raised by Members and their staffs because they hope to avoid the hurt feelings and the embarrassment that occur when they have to tell constituents and other outside groups that they cannot accept even small gifts extended as courtesies. Huge numbers of these questions would be eliminated—flat out eliminated—if we said that acceptance of gifts under $50 are no longer a concern.

And if we did so, we could focus the Committee's attention where it really belongs. Not

on a free lunch, tendered by a group that wants to talk to one of us (or one of our staff members) away from ringing phones and office interruptions in a place where we can hear ourselves think—but rather on real problems which may exist and which we need to address.

The present zero tolerance rule mistakenly directs our attention to what some unfairly assume is the per se appearance of impropriety whenever a gift is tendered. I reject that assumption and I contend that it detracts from the Committee's proper function—which is to counsel our colleagues against activities which could constitute real impropriety and which we must marshal our resources to combat.

My view of each and every one of you is that you want to conduct yourselves ethically. I assume the best, not the worst, about everyone in this body.

And my view of lobbyists is that they perform an important and honorable function for us in the legislative branch, bringing us information about how bills may affect our constituents and our society as a whole. I do not assume that something illicit occurs every time a Member—or his or her staff—gets together with a lobbyist. But I do believe that it is our task as Members of the House of Representatives to make sure that we seek to understand the consequences of legislation for all Americans—not just the well-heeled, to make sure that we open our doors and our ears to the dedicated advocates who plead the case of the poor and disadvantaged.

Our present gift rule does nothing, absolutely nothing, to ensure that this House is accessible to all, but it does create problems which I, as ranking members of the Committee on Standards, believe we can avoid by adopting the Senate standard.

At our last meeting, my colleagues on the committee voted unanimously to endorse this rules change. We are telling you that this rules change is appropriate and it is sound. Please join us in approving it.

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

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

Let me thank my good friend from California for the very kind words. It has been a real pleasure for me to work with the gentleman, and the Democrats and the Republicans. I think we did what the House asked us to do when we were given this charge, and I thank the gentleman for the great work that he has done. He has really been a stalwart and an extremely fine member.

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, I ask Members to vote for a new gift ban rule today not for themselves, but for their Nation's Capital. For Members, the gift ban represents the loss of trivial token gifts. For the District of Columbia, the gift ban has caused millions of dollars in lost revenue.

The District is just now emerging from a financial crisis that brought insolvency to the Nation's Capital. The Congress made great strides last Congress to hasten the District's recovery with the passage of the National Capital Revitalization and Self-Government Improvement Act (the Revitalization Act) in 1997. Last Saturday, a new, tough, fiscally prudent mayor and new City Council took the oath of office, ushering in new era in the District's political culture. Most importantly, downtown D.C. is coming back and is increasingly alive with people taking advantage of new reasons to go to downtown. Despite these great strides, however, the District's recovery remains in its infancy. District revenues are significantly dependent on tax receipts from downtown businesses. Moreover, these revenues have been flat, partly because of the effect of the gift ban. Small retail businesses have been particularly hurt. However, the most prominent example of the effect of the gift ban is the new MCI Center, the centerpiece of the revitalization of downtown D.C. Abe Pollin, the owner of the Washington Wizards, Capitals, and Mystics did the unheard of when he invested $220 million of his own money into the construction of an arena in downtown D.C. when the District was insolvent and at its lowest point. In making this commitment to the city, Pollin relied in part on the gift rule in effect at the time that allowed tickets to be accepted as gifts. The MCI Center is an unusual example of a sports arena that has been built with private rather than public funds. It is unfair and unfortunate to have an abrupt change penalizing a private entrepreneur who has willingly taken on what in most jurisdictions is viewed as a public responsibility.

Private economic development is the key to maintaining the solvency of the District. Harmonizing the House gift rule with the Senate rule does not cost the Congress anything, but this change can mean millions to the city. If the Congress can't help us, at the very least, it should not hurt us. There is more than one way for the House to help the District. A reasonable gift ban would be a cost-free way for the Congress to help meet its obligation to continue to assist the recovery of the District of Columbia.

