hospitals that is being stored around our cities, being stored in our own communities, how do we provide for the safe disposal, what happens to the reactor rods we take out of nuclear reactors, are they going to be in your community or my community, what are the conditions under which they will be disposed of when they are stored, what are the protections to the citizens in those areas; that is the kind of debate we should have, and that is the discussion they should have had in the committee. The Republicans were just not up to it.

On the first day they said their contract required open meetings and the Speaker stood before this House and said let the great debate begin. Apparently it was not as great as we thought. They decided to close the meetings, they decided to rule amendments out of order because they simply did not want any more time, not that the amendments were not germane or did not have an impact or were not worthy of consideration. They decided it was 6 o'clock, time had come to leave.

These were people who said they were going to work every day around the clock, Monday to Friday, 100 days. They could not find time to have hearings on a bill that decimates the laws of this country. I hope we will have better debate on the floor and the Republicans will reconsider their assault, and I hope the American people will turn them back from this assault.

I will urge the President to veto this bill, because in one swoop of his pen he undoes 30 years of social progress in the environment and in the workplace and in the security of American families.

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

THE CONGRESSIONAL ACCOUNTABILITY ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BARRETT of Nebraska). Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Connecticut [Ms. DELAURO] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Speaker, I wanted to talk a little bit today about my own support, which is strong support, of the Congressional Accountability Act. It was introduced by my colleague and my good friend, the gentleman from Connecticut, CHRIS SHAYS, and I congratulate him for his tenacity and for his determination to see this piece of legislation through.

The Congressional Accountability Act is a commonsense piece of legislation. It simply requires Congress to abide by all of the laws that it passes, so that Congress and Members of Congress are accountable for the laws that they pass, and they apply to Members. It makes perfect sense.

By bringing Congress under labor and workplace laws that have long regulated private industry, we then begin to move government closer to people.

The reforms of this Congressional Accountability Act are long overdue, and once again I reiterate my strong support for it and in fact worked very, very hard for it in the last session of this Congress.

However, in the midst of this wave of reform, in this package one perk was left untouched, and that is the ability of Members of this House to convert frequent-flier miles accrued from taxpayer-funded travel to their own personal use. Ending the frequent-flier perk is essential. It is essential to our ability to restore that bond of trust with the American people which we so need to remake with the American public. Members of this body should not be taking golf junkets or tropical vacations at the taxpayers' expense.

Last August under Democratic leadership, the House overwhelmingly approved the Congressional Accountability Act, and when we did that last August it included a ban on personal use of frequent-flier miles by Members of the House of Representatives. In October, the gentleman from Georgia [Mr. GINGRICH] objected to inclusion of the frequent-flier ban, so it was removed. We cannot reform this institution while the Republican leadership works behind closed doors to protect perks. It is wrong. It is not open government and it is not reform in the way that the American public demanded reform on November 8.

□ 1400

A ban on conversion of frequent-flier miles for personal use should, indeed, have been included in the Congressional Accountability Act today as it was last year.

Quite honestly, what makes the omission more disgraceful is that our colleagues in the Senate have included a frequent-flier ban in this version of the bill, and that means that we will pass a Congressional Accountability Act that will hold the United States Senate to a higher standard than the House of Representatives. That is wrong, and it is shameful.

By requiring that Members of Congress use these tickets only for official use we save the taxpayers money. That is what the debate is about.

Speaker GINGRICH says that hardly any money would be saved by ending this perk and, therefore, this is a ''Mickey Mouse reform.'' And while it is true that most Members of Congress only qualify for a few frequent-flier tickets per year, the dollars in fact do add up. Ask working Americans if they would not like a pair of free airline tickets dropped in their laps every few months to use at their own discretion to take a trip and get some rest and relaxation.

It may not be a lot of money to the Speaker, but it is to most Americans. But by simply attaching a dollar figure to figure the value of reform we miss the point. It is the message, the message that protection of this perk sends to the public that is most destructive.

Today, just today, Mr. GINGRICH reiterated his support for keeping the frequent-flier perk for Members of the House and admits that he used these freebies to fly members of his own family. Mr. GINGRICH says that he is interested in a more family friendly Congress and worries about Members of Congress of modest means who use the free tickets to fly family members to and from Washington.

Modest means? Members of Congress make $126,000 a year. I doubt that most Americans consider this to be modest means.

The American people, indeed, are fed up with public officials who live by a different set of rules. The Congressional Accountability Act begins to address these inequities, and the American public is right, Congress should not live by a different set of rules. But today we had a chance to go a step further and to close that loophole that allows Members of Congress to vacation at the taxpayers' expense.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BARRETT of Nebraska). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 1995, the Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Ohio [Ms. KAPTUR] for 5 minutes.

[Ms. KAPTUR addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 1995, the Chair recognizes the gentleman from Massachusetts [Mr. FRANK] for 5 minutes.

[Mr. FRANK addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause XII, rule 1, the Chair declares the House in recess until 5 p.m. today.

Accordingly (at 2 o'clock and 3 minutes p.m.) the House stood in recess until 5 p.m.

□ 1700

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore [Mr. DREIER] at 5 o'clock p.m.

CONGRESSIONAL ACCOUNTABILITY ACT OF 1995

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The pending business is the question of suspending the rules and passing the Senate bill, S. 2.

The Clerk read the title of the Senate bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is one the motion offered by the gentleman from California [Mr.