

grant immunity to some of these witnesses who know firsthand what happened. Why do some Members want to block a full investigation? The Justice Department agreed to immunity for every witness on whom we voted. The Justice Department had no objection.

The only reason to vote against immunity is to keep those witnesses from telling the American people what happened. Why would some Members want to be involved in covering up that? The Members should stop voting to block immunity and stop putting up roadblocks so we can get to the truth. The American people deserve the truth. The American people have the right to know what happened and who was responsible.

DOES OUR CHINESE FOREIGN POLICY MAKE ANY SENSE?

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

Mr. TRAFICANT. Mr. Speaker, when it comes to China, the wheel is turning but the hamster is dead. Check this out. China rips us off for \$60 billion a year. Then they steal our nuclear and missile technology. Then they sell that technology and those missiles to our enemies. Then the White House, they panic, and they spend billions of dollars to protect America from Chinese missiles pointed at us by our enemies, missiles that were financed by American dollars.

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Unbelievable.

Some of these foreign policy gurus must have fallen into the gene pool when the lifeguard was not looking, my colleagues.

If this is a policy, I am a fashion leader.

I want to say one last thing: I want to yield back any national security we have left, and if this policy with China makes any sense, then we all need a lobotomy.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. HULSHOF). The Chair will remind all persons in the gallery that they are here as guests of the House and that any manifestation of approval or disapproval of proceedings is in violation of the rules of the House.

DEMOCRATS STONEWALLING THEIR OWN JUSTICE DEPARTMENT

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

Mr. TIAHRT. Mr. Speaker, the House Committee on Government Reform and Oversight would like to grant immunity to Nancy Lee, Larry Wong, Irene

Wu and Kent La and get their testimony so that Congress can learn the facts about illegal campaign contributions in the 1996 presidential election. The Justice Department does not oppose the granting of immunity to these four key witnesses, but the Democrats on the committee refuse, refuse to grant immunity to these four witnesses.

How can this be defended? It cannot. This is the same people who cry partisanship whenever any investigation into the allegations of wrongdoing are investigated and the same people who are not only defending the White House stonewalling but now stonewalling their own Justice Department.

I must grant the Democrats this, they really do know how to play hardball, but this is the same people who have tried to destroy the reputations of Judge Robert Bork and Judge Clarence Thomas and now Judge Ken Starr are now the same people who stand silent and motionless in the face of massive evidence of White House stonewalling and round-the-clock spin.

Stop the stalling and stop the spin so the American people can get to the truth.

LISTEN TO THE VOTERS OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

(Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I am very glad to be here with my daughter for a day, Demika, who is a student at Brown Middle School; and I am here this morning because I wanted us to have a reasonable debate, Mr. Speaker, on this very important question of vouchers in schools.

Mr. Speaker, I think it is extremely important that we are reasonable because, if we are not reasonable, then we do not help those young people who, in fact, need to be educated. When one of our colleagues across the aisle compares public school education to communism, then we are unreasonable.

When the schools in D.C., private schools, cost on an average \$12,000, a \$2,000 voucher is not going to happen and not going to help children. In fact, it is \$3,200. Only 2,000 children are going to be able to be helped. This drains money from our public school system.

Mr. Speaker, the District of Columbia has already voted against vouchers; and if I was to ask those in the District of Columbia, I would imagine, Mr. Speaker, they would ask us to help them educate their children, help them support public schools. I would ask that we listen to the voters of the District of Columbia and not vote for D.C. vouchers.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Members of the House are reminded it is a

violation of House rules to call attention in debate to any guests of the House in the Chamber.

WHY ARE THE DEMOCRATS STONEWALLING THEIR OWN JUSTICE DEPARTMENT?

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

Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, as my colleagues know, Democrats are saying the American people are tired of talking about White House scandals. Well, congressional investigators are even more tired of the stonewalling, lack of cooperation and extraordinary memory loss that seems to afflict Harvard and Yale Law School graduates whenever they are called to testify. I believe the American people are stunned by the evasions, the retractions, the utter devotion to spin over truth coming out of this White House.

Mr. Speaker, it is Democrats on the House Committee on Government Reform and Oversight who are doing the stonewalling. Letters from the Justice Department say, and it has been said already, that Justice does not oppose granting immunity to four key witnesses in the campaign finance investigations, and I will just repeat that. The Justice Department does not oppose immunity, and yet the Democrats on the committee refuse to grant immunity.

I ask the American people to be the judge. Why would the Democrats be stonewalling their own Justice Department?

