handled. We need fiscal restraint. We need common sense when it comes to the budget.

The future of all Americans depends on an economy free of crippling deficits, free of crippling tax hikes, and free of a skyrocketing national debt. The extent of which earmarks unnecessarily burden the American taxpayers is unprecedented. Last year's earmarks amounted to nearly $100 for every man, woman and child in America.

While lobbying reform is necessary to preserve the integrity of our government, earmark reform is vital to our long-term fiscal well-being. Bringing earmarks to the light of day will promote fiscal responsibility, and it is going to promote more effective government as well.

So, Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the rule for lobbying reform.

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. MCGOVERN).

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, this is a sad day for the United States House of Representatives. This rule, quite frankly, is an insult to every single Member of this body. This rule should be open, and instead this rule is typically restrictive. This rule should be defeated.

The underlying bill, contrary to what you have heard here today, is not a reflection of bipartisan deliberation, because the truth is that deliberation is all but dead in this House. What everyone knows, and this leadership does not want to acknowledge, is that there is a direct connection between the corruption that has become so commonplace and the breakdown of the deliberative process.

The sweetheart deals for special interests, liability protection for big drug companies, tax breaks for big oil companies at a time when these companies are gouging Americans at the pump, they get slipped into bills without the knowledge of the majority in this House, Democrat and Republican. Why? Because the Rules Committee regularly waives the rules that requires that Members have at least 3 days to review the legislation.

They waive the rules that allow us to read the bill before it comes to the floor. Conference committees meet in secret. Big-ticket items are even put into bills after conference committees are closed. You can pass all the rules you want, but if you don't follow them, what good are they?

The Rules Committee did hold a series of hearings on this bill, and speaker after speaker expressed their concerns with the way this House is being run. And yet the underlying bill does nothing to open up the process. The underlying bill does nothing to shine some light on this corrupt process. Nothing will change as a result of this bill. Norm Ornstein, the congressional scholar, testified before the Rules Committee and he said, the problem goes beyond corrupt lobbyists or the relationship between lobbyists and lawmakers. It gets to a legislative process that has lost the transparency, accountability and deliberation that are at the core of the American system.

The failure to abide by basic rules and norms has contributed, I believe, to a loss of sensitivity among many Members and leaders about what is and what is not appropriate. Three-hour votes, 1,000-page-plus bills sprung on the floor with no notice, conference reports changed in the dead of night, self-executing rules that suppress debate along with an explosion of closed rules are just a few of the practices that have become common and are a distortion of regular order, and yet this bill does not even address any of those issues.

I would say to my colleagues on the other side of the aisle, if you want to show some bipartisanship, if you want to promote a process that has some integrity, this should be an open rule. All Members should have an opportunity to come here and offer amendments to this bill to improve the quality of deliberations on this House floor. They should be able to come and to offer amendments to clean this place up.

This rule is an outrage. Of all of the bills that we have considered here, if any one of them deserves an open rule, it is this. This is about the rules that govern this House. Vote ''no'' on this rule.

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, I withdraw the pending resolution.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BONNER). The resolution is withdrawn.

PRINTING OF PROCEEDINGS HAD DURING RECESS

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the proceedings had during the recess be printed in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD and that all Members and former Members who spoke during the recess have the privilege of revising and extending their remarks.

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

There was no objection.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess subject to the call of the Chair.

Accordingly (at 11 o'clock and 35 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess subject to the call of the Chair.

□ 1541

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. TERRY) at 3 o'clock and 41 minutes p.m.

VACATING ORDERING OF YEAS AND NAYS ON H. CON. RES. 357 AND H. CON. RES. 349

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the ordering of the yeas and nays be vacated with respect to the motion to suspend the rules and adopt H. Con. Res. 357, and the motion to suspend the rules and adopt H. Con. Res. 349, to the end that the Chair put the question de novo on each.

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

There was no objection.

SUPPORTING THE GOALS AND IDEALS OF NATIONAL CYSTIC FIBROSIS AWARENESS MONTH

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Florida (Mr. STEARNS) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution, H. Con. Res. 357.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds having voted in favor thereof) the rules were suspended and the concurrent resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

AUTHORIZING USE OF CAPITOL GROUNDS FOR THE GREATER WASHINGTON SOAP BOX DERBY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. SHUSTER) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution, H. Con. Res. 349.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds having voted in favor thereof) the rules were suspended and the concurrent resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 4975, LOBBYING ACCOUNTABILITY AND TRANSPARENCY ACT OF 2006

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, by direction of the Committee on Rules, I call up House Resolution 783 and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 783

Resolved, That at any time after the adoption of this resolution the Speaker may, pursuant to clause 2(b) of rule XVIII, declare the House resolved into the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for consideration of the bill (H.R. 4975) to provide greater transparency with respect to lobbying activities, and for other purposes. The first reading of the bill shall be dispensed with. All points of order against consideration of the bill are waived. General debate shall be confined to the bill and shall not exceed one hour equally divided and controlled by the Majority Leader and the Minority Leader or their designees. After general debate the bill shall be considered for

amendment under the five-minute rule. In lieu of the amendments recommended by the Committees on the Judiciary, Rules, and Government Reform now printed in the bill, the amendment in the nature of a substitute consisting of the text of the Rules Committee Print dated April 21, 2006, modified by the amendment printed in part A of the report of the Committee on Rules accompanying this resolution, shall be considered as adopted in the House and the Committee of the Whole. The bill, as amended, shall be considered as the original bill for the purpose of further amendment and shall be considered as read. Notwithstanding clause 11 of rule XVIII, no further amendment to the bill, as amended, shall be in order except those printed in part B of the report of the Committee on Rules. Each further amendment may be offered only in the order printed in the report, may be offered only by a Member designated in the report, shall be considered as read, shall be debatable for the time specified in the report equally divided and controlled by the proponent and an opponent, shall not be subject to amendment, and shall not be subject to a demand for division of the question in the House or in the Committee of the Whole. All points of order against such further amendments are waived. At the conclusion of consideration of the bill for amendment the Committee shall rise and report the bill, as amended, to the House with such further amendments as may have been adopted. The previous question shall be considered as ordered on the bill and amendments thereto to final passage without intervening motion except one motion to recommit with or without instructions.

SEC. 2. In the engrossment of H.R. 4975, the Clerk shall—

(1) add the text of H.R. 513, as passed by the House, as new matter at the end of H.R. 4975;

(2) conform the title of H.R. 4975 to reflect the addition of the text of H.R. 513 to the engrossment;

(3) assign appropriate designations to provisions within the engrossment; and

(4) conform provisions for short titles within the engrossment.

SEC. 3. After passage of H.R. 4975, it shall be in order to take from the Speaker's table S. 2349 and to consider the Senate bill in the House. All points of order against consideration of the Senate bill are waived. It shall be in order to move to strike all after the enacting clause of the Senate bill and to insert in lieu thereof the provisions of H.R. 4975 (as engrossed pursuant to section 2 of this resolution). All points of order against that motion are waived. If the motion is adopted and the Senate bill, as amended, is passed, then it shall be in order to move that the House insist on its amendment to the Senate bill and request a conference with the Senate thereon.

□ 1545

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from California (Mr. DREIER) is recognized for 1 hour.

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, for the purpose of debate only, I yield the customary 30 minutes to the gentlewoman from Rochester, New York (Ms. SLAUGHTER), pending which I yield myself such time as I may consume. During consideration of this resolution, all time yielded is for the purpose of debate only.

