the vacation indirectly. Does that make it all right? Of course not.

Believe it or not, it happens routinely, and apparently it is okay under the current reading of the Judicial Code of Conduct.

Earlier this year, The Washington Post reported that a substantial number of Federal judges had attended or were planning to attend seminars run by a group called the Foundation for Research on Economics and the Environment, known by the acronym FREE.

FREE, with funding from several oil and mining companies and other groups, invited Federal judges to a Montana guest ranch for seminars on alternatives to traditional environmental laws. The ethical implications of these vacation seminars need careful review. That is why I authored report language to the Commerce, Justice, State, Judiciary Appropriations bill requesting the Judicial Conference to examine the ethical considerations that bear on judges' decisions to attend this type of seminar.

Specifically, it requested a review of the extent to which a judge's acceptance of sponsor-paid travel and lodging raise questions under the Code of Conduct and applicable law and of the ability of the Judicial Conference to give ethical advice to judges about attending particular seminars.

While the CJSJ bill was pending in committee, I received a letter from the director of the Administrative Office of the Courts assuring me they were aware of the concerns raised in the press and by Congress and were addressing them.

Really? When Judicial Conference Committee on Codes of Conduct met last month, they evidently saw no need to revise or supplement their current guidance on the issues raised by our committee's report. This guidance is apparently contained in a single advisory opinion which states that judges may accept a gift of free lodging and expenses, ''so long as the donor is not a party in litigation before and its interests are not likely to come before the invited judge.''

The Judicial Code of Conduct is not limited to avoiding direct conflicts of interest, however. Canon Two of the Code states, ''A judge should avoid impropriety and the appearance of impropriety in all activities.'' In other words, a judge must not only be impartial but must inspire the confidence of all parties that their cases will be tried solely on the merits.

Under the interpretation provided by the Judicial Conference, judges may accept gifts in the form of free travel and vacation seminars so long as they are not directly sponsored by an entity likely to appear as a party to a case, and the judge need not investigate further. This allows persons or corporations interested in Federal litigation effectively to launder their gifts to judges by passing them through a nonprofit foundation.

If it is not ethical to accept gifts from those with current or likely interests in litigation, can it honestly be made ethical by having these gifts pass through a foundation? Should not the Judicial Conference require full disclosure in advance of all sources of funding for such seminar trips, so judges can make informed decisions and so the public can evaluate any questionable circumstances?

The Judicial Conference's response relies on the argument that the contributors do not necessarily control the views conveyed in these seminars. But how realistic is that? The fact is, the contributors give money precisely because they support the views expressed in the seminars or, more accurately, the seminars exist to propound their views.

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Certainly everyone has a right to communicate their views on the law to judges, and it is healthy for lawyers, economists, judges to discuss the law, including novel theories. The Federal Judicial Center, the educational arm of the judicial branch, sponsors seminars to do just that.

The problem comes with the inducement to judges of free travel and lodging, sometimes worth thousands of dollars, paid for by corporations and others to promote a particular school of thought. This is difficult to reconcile with the obligation to avoid the appearance of impropriety. Free travel and lodging paid for once removed by those with a stake in litigation is okay as long as it is couched in terms of an educational seminar? You have got to be kidding.

Parsing the educational content of a particular seminar makes no sense. It is the receipt of gifts from those interested in litigation and with an ideological ax to grind that creates the problem, not the curriculum of the seminar that provides cover for the gift.

The Judicial Conference needs to look again at this issue, this time keeping in mind there are no free lunches, or in this case, vacations.

PRESIDENT SHOULD USE POWERS AT HIS DISPOSAL TO HELP U.S. STEEL INDUSTRY

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

Mr. REGULA. Mr. Speaker, the steel industry and the steelworkers and their families are feeling the unfair impact of cheap steel being imported in the United States market in very large quantities. This hardship threatens to grow much worse in the months ahead as other markets dry up and the United States becomes the target of dumping in order to gain hard currency.

Mr. Speaker, I tell the President that Congress has provided him with the tools to help steelworkers. There are already a number of remedies under the United States trade laws that the President should use, if appropriate, to deal with the significant increase of steel imports.

Number one, the most significant and far-reaching power is under the International Economic Emergency Powers Act. Under this act, the President may block imports to deal with any unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security, foreign policy, or economy of the United States if he declares a national emergency.

Two, under the anti-dumping laws, the President may impose anti-dumping duties that equal the amount of dumping if injury to the United States industry is shown.

(A) These duties may be imposed retroactively if the administration finds critical circumstances deemed to exist when there have been massive imports over a relatively short period and there is a history or knowledge of dumping and injury.

(B) The President may accelerate the statutory deadlines for determining whether dumping exists so that duties may be imposed sooner.

Three, under the countervailing duty law, the President may impose countervailing duties that equal the amount of any subsidy provided by the foreign government, if injury to the United States industry is shown. As with dumping, these duties may be imposed retroactively and accelerated.

Four, under Section 201, the President may take action, including imposing duties, a tariff rate quota, or quantitative restrictions to respond to a surge of imports that is substantially causing serious injury to the United States industry, and I might add parenthetically that that is exactly what the European Union has done.

Five, under Section 301, the President must take unilateral action if he determines a country is taking action in violation of a trade agreement or is unjustifiable or burdens or restricts U.S. commerce.

Mr. Speaker, the President clearly has the authority to do something to help our steel companies and workers. He should use this authority today. I urge the President, do not ignore this growing erosion of steel jobs in America and the disastrous consequences for the families of the steelworkers. Stand up for the steelworkers and their families

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

Mr. REGULA. I yield to the gentleman from New York.