Mr. BRADY of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I strongly oppose amending House rule to increase the amount of gifts a member of Congress or their employees may receive, and am disappointed a recorded vote was not requested so that members would be held accountable to taxpayers for their vote.

There is a reason the institution of Congress is held in such low esteem by the American public: people simply don't believe we do the right things for the right reason, and that we are here to look out for our own interests rather than those of our constituents.

My experience is that that is not the case. But clearly we have a credibility problem and a trust problem. Increasing the gifts we can receive only reinforces that lack of trust and makes it harder for us to lead.

Congress needs to lead by example. We didn't today.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. LAHOOD). Pursuant to section 3 of House Resolution 5, the resolution is considered read for amendment, and the previous question is ordered.

The question is on the resolution.

The resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider is laid upon the table.

□ 1645

PROVIDING FOR CERTAIN APPOINTMENTS AND PROCEDURES RELATING TO IMPEACHMENT PROCEEDINGS

Mr. HYDE. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to clause 2(a)1 of rule IX, I hereby give notice of my intention to offer a resolution which raises a question of the privileges of the House.

The form of the resolution is as follows:

H.R. —

Resolved, That in continuance of the authority conferred in House Resolution 614 of the One Hundred Fifth Congress adopted by the House of Representatives and delivered to the Senate on December 19, 1998, Mr. Hyde of Illinois, Mr. Sensenbrenner of Wisconsin, Mr. McCollum of Florida, Mr. Gekas of Pennsylvania, Mr. Canady of Florida, Mr. Buyer of Indiana, Mr. Bryant of Tennessee, Mr. Chabot of Ohio, Mr. Barr of Georgia, Mr. Hutchinson of Arkansas, Mr. Cannon of Utah, Mr. Rogan of California, and Mr. Graham of South Carolina are appointed managers to conduct the impeachment trial against William Jefferson Clinton, President of the United States, that a message be sent to the Senate to inform the Senate of these appointments, and that the managers so appointed may, in connection with the preparation and the conduct of the trial, exhibit the articles of impeachment to the Senate and take all other actions necessary, which may include the following:

(1) Employing legal, clerical, and other necessary assistants and incurring such other expenses as may be necessary, to be paid from amounts available to the Committee on the Judiciary under applicable expense resolutions or from the applicable accounts of the House of Representatives.

(2) Sending for persons and papers, and filing with the Secretary of the Senate, on the part of the House of Representatives, any pleadings, in conjunction with or subsequent to, the exhibition of the articles of impeachment that the managers consider necessary.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. HYDE) to call up the resolution.

The Clerk will report the resolution at this time under rule IX.

The Clerk read as follows:

H.R. 10

Resolved, That in continuance of the authority conferred in House Resolution 614 of the One Hundred Fifth Congress adopted by the House of Representatives and delivered to the Senate on December 19, 1998, Mr. Hyde of Illinois, Mr. Sensenbrenner of Wisconsin, Mr. McCollum of Florida, Mr. Gekas of Pennsylvania, Mr. Canady of Florida, Mr. Buyer of Indiana, Mr. Bryant of Tennessee, Mr. Chabot of Ohio, Mr. Barr of Georgia, Mr. Hutchinson of Arkansas, Mr. Cannon of Utah, Mr. Rogan of California, and Mr. Graham of South Carolina are appointed managers to conduct the impeachment trial against William Jefferson Clinton, President of the United States, that a message be sent to the Senate to inform the Senate of these appointments, and that the managers so appointed may, in connection with the preparation and the conduct of the trial, exhibit the articles of impeachment to the Senate and take all other actions necessary, which may include the following:

(1) Employing legal, clerical, and other necessary assistants and incurring such other expenses as may be necessary, to be