(Mr. DREIER asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, it was 11:00 this morning that I first called up the rule for consideration of this extraordinarily important lobbying and ethics reform measure. As I began my remarks, I talked about the fact that over the past 4 months, we have been meeting with outside organizations. We have been meeting with Democrats and Republicans in this House. We have been meeting with congressional experts to glean as much information as we possibly can from a wide range of sources.

The point I want to make is we began at about 11:00 this morning. I felt at that point we had a great deal of input over the past 4 months since we began dealing with this critically important issue which has to do with the credibility of this institution. As we began that debate, I thought why don't we get a little more input; and so for that reason, I moved to withdraw the resolution, and that is exactly what we did. We decided to proceed with more input from Members on this issue. And having gained more information, more input from our colleagues, we are now reconvening and further considering this important measure.

You know, the issue of reform is something of which I have been very, very proud over the years I have been privileged to serve here. The Republican Party is the party of reform. We have led reform initiatives for Congress after Congress, and what we are doing here today is another indication of our strong commitment to the issue of reform.

We know that there is a problem of corruption. We also know that it is not a one-party issue. It is a problem that has existed on both sides of the aisle. I remember a quote from our very distinguished former colleague who served as chairman of the Ways and Means Committee, Dan Rostenkowski, who one time said, You know, if everybody is unhappy with a piece of legislation, it is probably a pretty good bill.

And that is exactly what is the case right here. I do not know of anyone who is ecstatic with this piece of legislation. I have read the editorials out there from some of the people who have provided me with input on this issue.

I have listened to Democrats, and I will tell you, since January, I could not come to the House floor without a Democrat coming up to me and saying, You cannot ban privately funded travel. We must continue to maintain privately funded travel. It is critical. And yes, I have heard similar statements from our side of the aisle.

I mention the fact that there was input from outside organizations. Some have been very critical of this legislation, Mr. Speaker. But I am pleased that some of the harshest critics of this legislation have been able to have a great deal of input in this legislation. I have been very proud to have had meetings with the leadership of Common Cause, Democracy 21 and other organizations.

One of the recommendations that came to us from Mr. Wertheimer was that we prevent registered lobbyists who are former Members of Congress from having access to the House floor and the gym. We, I am very happy to say, with a strong bipartisan vote, were able to make sure that we prevented former Members of Congress who are registered lobbyists from having access to the floor and to the gym.

One of the concerns out there has been the lack of transparency when it comes to the campaign contributions that lobbyists make and the lobbying activity that they engage in. That was another recommendation that was put forward by the leadership of Democracy 21 and Common Cause. I am very pleased that in this legislation we include that issue, and we address it to make sure that transparency and accountability is addressed, and we do bring this forward.

Could we do more? Of course we could do more. I hope in conference we will be able to address these issues when we move ahead with this. I also want to say that the issue of reporting from lobbyists, and it is done right now under current law on a semiannual basis, it was the recommendation of the leadership of Democracy 21 and of Common Cause that we go from semiannual reporting to quarterly reporting.

I know there were a wide range of other recommendations that those and other organizations made that have not been incorporated, but I get back to the argument that we have been able to take a number of very important issues that have been put forward by Democrats and Republicans and include them in this legislation.

Would I like to do more? Sure, I would like to do more. I hope very much that as we take this bill, passing it out of this House and go to a conference with our colleagues in the Senate, that we will be able to do more.

I see the distinguished former chairman of the ethics committee Mr. HEFLEY here, and I know he has a number of concerns. I have already told him that as we take this first step in addressing the issue of moving ahead to a conference, I want to address the concerns that Members have that have not heretofore been addressed in this first process in the legislation and do that.

Now, over the past 4 months we have seen five committees of jurisdiction hold hearings and markups on this issue. The Rules Committee, with which I am the most familiar, held three original jurisdiction hearings, and we held a markup on this legislation. We had 13 outside witnesses who came and provided their recommendations to us, and we had input from a wide range of Members as we went through this process.

I know that our colleagues on the Judiciary Committee, on the Government Reform Committee, Mr. HASTINGS, who is chairman of the ethics committee and also has been very involved working with the Rules Committee on this,

and also Mr. EHLERS, chairman of the Administration Committee, have all worked diligently so we can put together a piece of legislation which will allow the American people to have a greater opportunity to see what it is that takes place here, to ensure that the tragic problems of corruption that we have witnessed will never happen again. That is our goal. I believe this legislation provides bold, strong, dynamic reforms which will move us in the direction towards doing just that.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

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

I would love to ask my good friend from California what great insight he did gain in these last 5 hours, and if it led him to want us to be able to be part of this input and that you would reconsider turning down a Democrat substitute?

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, will the gentlewoman yield?

Ms. SLAUGHTER. I yield to the gentleman from California.

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, let me just say again, as we know very well in this institution, listening to Members talking about a wide range of issues is a very important thing. We have been talking about, over the past few hours, some of the concerns that were raised by a number of our Members.

The issue of increasing transparency and accountability is very important, and I will say that I believe this package with this excellent rule that we are coming forward with to allow us to debate a wide range of issues is the right thing to do and will provide the best structure for our first step as we prepare to move to a conference with our colleagues in the Senate.

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Mr. Speaker, I am sorry it did not lead to input from our side.

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, if the gentlewoman will continue to yield, I would say that input from her side has been very important. And, yes, I have over the past few hours been talking to a number of Democrats who have been providing recommendations to me as well, and I thank my friend.

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. OBEY), the ranking member of the Appropriations Committee, who does have some input.

Mr. OBEY. Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate the gentleman from California for being able to give that speech with a straight face. I really admire him for it.

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. OBEY. I yield to the gentleman from California.

Mr. DREIER. I was smiling as I presented it.

Mr. OBEY. Well, I thought you were gritting your teeth; but, nonetheless, that is fine.

Mr. Speaker, let me simply say I really regret days like this in the House because I love this institution, and I love what this institution is supposed to represent to the American people.

The public wants us to pass significant House reform. Instead, this legislation before us, in my humble view, constitutes consumer fraud masquerading as lobbying reform, and there are two spectacular examples of that.

The most egregious example of the corruption of the process in this House is the way in which conference committees have been substantially corrupted by some of the most powerful people in this body. When you have a package that does not prevent powerful people in this body from adding 30 and 40 pages of new legislation to a conference report without ever having a vote on the conference report, as happened last year on the defense appropriation bill, when you have a reform bill that still allows that to occur, I do not think that is much of a reform bill.

This bill ought to require that any time any item is inserted in a conference report, that that cannot be considered by the House unless there is an open public vote of the conferees beforehand. That is the way you prevent the pharmaceutical industry from being shielded from suit, as happened on the defense bill last year at the behest of the majority leader of the other body.

Let me also say that with respect to earmarks, this bill purports to deal with the problem of earmarks by only going after appropriations earmarks; and yet last year on the authorization bill on highways, there were some 5,000 earmarks, seven times as many as were contained in the comparable appropriation bill. To not do something about authorizing committee earmarks in the process is a joke, in my view.

And then I would point out, to not lay a glove on the special goodies that are tucked into tax bills is even more outrageous. The 1986 tax bill, for instance, included 340 separate transition rules each benefiting a small set of individuals and small, ''little'' businesses like General Motors, Chrysler, Phillips Petroleum and Commonwealth Edison. It provided special deals for sports stadiums in Tampa, San Francisco, Denver, Cleveland, and Los Angeles. It provided a special rule for a millionaire stockbroker who had the largest private collection of Rodin sculpture in the Chicago area, and a family listed by Forbes Magazine as one of the 400 richest in America.

Any bill that allows those kinds of earmarks to continue is a bill that is not worthy of the name. It is a joke. It is an embarrassment, and I would urge that this House get serious and pass real reform.