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, I want to commend the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. REGULA) for bringing this to the attention once again of the floor. We tried on two different occasions to do something important in this Congress, near the end of this Congress, to bring to the attention of the administration the need to take some very strong affirmative steps in stopping this dumping of steel on our market.

It is eroding our steel industry. It is hurting our steelworkers. And I am hoping that the Members will heed the message that the gentleman from Ohio is bringing before us and we hope the administration will wake up to this call before it is too late.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Ohio for yielding to me.

Mr. REGULA. Mr. Speaker, reclaiming my time, I thank the gentleman for his comments. He is absolutely right. The tools are there. We need the will to use them. And, obviously, it is not just steel jobs, but there is an enormous ripple effect, because the steel families will purchase goods in the communities they live in, they support the schools, the United Way, it has an enormous impact.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. WELLER).

Mr. WELLER. Mr. Speaker, I want to commend the gentleman from Ohio for his leadership on this issue. This is an issue that impacts not just the State of Ohio but the south side of Chicago and the south suburbs of northwestern Indiana which historically has always been a major steel producing area.

It is unfortunate that because of the inaction of the Clinton administration, Acme Steel has declared bankruptcy. Birmingham in my district is shortening their work hours. Belson Scrap and Steel has reduced their payroll by 10 percent. All because we have seen a doubling of Japanese steel imports in the United States, and just in the last year almost a doubling of Korean steel imports in this country.

Steelworkers are losing their jobs. And while steelworkers lose their jobs, the Clinton administration is doing nothing. I believe it is time for action. I think it is time that this Congress make it very clear that we expect the President and the Clinton administration to take leadership to help steelworkers. Otherwise we are going to see more steelworkers lose their jobs because of inaction by the Clinton administration.

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

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

EXCHANGE OF SPECIAL ORDER TIME

Ms. STABENOW. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to claim the time of the gentlewoman from Connecticut (Ms. DELAURO).

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SESSIONS). Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from Michigan?

There was no objection.

CONGRESS SHOULD FOCUS ON EDUCATION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Michigan (Ms. STABENOW) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. STABENOW. Mr. Speaker, I rise this evening to urge the leadership of the House to focus on education before we leave this Congress.

Mr. Speaker, we have important duties to do in order for us to be able to be partners with our local communities, with parents, community schools with the State governments, to make sure that our children have the resources and the skills that they need when they graduate so that they can be successful in this new world economy.

We know that we need higher standards and lower classroom sizes. And, in fact, we have the opportunity in the next few days to be able to help contribute to making that happen. I am extremely concerned about the efforts now that appear to be moving in exactly the opposite direction from where we should be as it relates to education.

As someone who has worked for a number of years and spent a lot of time in this Congress focusing on technology, I am very concerned that we are not moving ahead to modernize our schools, provide the construction funds, and provide the technology dollars that are needed to prepare our children so that they will be able to have the skills that they need to be successful.

It does not matter if I am talking to the business community in my district or if I am talking to a PTO or if I am talking to a neighborhood organization, always I hear from people that we need to be focused on increasing our skills, our math and science skills, be able to provide the tools to children in the classroom so that in fact they have what they need to be successful. Employers know that. We know that, just as we listen to people in the community. And yet we do not see the actions coming from this Congress that will support those kinds of things happening in the community.

Let us make a commitment this evening that we are going to make a commitment to our children, we are going to make a commitment to parents, to communities, that we are going to do what is necessary to provide resources in partnership with our local schools and with the State governments to make sure that our children have what they need.

We need to make sure that when a young person is in a classroom today, they have access to the technology they need, to the information, to the world that is available now through the Internet and to allow them to be able to truly receive the kinds of skills that they need in smaller classes and with higher standards so that they can be prepared.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from New York (Mrs. MCCARTHY).

(Mrs. MCCARTHY of New York asked and was given permission to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. MCCARTHY of New York. Mr. Speaker, in the last 2 years, I have spent an awful lot of time in my schools in my district. After the first month, I decided to do a survey just to look at all my schools that needed help and repair.

I come from a middle-income suburban area, and I have to say that I was totally shocked at what I found. What hurt even more is when the survey came in, all of my schools needed some sort of help as far as repair. They have put it off constantly over the years.

I have one school in Hempstead that to this day, I went back just a week ago to look at it again, because I could not believe my eyes every time I go into there. They have a boiler from 1908. They cannot find anyone to repair it anymore, and yet they do not have the money to do this. They have open classrooms. This school was built way before World War II, and here we have our children in open classrooms. Kids with learning disabilities in the hallways. Children with hearing problems not having the right facilities.

As someone who grew up with learning disabilities, I certainly know how important it is to have a secluded quiet area. Technology has to come into the school. We are nowhere near it.

So what we can do? Certainly, I agree with the President's initiatives to bring our schools up to where they should be today. What concerns me the most is we know we need school construction to give a safe environment for our children. But also more importantly, we need to send a message to our children that we care about them. Also sending a message to our teachers.

Mr. Speaker, going back, I have met so many teachers over the last 2 years. These are teachers that care very much. But when we have the classrooms so large and we have kids coming in in an environment which I consider not safe, not sound, we have to do all we can.

I came to Congress to reduce gun violence in this country, and as soon as I got here, education became my number one issue. If we start working with these young people, have smaller classes, give them hope, give them a good education, we are not going to see drugs in the school, we are not going to see violence in the school. Is that not the goal of all of us here?

I certainly support the initiative that we have to do with the President, and hopefully we will see it pass before we go home.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that if we expand educational opportunities to all Americans, especially young people, we can reduce crime, drug use and gun violence in our society.

I do not believe that education is a partisan issue. But I am very concerned that partisanship in these last days of the session may prevent us from improving the education system. We have a golden opportunity to help young