

THE CALL FOR AN INVESTIGATION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. BROWN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, 165 years ago the late 1830s, Congress passed a rule prohibiting the use of the word "slavery" in the Chamber of this House, prohibiting debate about the Nation's largest blemish, the Nation's largest embarrassment, the institution of slavery. For some years Members of Congress, because of this House gag rule, could not even debate the issue of slavery in this body.

Mr. Speaker, in those days Congressman John Quincy Adams, former President, elected to Congress after he left the White House, was particularly outraged by that gag rule, and he came to the floor of the House, to the Chamber of this House of Representatives, week after week, day after day in many cases, reading letters from his constituents about the issue of slavery. Since he was prohibited from the debating the issue, he served as the megaphone, and he let his constituents speak about slavery.

Today, we face a similar situation in which the leaders of this Congress have refused to discuss some of the issues about the President's behavior in Iraq, about who knew what when, and as a result, a group called MoveOn.org, a national Internet organization, a group of about 1.4 million citizens, circulated a petition, and the petition said "We believe Congress should support an independent commission to investigate the Bush administration's distortion of evidence of Iraq's weapons of mass destruction program."

Several hundred thousand people signed the petition, tens of thousands of people actually wrote letters about this petition, about this issue. And I would just like to serve as the mouthpiece for those Ohioans who are concerned about what we need as a Nation to find out about the reasons that we actually went to war, whether the President told us the truth.

Ms. Durkin of Cincinnati wrote: "The possibility that the administration may have misled America (Congress and the American people) is a matter not of politics but of integrity."

Chris Bache of Poland, Ohio wrote: "The distortion of intelligence concerning Iraq . . . is a gross violation of the duties of public office."

Jim Waldfole from Cincinnati wrote: "Even if well-intentioned, distortions of the truth can only hurt the credibility of government in the long run. If this has taken place, it needs to be brought as soon as possible by Congress, to restore the public's faith that Washington will not tolerate abuses of the system."

From Akron, Ohio, Mary Benzie writes: "Was our son in the Army Reserves sent to Iraq for a cause based on, at best, inaccuracies, at worst, a deliberate deception? How do you think we will feel the next time?"

Timothy A. Bennett of Springfield writes: "This is an extremely urgent issue which requires investigation. Failure to do so would undermine the public's faith in our democratic institutions. Please support an investigation."

Constance Bouchard from Wooster, Ohio, writes: "We seem to have three choices about the missing weapons of mass destruction, none of them good. One, our intelligence is deeply flawed or two, our intelligence was deliberately distorted by the administration, or, three, the weapons have left Iraq and are now in terrorist hands."

Suzanne Seals of Worthington, Ohio writes: "I am very frightened for the freedom and welfare of our country when the administration can bully the evidence and distort the truth to a naive public without any accountability. When this behavior is used to wage war, I become even more concerned about the policies of our administration."

Deborah Steytler of Mentor, Ohio writes: "Please support appropriate investigations into the methods of war-making and intelligence-gathering."

Victoria Kelsey of West Chester writes: "I feel that the exaggerations employed by politicians to push their agendas have overstepped all boundaries in this case and cannot condone it by my silence on this important issue."

From Kingsville, Ohio, William Venable writes: "We need to know the truth without spin, without obfuscation, and without prevarication."

Paul Burnam of Westerville, Ohio writes: "I am indeed troubled by, at best, the use of outdated and inaccurate evidence to make the case to invade Iraq. The Bush administration needs to be held to account for the which it 'marketed' (I am using presidential Chief of Staff Andrew Card's word) the war."

Elmer Fischesser of Cincinnati writes: "Because individuals are still losing their lives, we have a right to know, as a matter of justice, what was known and how the information was acted upon."

From Canfield, Ohio, Marcia Malmer writes: "This cannot be a government by the people if we are given misleading and/or false information on which to base our decisions."

Mr. Speaker, these are all important letters and important concerns. We do in fact need an investigation to set the public's mind at rest.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. DEFAZIO) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. DEFAZIO addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from the District of Columbia (Ms. NORTON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. NORTON addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Illinois (Ms. SCHAKOWSKY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. SCHAKOWSKY addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Ms. LEE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. LEE addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Ms. WATERS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. WATERS addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

By unanimous consent, leave of absence was granted to:

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas (at the request of Ms. PELOSI) for today after 6 p.m. on account of official business in the district.

SPECIAL ORDERS GRANTED

By unanimous consent, permission to address the House, following the legislative program and any special orders heretofore entered, was granted to:

The following Members (at the request of Mr. PALLONE) to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material:

Mr. PALLONE, for 5 minutes, today.
 Ms. KAPTUR, for 5 minutes, today.
 Mr. BROWN of Ohio, for 5 minutes, today.
 Mr. DEFAZIO, for 5 minutes, today.
 Ms. NORTON, for 5 minutes, today.
 Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, for 5 minutes, today.
 Ms. LEE, for 5 minutes, today.
 Ms. WATERS, for 5 minutes, today.

SENATE BILLS REFERRED

Bills of the Senate of the following titles were taken from the Speaker's table and, under the rule, referred as follows:

S. Con. Res. 62. Concurrent resolution honoring the service and sacrifice of Korean War veterans; to the Committee on Veteran Affairs; in addition to the Committee on International Relations for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I move that the House do now adjourn.