□ 1600

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, let me just say that we are, with this package, going to implement real reform.

I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART), the very distinguished vice chairman of the Rules Committee who has long been a champion of institutional reform.

Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I thank the chairman for the time and for his hard work in bringing forth this piece of legislation today.

The Speaker of the House announced last January that this difficult subject, difficult but important, and it is difficult, Mr. Speaker, because any time that you deal with institutional reform, you deal with reform of the practices of Congress, obviously there is much tension and controversy and difficulty. And we are seeing it in the debate today, and we are going to continue to see it in the debate today. So it is not an easy task.

But the Speaker in January announced that he was going to deal, and we were going to, pursuant to his instruction and his leadership, deal with this issue of further creating transparency in this process and in this House, this respectable, this House that needs to be respected because it merits it. And yet, obviously, it can be improved.

And Chairman DREIER, pursuant to the instruction of the Speaker, has done tremendous work in listening time and again to the concerns of Members on both sides of the aisle and formulating this piece of legislation that is before us today that seeks to be before us based on this rule with which we bring it to the floor today.

So I urge all colleagues, first, to realize that their vote on the rule is going to be a vote on whether they are serious about considering lobbying reform. This is the vote on the record of whether or not one is serious about considering, about dealing with the issue of lobbying reform, and we will have an opportunity to go on the record.

We can always talk about how we would prefer to do other things. But perfection is sometimes, Mr. Speaker, the enemy of progress. This is the real thing, the real vote. If you are for lobbying reform, you will vote for the rule. If you are not, even if you have all sorts of excuses, then you vote ''no.''

I am confident that the majority of this body will vote for this rule so we can further consider and further improve this important piece of legislation that we bring to the floor today.

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2½ minutes to the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. SNYDER).

Mr. SNYDER. Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to this oppressive, undemocratic rule, a rule inconsistent with the great traditions of the people's House. So many amendments that were proposed by good Members of this body were not allowed to be considered today. And let me give you three examples. Number 1, no amendment was allowed to deal with the issue of Members getting rides on corporate jets. Let me put this in perspective for you

with real numbers. Today my wife is 35 weeks pregnant. A few weeks ago, I priced what does it cost if this happens in the middle of the night and I need to try to get home quickly to be with her when she goes into labor: $12,000 on a charter service for me to get home to Little Rock to be with my pregnant wife. Do you know what the first class ticket costs with Northwest Airlines? $680. So an alternative for me is to call up one of my good corporate friends and say, can I catch a ride on your plane? I will give you $680, and neither one of us will say, oh, by the way, that means you gave me an $11,300 gift. I think that people should be able to ride on planes. But they should pay the fair market value. That amendment should have been allowed to be discussed and brought on the floor.

Second, the chairman and I had a discussion at the beginning of this session about my feelings. I had an amendment proposed in the Rules Committee yesterday to greatly restrict the ability of former Members who are registered lobbyists to be on the floor and participate in some of these activities that we know as the Members dining room and the parking garage and the gym and all these kinds of things. Because here is the issue: when my constituents come from Arkansas, they have to go through the security. Members who are registered lobbyists do not. When my constituents come from Arkansas, they don't get to go to the Members' dining room. When my constituents come from Arkansas they don't get to roam through the halls and go in the back rooms of the committee rooms. Former Members who are registered lobbyists do.

My amendment was not allowed on the floor to be considered. If you don't like it, vote against it; but let me have this discussion.

Third, an amendment that deals with lobbyist-funded meals was not allowed. An amendment to deal with the ban on lobbyists-paid meals was not allowed. Are we so dependent on lobbyist-funded meals for our lunch money that we won't even let an amendment come on the floor of the House? Well, I have got a solution. I have got $5. I will leave it over here on this podium. If any Member is so dependent on not having lunch money, so dependent on lobbyist-funded meals, take the $5. But let us have a vote on these very important amendments.

Vote against this rule. It is a bad rule, undemocratic.

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume to first congratulate my friend. And I know that he is going to have a wonderful baby boy or girl before too terribly long.

And I will say in response to the issue of corporate aircraft, that is an issue that is addressed by the Federal Election Commission, and those are regulations which are promulgated by them. And that is the reason that we have not addressed this issue there in light of the fact that those regs come forward there.

Mr. SNYDER. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. DREIER. I yield to the gentleman from Arkansas.

Mr. SNYDER. Obviously, Mr. Speaker, me going back to Little Rock, Arkansas, to be with my wife as she goes into labor is not a campaign event. That is not the issue. We are talking about people catching rides for all kinds of reasons.

Mr. DREIER. If I could reclaim my time, Mr. Speaker, what I am talking about is the use of corporate aircraft for campaign events that is handled by the Federal Election Commission. The Federal Election Commission is the one that promulgates those regulations, because those corporate aircraft are used for campaign events for the political process.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the very distinguished former chairman of the House Committee on Ethics, my good friend from Ft. Collins, Colorado (Mr. HEFLEY).

Mr. HEFLEY. Mr. Speaker, I don't know who left me the $5 up here to buy my vote. I am not sure here.

Mr. DREIER. My recommendation is that you not touch it.

Mr. HEFLEY. I will keep my hands up here where you can see them.

Mr. Chairman, I have enormous respect for you and the committee, and you know that I do. But I am not happy with this rule. And I am not happy with this rule because I think it doesn't allow the House to consider real and meaningful ethics reform.

Now, you do lobbyist reform. But in terms of the ethics process reform, I don't think we really have much of that here. The rule does not allow the House to consider many of the provisions that would strengthen the integrity of the House and help restore public confidence. And I think actually we are missing an opportunity here.

I introduced a bill, along with Representative HULSHOF, who was my colleague on the Ethics Committee, to strengthen the Ethics Committee in ways not allowed under this rule. Our bill is cosponsored by many Democrats and Republicans, and not just Democrats and Republicans, but the left and right wing of both parties. So philosophically it crossed lines too. And yet our amendment will not be considered in this rule.

Our amendment had broad and sweeping disclosure across the board. All gifts over $20 disclosed, all privately funded travel disclosed, all lobbyist registrations, all passengers on corporate jets, all Members' financial disclosure statements, all disclosed on the Internet in real-time. Most of this is not in the bill. And yet it would allow Members to, our bill that we wanted as an amendment, would allow Members to continue privately funded travel, which I think is important.

Mr. DREIER. Would the gentleman yield on that point?

Mr. HEFLEY. I yield to the gentleman.

Mr. DREIER. I thank my friend for yielding, and I would simply say to my friend that he has brought forward a wide range of very, very important issues, many of which he addressed as chairman of the Ethics Committee himself. And I will, again, as I said in my opening remarks, I am very happy to make the commitment that we recognize that this process is the first step on our road towards dealing with this, and it is our goal that as we move beyond this rule to consider the legislation that we get into a House-Senate conference.

I am happy to yield my friend an additional 30 seconds.

Mr. HEFLEY. I won't belabor the point any more, except to just simply say there was a lot of good opportunity here, I think, to really strengthen the ethics process. And I know there are some who would like to do a commission to that again. The ethics process works. It did work and it worked very well for a long time. It needs to be tweaked a little bit, and that is what this bill would do.

I see the majority leader on the floor. I would be happy to yield.

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the majority leader.

Mr. BOEHNER. I thank my colleague for yielding, and suggest to my colleague from California, I am as concerned as you and many other Members on both sides of the aisle that the Ethics Committee process is not running the way it should. For the benefit of this institution, for the responsibility of this institution, the Ethics Committee should be functioning and should be enforcing the rules of the House. Unfortunately, one side of the aisle has decided that they don't want the process to continue.

