

I am proud of the students in Florida's Sixth Congressional District for their hard work and their skill. Being in a marching band is strenuous enough, but central Florida with all its heat adds an extra impediment to the challenge. Job well done.

□ 1015

**WEAKENED ETHICS RULES: NO WONDER REPUBLICANS ARE SO CONFIDENT**

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

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, what are House Republicans afraid of? True, there are constant newspaper reports about a member of the Republican leadership participating in questionable activities dealing with Washington lobbyists, trips overseas and questionable financial dealings. However, if Republicans are so confident that these activities do not constitute a breaking of the House rules, why have the Republicans made it virtually impossible for the Committee on Standards of Official Conduct to do its job?

Earlier this year, the Republicans weakened the ethics rules. Under the new Republican rules, if a majority of the committee cannot determine whether or not an investigation should proceed after 45 days of receiving a complaint, it would simply be dropped. Under the old bipartisan ethics rules, a subcommittee was created after the 45-day deadline to investigate the ethics charges.

It is no wonder Republican leaders are so confident. If they keep their Republican troops on the committee in line, they do not have to worry about an investigation. And this is no way to run an ethics committee. It is time that House Republicans join the Democrats in rejecting these new rules in favor of fair, bipartisan rules that restore confidence to the House ethics process.

F/A-22

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

Mr. GINGREY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the F/A-22 Raptor, one of the most important weapons the Air Force has in its fight to protect our country.

On Friday the Pentagon approved the F/A-22 for full-rate production. I am glad the Pentagon is recognizing what we have known all along: the Raptor is a superior and essential weapon for our Air Force.

It is our duty in Congress to ensure the safety of every American, and fully funding the F/A-22 goes a long way toward that end. Our bloated and bureaucratic government offers many opportunities to reduce spending and balance

the budget. But our Nation's defense is not the place to cut funds. The F/A-22 will let the United States military continue dominating our adversaries.

To prepare for tomorrow's threats, we need to fund these planes today. Mr. Speaker, I ask the Members to join me in supporting the F/A-22 program.

**WEAKENED ETHICS RULES: ETHICS COMMITTEE NOW A SHELL**

(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, on January 4, 2005, the first day of the 109th Congress, this House adopted several changes to the House ethics rules that many in this body warned would severely weaken the ability of the House Committee on Standards of Official Conduct to enforce the highest standards of ethical conduct in its Members, officers, and employees.

In the middle of March, these warnings, sadly, came to pass when the House Committee on Standards of Official Conduct failed to adopt committee rules that would have given it the ability to investigate credible allegations of misconduct even in cases where partisan considerations caused the committee to be deadlocked.

Now we are left with a shell of a committee, a paper tiger that can perform only a fraction of the advisory, enforcement, and investigatory duties assigned it.

The absence of a functioning ethics committee and the collapse of the ethics enforcement process are untenable, unacceptable, and irresponsible. In the eyes of the American people, this can only serve to undermine the integrity and credibility of the Members of the House and the House as institution.

**CLARENCE GAINES**

(Ms. FOXX asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay my respects to Coach Clarence "Big House" Gaines, who passed away on Monday April 18, 2005. Coach Gaines was a college basketball icon, having guided the Winston-Salem State University Rams to an amazing 828 wins during his 47 seasons at Winston-Salem State University. His record of success places him fifth on the NCAA career coaching wins list, just behind Dean Smith, Adolph Rupp, Bob Knight, and Jim Phelean.

Under Coach Gaines's leadership, the Winston-Salem State Rams won 11 CIAA titles and became the first predominantly black college to ever win an NCAA basketball title.

Coach Gaines was inducted into many halls of fame and was named CIAA Coach of the Year several times. He was also named NCAA Coach of the Year in 1967.

Coach Gaines was a truly remarkable man, and he will be missed. My condolences go out to his wife, Clara, and his two children.

**NORTHEAST REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION**

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

Mr. MICHAUD. Mr. Speaker, this week a tripartisan group of original co-sponsors has joined together to reintroduce our bill to create a Northeast Regional Economic Development Commission to invest in the most distressed areas of Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, and New York.

Economic development commissions are now in existence in Alaska; Mississippi; the Midwest; and, of course, Appalachia; among other places. These bodies have a proven track record of success. For example, since its creation, the ARC has cut the number of distressed counties in their region in half.

Today, when one looks at the statistics, the border region of the Northeast has just as strong a need as the other areas. We need direct Federal investments to turn our economies around. Our bill does that and ensures both local planning and the advancement of regional goals like sustainable land use.

We are proud to have such a strong tripartisan group working together to promote economic development in the Northeast. We look forward to advancing our bill and working with other regions who want to grow their economies and bring prosperity back.

**ENERGY POLICY**

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

Mr. MCHENRY. Mr. Speaker, in recent months Americans have been struggling to cope with rising gas prices. And today the Republican majority and the U.S. House of Representatives bring forward a comprehensive, a comprehensive, energy program.

And let me tell the Members this: we need to have a comprehensive energy program so that we can avoid losing jobs due to high energy costs.

This week it is a comprehensive energy bill that will drastically reduce the costs of energy. It will lower energy prices for consumers, revitalize our economy, and create jobs. That is because the money that was diverted to high energy costs can now go to goods and services; and most importantly, this bill will reduce our dependence on foreign oil.

Mr. Speaker, our opponents on the other side of the aisle have only given blather. They have only given bluster. They have not offered a comprehensive policy. We today are going to offer a comprehensive energy policy to help