

me, in the previous ruling it is impermissible to say anything about another Member, or insinuate by innuendo anything about the private life or aspects of a Member.

But now what the Chair is saying is it is all right to impugn motives by innuendo of a whole group. Is that correct? So he can say it about the whole group, but not to a Member, because that is by innuendo he implied our motives and my motives.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. It is the opinion of the Chair that the words do not engage in personal innuendo against any one Member, and Members can engage in debate on political motivation which is not—

Mr. VOLKMER. A book deal is not a political motivation.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Let the Chair finish—which is not personal.

The gentleman from Texas [Mr. DELAY] may proceed.

Mr. DELAY. I think we all ought to take a deep breath. It is quite evident to the American people that from January 4 we have been working tirelessly to get to the Contract With America.

GRIDLOCK REPLACED BY TOTALITARIANISM

(Mr. WATT of North Carolina asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. WATT of North Carolina. Mr. Speaker, on last Wednesday at approximately 6 o'clock the Judiciary Committee, after 1 day of markup on the balanced budget amendment, and with the Democratic members of that committee having in excess of 20 amendments to the bill that was pending, closed debate and went home on Wednesday afternoon.

On yesterday, congressional accountability came to the floor without the benefit of any deliberations or debate in committee. Today we stifle debate on the floor of the Congress.

I would just say to the American people that gridlock is being replaced in this body by totalitarianism.

ADDITION OF NAME OF MEMBER AS AN ORIGINAL COSPONSOR OF HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 1

Mr. BARTON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to add the name of our distinguished Democratic colleague, the Honorable RALPH HALL of Texas, as an original cosponsor to House Joint Resolution 1, the tax limitation balanced budget amendment congressional plan. His name was inadvertently left off the original list turned in on the day the bill was introduced.

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

There was no objection.

THE GAG RULE

(Ms. KAPTUR asked and was given permission to address the House for 1

minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, today freedom of speech on this floor is at stake. Two weeks into this Congress we see what gag rules are all about when no Ethics Committee has been appointed by the Speaker, when Members are purposefully muzzled in committees, when no hearings are allowed, when witness lists are completely controlled, we understand what a gag rule is.

In doing our people's business we have a right to know where a new author's personal interests, financial interests get tied up with his public duties. The deal for a \$4.5 million advance for three books not written, plus royalties are signed with a company owned by Rupert Murdoch, the very man who owns Fox News Network and could directly benefit by the obliteration of public television and radio, positions that the top official in this House has already publicly said he supports.

So we trade Big Bird and Barney for the gag rule.

THE MINORITY IS ATTEMPTING TO GAG THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

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

Mr. PAXON. Mr. Speaker, the previous speaker mentioned a gag rule. It is the minority party that is attempting to put a gag rule on the will of the American people.

The American people want the unfunded mandates legislation brought to the floor today. But what is the minority party trying to do? Adjourn the House so that legislation cannot come to the floor of this august body.

□ 1300

Since election day, it is the game the minority party has tried to play. They did not understand what happened on election day. The contract will continue to move ahead.

And one other point, the distinguished gentleman brought up the point of the ethics committee. We are waiting on the minority leader to move that body forward, not the Speaker or the majority.

THE GAG RULE

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

Mr. STUPAK. Mr. Speaker, I came here today to speak of unfunded mandates, but I must point out to the American people that there was no legislation ready to come to the House floor this week or today or tomorrow. It will not be until Friday.

But now I must speak of a new gag rule which is being implemented in this House. The gag rule in this House, and this Chamber, is that the media can truthfully report to the American

people, but a duly elected Member of this body, of this Congress, cannot report from this floor to his or her constituency the latest press reports on the Speaker's book deal.

So let me remind any Speaker in this chair that the Members of this side of the aisle will not be gagged, we will not be silenced, we will not be intimidated, we will continue to question all actions of anyone who does not conform to the high standards expected by the American people and of this institution.

Free speech will not be squelched to protect anyone.

WE REMAIN DETERMINED

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

Ms. MOLINARI. Mr. Speaker, there have been a lot of facts that have been ignored in this recent debate.

Fact No. 1, there was, up until this point in time, a lot of work that was going on, no, not on the House floor but in committee meetings.

Five subcommittees of Appropriations were attempting to meet today; the Economic and Educational Subcommittee was meeting on welfare reform; National Security, the Resources Committee. Rules is meeting to deliver the unfunded mandates bill to the floor. Small Business and Ways and Means. Those are important motions that are going on outside the House floor that have been delayed.

Fact No. 2, the people who ruled the so-called gag order was the Parliamentarian that was hired by the minority party, not by the Republicans.

And, fact No. 3, we, the Republican Party, admit our work today has been delayed, but the fact is we remain determined.

A GAG RULE IS BEING IMPOSED

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

Mr. DINGELL. Mr. Speaker, I came here to the House floor to discuss the unfunded mandates question. But a much more important question is before this body.

This is not the Duma, this is not the Reichstag. This is the House of the people, and in the 40 years that I have served here, it has been my pride that we have had free and open debate, and that great questions, including questions of the propriety and the behavior of Members of this body, could be discussed on the floor in an appropriate fashion.

Today we find that that cannot be. Members on this side get the distinct impression that a gag rule is being imposed and that Members of this side

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, kept 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.)