Now, the gentleman from Colorado and I, yesterday, had a conversation about the ethics process. I am interested in seeing it up and running. I am interested in working in a bipartisan way to fix the problems that are there so that it will run for the benefit of Members and the institution; and the gentleman has my commitment to work with him and Members on the other side of the aisle to make sure that the ethics process works, because it is important for the integrity of this institution.

I yield to the gentleman.

Mr. HEFLEY. You said one side of the aisle is not interested in the Ethics Committee proceeding and working. There is enough blame to go around, I have to say. Both sides of the aisles have fouled this process up now. And we need to work together to get it back together. The Ethics Committee needs to work, and anything we do in the Ethics Committee reform process has to be bipartisan, or nonpartisan. You can't have an Ethics Committee that is partisan, and it has to be nonpartisan. So I would like to work with the majority leader, and I would like to ask

that if we are not going to have this as an amendment to this bill, that we have the opportunity to have a free-standing bill on the floor in the foreseeable future, in the near future, which would encompass much of what I have described here.

Mr. BOEHNER. In responding to my colleague from Colorado, I am interested in working in a bipartisan way to come to an agreement on those issues that are necessary for the Ethics Committee to do its job on behalf of Members and this institution. And whatever I can do to help foster those changes and to initiate real action at the Ethics Committee, I will do everything I can to work with you to do that.

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Mr. Speaker, if Mr. HEFLEY would like more time, I can yield him another minute.

Mr. HEFLEY. Mr. Speaker, I just lost my $5 here.

I don't want to take any more time because I know this is going to, we need to go ahead and get on with this thing. But I think we do have a serious opportunity here to do some really good things. And there are some really good things in this bill. I just don't think it goes far enough if we are really to have the reform kind of package that many of us would like to see.

Mr. DREIER. If the gentleman would yield, if he has any time left. I will say that I agree with exactly what the gentleman said. I wish there could have been more in this bill too. But, again, getting input from so many on both sides of the aisle has been a challenge.

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Reclaiming my time, I would like to say, Mr. Speaker, that it is all well and good to talk about we are going to work very hard to fix the Ethics Committee, but we are in the 16th month of this term, and I don't see much action taking place over there.

I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. SHAYS).

Mr. SHAYS. Mr. Speaker, I happen to believe we are losing our moral authority to lead this place. It has been over a decade since my party took over the majority, and I feel like we have forgotten how we got here. Republicans were united on three common issues, and one of them was reforming Congress.

It was amazing after the 2004 election we considered repealing the rule requiring a Republican leader to step down if indicted. Next we proceeded to remove the members of our Ethics Committee who had voted to hold our former majority leader accountable for his actions. Then we proceeded to make it more difficult to initiate an Ethics Committee investigation.

I think there is a tendency for power to corrupt, and absolute power to corrupt absolutely. We need bold action, and we need bold reform. Regretfully, this bill does not do it, and this rule does not allow us to make it better.

□ 1615

I asked the Rules Committee to consider 5 reforms that Congressman MEEHAN and I and others had proposed. Create an Office of Public Integrity. If you do not think it makes sense, debate it and then explain why.

Strengthen lobby disclosure requirements above what this legislation includes. If you do not think it makes sense, allow the amendment and then argue against it and vote it down.

Require disclosure of huge sums being spent by professional lobby firms and lobby organizations on grassroots campaigns to stimulate lobbying by Members of Congress. Allow that amendment. If you do not think it makes sense, argue against it and vote it down.

Require Members to pay for charter flights they take rather than pay a first-class fare. Allow this amendment, and if you do not think it makes sense, argue against it and vote it down.

Enact a true gift ban. If you do not think it makes sense, still allow a debate. Debate it, and if you do not think it makes sense, vote it down.

Particularly as it relates to charter flights, here we are going to ban Members from potentially flying to deliver a commencement address, but we are going to say to the leaders on both sides of the aisle, you can go on a corporate jet and only pay the first-class rate when it will cost that corporation literally tens of thousands of dollars. I do not understand how we, with a straight face, can say we are cracking down on the abuses of lobbying when we allow the corporations to fund where our leaders go.

The bottom line for me is why can we not have debate and vote on these issues and a number of others? I believe we need to defeat the rule and then do what my majority leader and the chairman have said: work on a bipartisan basis on a new bill, on new rules, that will allow some debate.

When I was re-elected 10 years ago and Republicans took over, I really believed, Mr. DREIER, that we would be allowed to have debates. Every year I see less and less of it.

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

Let me say once again that I am very proud of the reform agenda that we have implemented and continue to implement in a wide range of areas including institutionally right here on ensuring that we have a free-flowing debate on a wide range of issues, a guaranteed motion to recommit, which I know my colleagues will have on this legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Columbus, Indiana (Mr. PENCE), the distinguished chairman of the Republican Study Committee.

(Mr. PENCE asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. PENCE. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding. And I commend the chairman of the Rules Committee for his outstanding leadership and no small amount of perseverance and courage in evidence today.

I also speak in commendation of Speaker HASTERT and our leadership for bringing the Lobbying Accountability and Transparency Act to the floor in this rule.

After months of scandal and years of deficit spending, we have come to a moment of truth. We will show today on this floor in less than an hour who in this body is committed to reform and who is not.

This legislation has significant lobbying reforms: enhanced disclosure reporting for lobbyists, civil and criminal penalties for noncompliance, and imposes a moratorium on privately funded travel. But as we change the way lobbyists spend their money, this Congress also understands that we must change the way we spend the money of the American people, understanding that you cannot complain about the sharks when you are holding a bucket of chum.

This bill contains historic and significant budget reforms. Under the reforms we will consider, Members will have unprecedented opportunities to challenge so-called earmark spending at every stage of the legislative process. And we can do more earmark reform, applying it to all committees, as has been suggested, but we dare not do less. Lobbying reform must be married with spending reforms that give greater transparency and accountability to the process and the American people.

This country longs for a Congress that will renew its commitment to fiscal and ethical reform, and this is such a moment. This is a moment of truth. I urge all of my colleagues to support the rule for the Lobbying Accountability and Transparency Act.

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. SCOTT).

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I had an amendment that was adopted in the Judiciary Committee, and the adoption of this rule would eliminate that amendment.

That amendment would have created just a study of a practice where some lobbyists appear to be charging percentage contingency fees for getting earmarks. Now, when you combine this idea with the K Street Project where you are supposed to be hiring Republican lobbyists who are supposed to be contributing back to the legislators, you can see how ugly a practice this can get. I just asked for a study.

And, Mr. Speaker, these kinds of contracts are illegal for agents of foreign governments. They are illegal in some executive branch lobbying. The Congressional Research Service in a memorandum cited these as bad because they furnish the strongest incentive to the exertion of corrupting and sinister influences to the end that the desired legislation may be secured, and there is a long line of cases in which it

is utterly void against public policy. The CRS memo cites Oliver Wendell Holmes in 1906, saying that it is the tendency in such contracts to provide incentives towards corruption. An 1853 Supreme Court case said that it is an undoubted principle of the common law, that it will not lend its aid to enforce a contract such as this to do an act which is inconsistent with sound morals or public policy or which tends to corrupt or contaminate.

Mr. Speaker, these kinds of contracts are illegal in 39 States because of their corrupting influence. If we are going to have a bill that suggests it is going to do something about corruption, what is wrong with at least studying the prevalence of these contracts which do not appear to be illegal in the Federal Government but everybody knows have a corrupting influence?

I would hope that we would defeat the rule so that my amendment, which was adopted in the Judiciary Committee, can be reinserted back into the bill.

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself 1 minute.

As I listen to critics of this legislation, you would think that the package that we have is a huge step backward. Let me first say to my friend Mr. SCOTT that his amendment was not germane to the bill, and all of the amendments that we have made in order are germane to the bill. We, in fact, used that as a guide in proceeding here.

When one thinks about what has or has not happened, again, this criticism is leveled towards what is not in the bill, failing to recognize what is in the bill.

This bill doubles the fines for lobbyists who fail to disclose. It adds the possibility of jail time for failing to comply with the act. It adds oversight to make sure disclosure information is accurate, and it gives the public full on-line access to disclosure reports, all things that are needed and are improved with the passage of this legislation.

Mr. Speaker, at this point I am very pleased to yield 2½ minutes to the gentleman from Scottsdale, Arizona (Mr. HAYWORTH).

(Mr. HAYWORTH asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. HAYWORTH. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from California, the chairman of the Rules Committee, for the time to speak on behalf of this rule.

And one of the challenges we confront in an institution that, yes, has a partisan composition and is made up of, admittedly, imperfect beings is that there are numerous examples of imperfection and, dare we say, partisanship brought to this debate.

But the question in the final analysis, despite the seeming inevitability of incrementalism, which in itself in this case is not fatal or does not flaw this positive action, is that the short-term temptation to attempt to gain partisan advantage is not completely negated on this floor. And, Mr. Speaker, my colleagues, we would be naive if we thought that it were.

I listened with great interest to my friend from Virginia, a member of the Judiciary Committee, offer some legal case history, although his amendment was not germane to this bill. I could point out, just as a citizen, we could look at other challenges faced by other Congresses and other majority in a landmark work entitled The Ambition and the Power that dealt with the challenges of a previous majority.

What is past is prologue. What we have an opportunity to do in this House today, despite admitted imperfections, despite the temptation of partisanship, is to take a meaningful step forward for reform.

I listened to constructive criticisms from those who say the bill does not go far enough. I listened to other criticisms that perhaps are partisan in nature. But the question before this House is will we stand up clearly and take a step in favor of reform?

This Member says yes. Let it begin with this rule. Vote ''yes'' on the rule and ''yes'' on the legislation and ''yes'' for real reform.

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2½ minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. WAXMAN).

Mr. WAXMAN. Mr. Speaker, I will be blunt. Washington is mired in corruption. In this last year alone, the Vice President's Chief of Staff was indicted for obstructing justice. Two of the former majority leaders top aides have pled guilty to bribery and conspiracy. And a senior Republican Member of Congress was convicted of accepting over $1 million in bribes from military contractors. Yet this so-called reform legislation, this incrementalism that we should accept, is a complete and utter sham.

In my committee, the Committee on Government Reform, we worked hard to pass true reform legislation of the executive branch, and on a unanimous bipartisan vote of 32–0, we reported legislation that would have closed the revolving door between K Street and the Federal Government. Our bill would stop lobbyists like the former Deputy Interior Secretary from using a high-ranking government position to benefit energy industry clients. It would prohibit senior officials, like the former Medicare Director, from seeking jobs representing pharmaceutical companies while writing prescription drug legislation. Our legislation would have ended secret meetings between lobbyists and executive branch officials like those that produced the deeply flawed White House energy plan. And it would have promoted open government, banned covert propaganda, and given national security whistleblowers long overdue protection.

But what does the Republican leadership do when Committee Chairman TOM DAVIS and I jointly proposed these landmark bipartisan reforms and we asked that it be included in this legislation or give us a rule to report it out as separate legislation? They reject it. They would not give us an opportunity to bring bipartisan legislation to the floor. And then they stand here and say, we cannot do more because we do not have bipartisan support. But when we give them a bill on ethics and lobbying reform with bipartisan support, they ignore it and will not give us a chance on the House floor.

A corrupt mentality governs in Washington, and there is no better metaphor for the contempt for reform that has infected this body than the treatment that our proposal received.

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield? I would be happy to yield the gentleman time.

Mr. WAXMAN. If you yield me time, I would be happy to yield to you.

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, I would just like to engage in a colloquy with my friend.

□ 1630

I have the greatest respect for him as a fellow Californian. The fact is, Mr. Speaker, as we look at this issue, will the gentleman not acknowledge that the problem of corruption we face in this town is a bipartisan issue, that it crosses party lines and it is not just a Republican issue?

Mr. WAXMAN. Mr. Speaker, reclaiming my time, I certainly think what we have seen is a lot of corruption, and the resolution of how to deal with it ought to be bipartisan. We gave you a bipartisan proposal, which you would not bring to the House floor.

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to my friend, the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. KENNEDY).

Mr. WAXMAN. Mr. Speaker, the gentleman from California will not yield further to me?

Mr. DREIER. I yielded twice as much, 100 percent more, than what the gentleman yielded to me.

Mr. WAXMAN. The gentleman will not yield further.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. HAYES). The House will be in order.

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, I am going to ask the gentleman from Minnesota to proceed, and then if my friend from California would like to ask me a question or something, as soon as we are done with the gentleman from Minnesota, I will be happy to yield to my friend from California.

Mr. KENNEDY of Minnesota. Mr. Speaker, this bill does include many important provisions, and I am thankful for that; but I feel that we have not gone quite far enough in terms of stopping the revolving door from public service to K Street. It does not extend the current 1-year ban on Members becoming registered lobbyists.

To fix the problems caused by competing public and personal interests, we must close the revolving door between Congress and lobbying. That is why I introduced H.R. 4685, to permanently ban Members from taking jobs

as registered lobbyists. We must make sure there is not the temptation for Members of Congress.

Mr. Speaker, I applaud the things that are in the bill. I hope that we can continue to work on this further in the future.

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, if the gentleman would yield, I would simply say in response to my friend, as he knows very well, we have really gone a long way toward making sure there is greater transparency on that issue, so the so-called ban on lobbying, the cooling-off period, is made clear with lines that we draw. I think it is really moving in the direction to which my friend has referred.

Mr. KENNEDY of Minnesota. Mr. Speaker, reclaiming my time, I appreciate the clarity that was put in the bill.

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, at this juncture I would like to yield 30 seconds to my good friend, the gentleman from California (Mr. WAXMAN).

Mr. WAXMAN. Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask my good friend why, when the committee that has jurisdiction over executive branch lobbying has a unanimous vote on a bipartisan bill to try to stop some of these egregious problems of the revolving door, why we couldn't get it on the floor?

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, I would reclaim my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Both gentlemen will suspend. Thirty seconds has been yielded. Please allow the 30 seconds to expire.

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, if the gentleman would yield, I would simply say that this measure is designed to deal with lobbying and ethics reform for the first branch of government, the legislative branch; and it is for that reason that we have not gotten into the executive branch issue to which my friend referred.

Mr. Speaker, may I inquire of the Chair how much time is remaining on each side.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from California (Mr. DREIER) has 8½ minutes remaining, and the gentlewoman from New York (Ms. SLAUGHTER) has 15½ minutes remaining.

The Chair would remind the House that when a Member who controls time yields a specific block of time to another, that time may not be reclaimed and should not be interrupted by interjection.

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, in light of the fact that I have 8½ minutes remaining and my colleague from Rochester has 15½ minutes remaining, I think it would be probably useful for us to proceed with hearing some of her arguments.

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. LYNCH).

Mr. LYNCH. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the gentlewoman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, the lobbying reform proposal drafted by the Republican leadership in the wake of the Jack Abramoff scandal and other recent instances of corruption by public officials is woefully lacking in many respects; but chief among them, however, is its failure to address the central weakness and the most corrosive aspect of the current lobbying rules, and that has proven to be this revolving door aspect we have heard so much about today, which involves public sector congressional folks, employees, going over to work for special interest groups. In the most recent instance with the Abramoff scandal, we had staffers for the former Republican leader going over to work for Abramoff.

However, the need to impose greater restrictions on the flow between key legislative and executive branch policymaking posts and business and lobbying firms was never more evident than during the days following the passage of the Medicare Prescription Drug Act. That was an absolute disgrace. We came to find out that the former chairman of the House Energy and Commerce Committee had taken the top job at the pharmaceutical industry's most powerful trade group only a couple of months after he had played an instrumental role in the bill's development and promotion.

We came to find out only days after passage of the Medicare act that the administration's chief congressional negotiator on the bill had landed a job at a top lobbying firm representing drug companies and health care providers with major stakes in the legislation.

As has been pointed out, that legislation has a provision that says the Secretary of Health and Human Services shall not negotiate lower drug prices with the pharmaceutical companies. Then one of the chief drafters of the bill goes to work for the pharmaceutical companies. It weakens our credibility as an institution here. Not only were seniors robbed, but also I think that the insurance companies were allowed to greatly benefit as a result of this revolving door situation, and we must correct it.

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. DOGGETT).

Mr. DOGGETT. Mr. Speaker, this lobby bill began with grand talk and broad promises, and today it is ending with a whimper. The announcement was the high watermark. Since then, the Republican strategy has been on each of these reforms, let the weak get weaker, and to reject most every Democratic proposal that has been advanced, even some like my own that had no visible opposition.

So much has been stripped from this bill that if it remains here another week, there won't be anything left but the name, and the name is certainly appropriate, The Transparency Act, because you can see right through this bill, that it does not reflect any meaningful bipartisan reform of a very corrupt system.

Tragically, the party of Abraham Lincoln is becoming the party of Abramoff. No wonder you have blocked every effort we have made to investigate this wretched scandal. With all the special interest wining and dining, what a ''Grand Old Party'' it is. But it is a grand party for everyone but the taxpayers, who have to pick up the tab, because corruption is not a victimless crime. Ask those who bear the higher price at the gas pump, who bear the costs as taxpayers of no-bid Halliburton contracts, or the suffering of our seniors from a pharmaceutical bill written for the manufacturers, not for the seniors.

This bill represents no right step in the right direction, no true incremental reform. It is, instead, a phony, contrived maneuver to obstruct genuine change, to stop the greed and end the culture of corruption that is weakening our country.

We have come forward as Democrats with one proposal after another to reach across the aisle and to try to address this corruption, but at every turn our hand has been slapped away by those who are content with the corrupt system that is ruining this country and damaging this Congress.

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield the balance of my time to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. PELOSI), our minority leader.

Ms. PELOSI. Mr. Speaker, we are about to vote on a rule for a so-called lobbying reform bill that The Washington Post has said ''is simply a joke.'' ''Or more accurately,'' it goes on to say, ''a ruse aimed at convincing what the leaders must believe is a doltish public that the House has done something to clean up Washington.'' A ruse. That is what this is.

And to the distinguished Chair of the Rules Committee, if you think that what is being proposed today maintains a high ethical standard for this House, either your standards are too low or you have no interest, no interest, in cleaning up the culture of corruption that the Republicans have in this House of Representatives.

This Republican leadership so-called Lobbying Accountability and Transparency Act holds no one accountable and provides little transparency to the activities of lobbyists or anyone else. It is an embarrassingly trivial response to the culture of corruption that has thrived under the Republican Congress.

And this corruption has a cost to the American people, as others of my colleagues have said. This corruption has come at great cost to the American people in terms of prices at the pump, a Medicare prescription drug bill that does little to lower the cost of spiraling health drug costs, and waste and fraud in the gulf coast and in Iraq.

This bill is a missed opportunity, a missed opportunity. As House Democratic Leader, I would have hoped that we could have worked together with the leadership of this House of Representatives to put forth something

that truly threw up the windows and pulled back the shades to let in the fresh air. But that didn't happen because of this ruse.

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, would the gentlewoman yield?

Ms. PELOSI. I wouldn't even think of yielding to you. You have all the time in the world.

I come to this floor with great sadness. I come here as one who has served on the Ethics Committee for 7 years, at a time when we worked in a bipartisan fashion to maintain a high ethical standard. I take very seriously our responsibility to the American people to do their business here, not the business of the special interests of the lobbyists.

That is why it is such a pity that we really don't have transparency in this rule and in this bill, where we can come to the floor with an open rule, where all points of view can be considered and all positive initiatives can be considered and voted up or down. Let's leave that up to the debate.

We certainly can do better than this. That wouldn't be difficult.

Democrats are offering a motion to recommit that breaks the link between K Street lobbyists and the Congress of the United States. It says it ''bans.'' It is unequivocal. It is unambiguous. It bans gifts and travel from lobbyists and from organizations who employ lobbyists. It prohibits use of corporate jets for official travel. It just prohibits it. You can't do it. It shuts down the K Street Project, in which lobbying firm jobs are traded for legislative favors. And it shuts down the revolving door. What a disgrace, this revolving door that is spinning so fast. It prohibits Members, senior staff and executive branch officials from lobbying their former colleagues for 2 years after leaving office. Two years. I think it should be longer, but that is a compromise.

Today, the Republican majority brings forth a rule that is itself an abuse of power. The Republican Rules Committee has refused to let this House debate bills that 165 Democrats cosponsored. The Republicans have refused to let this House debate even Republican serious proposals directed at cronyism and corruption in government contracting. The Republicans have refused to let this House debate any serious attempt to end the culture of corruption.

They call this bill the Lobbying Accountability and Transparency Act? The Washington Post calls it a joke. The sad thing is, it is not a very funny joke, because, once again, the American people are paying the price.

My colleagues have listed some of the abuses of power. Mr. WAXMAN in particular talked about what the impact is on the American consumer from some of those abuses of power.

Imagine that the person managing the bill on prescription drugs left this House and soon was representing the pharmaceutical industry for $2 million a year in salary. How much does it cost to sell the seniors down the river? Well, about $2 million a year, if you are the manager of the prescription drug bill. That is why Americans, middle-income seniors, will be paying more at the pharmacy because of the corruption that was involved in writing this bill, a bill where the pharmaceutical industry insisted that there be a prohibition in the bill against the Secretary of HHS for negotiating for lower prices. It was in the bill because the pharmaceutical industry insisted upon it. They had their representatives at the table. America's seniors did not. Who do you think came out on top in that bill writing?

We have talked about a time when the American taxpayer has the burden of that, plus paying a price at the pump because of the corruption in writing the energy policy for this country, behind closed doors, refusing to reveal what went into writing that legislation.

□ 1645

And that legislation, do not take it from me, the Republican Department of Energy stated at the time that the energy bill proposed and passed by the Republicans in this Congress would increase the price at the pump. They said it at the time.

So not only are the consumers paying the price at the pump and an increased cost in their home heating oil and cooling oil as we go into the summer months; they gave a gift, they, the American taxpayers, we gave a gift to the oil companies.

That same bill that increased the price at the pump that people are now paying nearly $3 a gallon for, they, those oil companies, those same oil companies got subsidies of $12 billion in the energy bill. They got royalty relief, royalty holidays of several more billion dollars.

And to make matters worse, in the most recent tax bill that is being prepared to come to this floor, they will get $5.5 billion more in tax breaks. What are they taking the American taxpayer for? What are they thinking of? It is such an insult to the intelligence of the consumer and the taxpayer.

Wait a minute, at a time of record, of record profits, historic and obscene profits, these companies are paying enormous fees. The CEO of Exxon is getting a retirement package of $400 million. Record profits. High subsidies from the taxpayer, and high prices at the pump, a very raw deal for the American consumer.

All of it born from the culture of corruption in this House of Representatives. We must break that link. We are here for the interests of the American people, for the public interest. The Republicans are here for the special interests. They are the handmaidens of the pharmaceutical industry. They are the handmaidens of the energy companies. They do not know any other way to do it.

And that is why we get not only bad policy, not only corruption in this House, not only a cost of that corruption to the taxpayer and to the consumer, but we have a ruse of a bill that tries to masquerade as reform on this House of Representatives.

I feel really sad about this. I feel sad for the American people. They expect and deserve better. And we can give that to them in our motion to recommit that I talked about earlier. It bans the gifts and travel. It breaks the link. It stops the revolving door. It also says that if you are convicted of a felony in the performance of your duties as a Member of this House, you do not get your pension. You do not get your pension.

And as I said, again, this whole thing about jet travel and the rest, our motion to recommit would prohibit corporate travel for official purposes. So I hope that our colleagues will understand that we certainly can do better and that the American people are watching; that we can present substantive reforms, some that we should be debating today. I can assure my colleagues that these reforms, that if we have these reforms, we will end this culture of corruption. I also assure you that if the Democrats win the Congress next year, they will be implemented on the first day, the first day of the first session of this next Congress.

So let us start fresh with this. The American people, as I say, expect and deserve better. We can clear the slate by rejecting, all-out rejecting this ruse, this pathetic, pathetic little tiny step that is a missed opportunity for a high ethical standard and is an excuse to keep the culture of corruption that is here.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to vote ''no'' on this rule, and if the opportunity presents itself, to support the Democratic motion to recommit. I want to in closing commend the ranking Democrat on the Rules Committee, Congresswoman SLAUGHTER. She has been a relentless crusader for a high ethical standard in this House for not only lobby reform and all kinds of other reform, but for injecting a level of civility into how we should have debate on the floor of the House that respects the views of Democrats and Republicans, because we respect the people who sent all of us here, not just having Republicans heard and Democrats blocked out.

So Congresswoman SLAUGHTER, I commend you for your leadership. I thank you for your courage. I urge our colleagues to vote ''no'' on the rule.

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself 30 seconds to say to my dear friend from California, the distinguished minority leader, to whom I am happy to yield at any time whatsoever, that on the issue of prescription drugs, we are very proud of the fact that more than 30 million Americans, many more than had been anticipated, are today saving millions and millions of dollars because of the Medicare prescription drug package that we put into place.

On the issue of energy issues, we are outraged at the increase in gasoline and fuel costs. But I will tell you, I am really perplexed, because as they decry the issue of global warming, you would think that they would be ecstatic at the fact that gasoline prices have gone through the roof.

But, unfortunately, it is their policies, their refusal to pursue ANWR in a responsible way to deal with the issue of boutique fuels and to deal with the issue of refinery capacity that has been a problem.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 2½ minutes to a very hardworking member of both the Rules Committee and the Committee on Ethics, my friend from Oklahoma (Mr. COLE).

Mr. COLE of Oklahoma. Mr. Speaker, I thank the chairman for yielding.

I rise to support the rule and the underlying bill. And I want to first, Mr. Chairman, commend you. I have watched this process unfold in front of us as we have worked, as you and the Speaker committed we would, through regular order, through five different committees, over 4 months, entertaining dozens of amendments.

I have watched you struggle with the numerous amendments we had, and yet try to get them down to a manageable level, things that actually counted and made a difference in the legislation that let us debate things.

I have watched as you and the Speaker and others have tried to craft a bill that moved us forward, and indeed this bill does move us forward. After all of the smoke and all of the rhetoric and everything is said, the real basic question is simply this: Will we be better off with or without this bill? There is no question we will be better off with this bill. We will be more transparent, we will have more reporting by lobbyists, stricter supervision, higher penalties for those who transgress, whether they be those amongst us or others in the lobbying and the political community.

We have a measure of campaign finance reform that could be triggered by this legislation. And indeed as you pointed out, Mr. Speaker, this is simply the first step of a long journey. And it is very important. I appreciate the way that you have dealt with the dilemma of having some who want to go further than we are able to go, and actually enact legislation, and those who do not want to do anything at all.

And it is always easiest to take one of those two positions, because you are always right. You never have to answer for anything. But at the end of the day, the Speaker and the chairman have to craft a package that will pass and will put them in a position to negotiate with the Senate. I think they have done that.

I also wanted to highlight just briefly an amendment that may come up later in this debate, which is indeed bipartisan in nature, and which I think takes us in the right direction in appropriately regulating private travel, something that has been an abuse, and where I have had the good fortune of working with my friends across the aisle, Mr. MILLER, Mr. BERMAN. I had the opportunity to also work with Mr. HASTINGS and Mr. LUNGREN, and we think we have crafted an amendment that everybody in this House can be pleased with.

That would not have happened without your help, Mr. Chairman, and without your support. Let me conclude by saying, I am very proud to have worked with my friend, the chairman on the Rules Committee. I appreciate his support as we have worked through difficult issues.

I know we are at the beginning of a long debate. I am very confident at the end of the day we will have a legislative package that will be a marked improvement.

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, may I inquire of the Speaker how much time is remaining on each side.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. HAYES). The gentleman from California has 5½ minutes. The gentlewoman from New York's time has expired.

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2½ minutes to a hardworking member of the Rules Committee, the distinguished chairman of the Republican Policy Committee, my good friend, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. PUTNAM).

Mr. PUTNAM. Mr. Speaker, I thank the chairman for his hard work on this issue. This is another situation where the Democrats were for it before they were against it, before they were for it, before they were against it again.

It has been interesting to watch this debate unfold as fingers have been pointed now since the end of last year about a culture that they have described as being corrupt, and yet here they come today to oppose a bill that addresses many of the same issues that they have been screaming about for the past 4 months.

The Policy Committee did exhaustive work, Mr. Speaker, in bringing together groups of Members to talk about these issues. Reforming the institution is among the most important and also among the most difficult issues to do, because everyone involved has an innate understanding of the issues that we are dealing with and the needs of the House from the perspective of their particular district.

There was widespread agreement that disclosure, sunshine, accountability should be the three pillars upon which we build this reform effort. And we did that. When it comes to issues like travel, as Mr. COLE has described, who has been a leader in a bipartisan effort to reform those practices, it has been a very difficult path, but one which has yielded bipartisan results in the form of the amendment that we will be considering later.

When it comes to making sure that there is an opportunity for the public to know what goes on in this institution and what interest groups that are attempting to lobby the Congress are doing, we increased the reporting requirements. We increased the penalties for those people who would take advantage of the public trust that they are given by the voters and by the electorate.

When it comes to the issues of making sure that we have a functioning ethics committee, that is the most important piece of this process, increasing the leverage to make sure that that committee is one that is functioning appropriately.

So in sum, Mr. Speaker, it is appalling to me that people would say that in this case, after 4 months of decrying the status of things, that nothing is better than disclosure requirements, that nothing is better than transparency, that nothing is better than greater accountability.

The foundation upon which this bill is crafted is something that every Member can go home and talk to their constituents about. It is something that will improve the work of this institution and begin the process of restoring the public trust in the people's Chamber.

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of the time.

As many of my colleagues have said, this has been obviously a challenging time for us. We are dealing with some very serious problems in this institution. They are bipartisan. They cross party lines. And that is why the Speaker and I and others felt very strongly about the need to do what we can to do what we possibly could to ensure that we reached out to both Democrats and Republicans and a wide range of individuals and outside groups and all for recommendations.

I am happy that many of those issues have been addressed, and I think it is very important for us to ask each Member to look at the bill as a whole and answer these very important questions: Does it increase transparency? Does it increase accountability? Does it put more information in the hands of the American people? Does it protect the first amendment right of citizens to petition their government? Does it strengthen the integrity of the United States Congress?

Mr. Speaker, I am absolutely convinced that the answer to every single one of those questions is a resounding ''yes'' on every single count. No matter what some have argued on the other side, if they want to maintain the absolute status quo, it creates the potential to continue many of the problems that we have faced.

□ 1700

Virtually everyone has acknowledged that while they may not believe that this bill goes as far as we would like, this is the first step in a process that will allow us to join with our colleagues in the other body to deal in a conference with the measure that I hope is even stronger than this very important first step that we are taking.

I think that the vice chairman of the Rules Committee Mr. DIAZ-BALART put it very well when he said that anyone who casts a vote against this rule is saying no to the issue of reform. No, I don't want to proceed with bringing about the kinds of institutional changes that will play a role in enhancing the level of integrity to which the American people can hold this great deliberative body.

We hear everyone talking about reform. Voices for reform are out there, and they are very prevalent in the media, here on the House floor, day after day after day. But in just a few minutes we are going to have the opportunity to transform those voices for reform into votes for reform. This is our opportunity.

Mr. Speaker, with that I urge an ''aye'' vote on this rule so that we can move ahead with this very, very important reform effort.

Mr. PRICE of North Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to join my colleagues in making a point that seems to be lost on the leadership of this House: this is not simply a ''lobbyist problem'' we are facing. Ensuring that lawmakers comply with existing ethics rules and enhancing lobbyist disclosure requirements are important goals . . . and even on this measure, . . . the so-called ''Lobbying Accountability and Transparency Act'' falls embarrassingly short.

What started as a limited but seemingly earnest attempt at reform has been progressively hollowed out over the past several weeks in—you guessed it—closed-door meetings with lobbyists. The result is not surprising. Reporting requirements for lobbyist-hosted fundraisers? Gone. No more bargain rates on corporate jets? Gone. A study to examine lobbyist employment contracts? Gone.

But again, this is not simply a lobbyist problem. House Democrats have tried in earnest to offer a plan for reform that takes a hard look in the mirror and examines what Congress must do to clean up its own house.

My colleagues DAVE OBEY, BARNEY FRANK, TOM ALLEN and I have introduced a fourteen-point plan that would address not only individual abuses, but also the abuses of the legislative process. Our proposal would end the practice of keeping votes held open long enough to twist recalcitrant arms into compliance. It would prevent legislation from being slipped into conference reports without conference approval. It would require House-Senate conferences to actually meet and vote. And it would give Members of Congress at least a full day to examine the contents of any legislation we are voting on.

We have testified before the Rules Committee in favor of this comprehensive approach. During Rules Committee markup of this bill and again during the hearing on the rule last night, numerous amendments were offered and defeated—mostly on party-line votes—that would have implemented these reforms. The Democratic Substitute, which was also denied a fair hearing last night, recognized the need to take a comprehensive approach to lobbying and ethics reform. At each step in the process, our attempts at genuine, bipartisan reform were turned away.

So what did we get instead? It's no surprise: a bill that could serve as a case study in everything that is broken in our legislative process—of everything we should be ''reforming.'' We get a so-called ''Lobbying Accountability and Transparency Act'' that offers neither accountability nor real transparency. We get a minority party—and many Members of the majority—completely shut out of the process once again, their amendments denied, their advice and concerns unheeded. We get a restrictive rule that makes in order just nine out of the 74 amendments offered—and only one sponsored by a Democrat without a Republican cosponsor—and allows for only one hour of debate on what should be one of the most significant bills we consider all year.

This leadership had a real chance to enact real reform, not for the sake of an aggrieved minority . . . not for the sake of election-year politics . . . but for the sake of our institution, for its integrity and its capacity to govern. Instead, they seem to think they can convince the American people that they're cleaning up our House, when all they're doing is sweeping our problems under the rug.

Well Mr. Speaker, the American people will not be so easily fooled. And I assure you that those of us in this body who want real, comprehensive reform will not rest until we have successfully enacted such a measure. But this is not such a measure. I urge my colleagues to oppose this legislation.

Mr. HULSHOF. Mr. Speaker, it is with regret that I rise today in opposition to the rule before us.

The ethics process in this body is broken. In all candor, there is plenty of blame to go around as to why we find ourselves in this situation. We undermine the public's faith in this great institution when we let petty politics erode the very processes meant to preserve the public's trust in Congress.

I have met with the Majority Leader on this issue, and I sincerely believe that he has a genuine desire to have an effective, functioning Ethics process in the House. I thank him for his willingness to listen, and I hope we can perhaps address this issue in the future.

Having previously served on the Ethics Committee, I firmly believe that the ethics process can work. For the sake of this institution—it must work. And as we begin consideration of the Leadership's ethics and lobby reform package, I will say there are some provisions in the base bill before us that should ultimately be adopted—earmark reform, denying Congressional pensions to convicted felons, enhanced disclosure and improved ethics education are common-sense proposals that I would hope that we can all support.

That being said, I cannot support this rule. Ethics reform is incomplete absent changes to improve the enforcement of House rules. My colleague JOEL HEFLEY and I have put forward legislation to strengthen the ability of the Ethics Committee to dispense with ethics matters by expediting the review of these issues and insulating committee members and non-partisan staff from the political pressures that can pollute the ethics process. We do this by giving the Chair and Ranking Member on the committee subpoena power earlier in the investigative process and prohibiting the arbitrary dismissal of Members and technical staff. We also require ethics education for Members and staff, and we dramatically improve disclosure associated with gifts and travel. All of these common-sense reforms would greatly improve the ethics process in the House.

We sought to offer our legislation as an amendment to the bill we are to consider today. This proposal was not made in order under the rule. Thus, we are faced with the prospect of passing an incomplete ethics reform package that lacks enhanced enforcement.

I think this is a mistake, and for this reason, I must reluctantly oppose this rule.

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time, and I move the previous question on the resolution.

The previous question was ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. HAYES). The question is on the resolution.

The question was taken; and the Speaker pro tempore announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

A message in writing from the President of the United States was communicated to the House by Ms. Wanda Evans, one of his secretaries.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, proceedings will resume on two questions previously postponed.

Votes will be taken in the following order:

Motion to instruct on H.R. 4297;

Adoption of House Resolution 783.

The first electronic vote will be conducted as a 15-minute vote. The second will be conducted as a 5-minute vote.

MOTION TO INSTRUCT CONFEREES ON H.R. 4297, TAX RELIEF EXTENSION RECONCILIATION ACT OF 2005

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. KUHL of New York). The unfinished business is the vote on the motion to instruct on H.R. 4297 offered by the gentleman from Washington (Mr. MCDERMOTT) on which the yeas and nays are ordered.

The Clerk will redesignate the motion.

The Clerk redesignated the motion.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion to instruct.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 190, nays 232, not voting 10, as follows:

[Roll No. 109]

YEAS—190

Abercrombie	Berkley	Brady (PA)
Ackerman	Berman	Brown (OH)
Allen	Berry	Brown, Corrine
Andrews	Bishop (GA)	Butterfield
Baca	Bishop (NY)	Capps
Baird	Boswell	Capuano
Baldwin	Boucher	Cardin
Becerra	Boyd	Cardoza