SHAMEFUL CIRCUMSTANCE WHICH NEEDS TO BE ADDRESSED

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

Mr. HINCHEY. Mr. Speaker, in the last several days, the Speaker of this House has launched an intemperate prejudicial attack on the President of the United States, demeaning himself and the office he holds by prejudging issues that may, in fact, come before this House. One can only conclude by these intemperate actions that the Speaker's basic intention is to draw attention away from the failure, his failure and the failure of the Republican leadership to address important issues that are of deep concern to the American people.

Yesterday, we learned that the Speaker personally made it impossible to reach a bipartisan agreement on a broad-based tobacco bill. He, in effect, told the chairman of the Committee on Commerce that he could no longer cooperate with Democrats to put together a bill that would make it difficult for children to become addicted to tobacco, demonstrating once again how deeply into the pockets of tobacco this Speaker actually is.

It is a shameful circumstance and one that needs addressing. We need to get on to the business of this House.

REMOVAL OF NAME OF MEMBER
AS COSPONSOR OF H.R. 3584

Mr. FROST. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that my name be removed as a cosponsor from H.R. 3584.

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

There was no objection.

PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION
OF S. 1502, DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
STUDENT OPPORTUNITY
SCHOLARSHIP ACT OF 1997

Mr. HASTINGS of Washington. Mr. Speaker, by direction of the Committee on Rules, I call up House Resolution 413 and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 413

Resolved, That upon the adoption of this resolution it shall be in order to consider in the House the bill (S. 1502) entitled the "District of Columbia Student Opportunity Scholarship Act of 1997". The bill shall be considered as read for amendment. The previous question shall be considered as ordered on the bill to final passage without intervening motion except: (1) two hours of debate on the bill equally divided and controlled by the Majority Leader or his designee and a Member opposed to the bill; and (2) one motion to commit.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Washington (Mr. HASTINGS) is recognized for 1 hour.

Mr. HASTINGS of Washington. Mr. Speaker, for purposes of debate only, I yield the customary 30 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. FROST) 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. Speaker, yesterday the Committee on Rules met and granted a closed rule for S. 1502 which provides for 2 hours of debate equally divided between the majority leader or his designee and an opponent of the bill. The rule also provides for one motion to commit.

Mr. Speaker, let us make no mistake about it. The intent of this bill is to provide a better education for the children of Washington, D.C. The bill allows the most needy families of this city to choose what school is best for their child, and it provides them the resources to do it. In short, the bill empowers the families of Washington, D.C., who now have no choice but to send their child to an often inadequate local school.

At the same time, though, this bill will help the children who remain in the District's public school system. It provides Federal funding to help local public school students pay for private tutors. In addition, as some students

begin to choose scholarships, spending per pupil in District public schools may go up, while class sizes go down.

Our intent is not to drain Federal funds from public schools. Instead, we are striving to help out accountability back into the public school system. A parent who notices that a neighbor's child has blossomed under the scholarship program will have the same opportunity for their child.

The scholarship funds in this bill are in addition to the more than \$568 million that Congress provides every year to the District of Columbia public schools, a school system that spends more money per pupil than almost any other school system in the country, approximately \$10,000 per pupil.

Mr. Speaker, the D.C. Student Scholarship Act helps the children of this city. I strongly support this legislation because I firmly believe that it enables parents to send their children to a more structured, more disciplined environment. It is their choice. At the same time, the bill allows the local public schools to focus on the children who remain and allows each school to spend more money for each child.

I urge my colleagues to support this rule and the underlying legislation.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, the Republican leadership just does not get it. We do not get better public schools by shifting public money to private and parochial schools; and that is, in the end, what the Republican leadership wants to do. They just want to start this grand social experiment in the District of Columbia and use the bill before us to do it.

Mr. Speaker, no one denies that there is a need for vast improvement in the schools of the District. But providing vouchers for 2,000 students just will not get it done.

And, Mr. Speaker, to make matters worse, this rule shuts out any debate on this matter. This closed rule prohibits the delegate from the District of Columbia (Ms. NORTON) from offering an amendment to a bill that ostensibly affects only her constituents.

This rule is unconscionable and deserves to be defeated.

Mr. Speaker, the Republican leadership will use words and phrases like school choice, accountability, object lesson to promote school vouchers. The Republican leadership will say that, first and foremost, school vouchers are about the children. Mr. Speaker, if that is, in fact, the case, why have not we seen legislation to provide schools districts with the funds they need to hire more teachers so that we can reduce class size and more readily promote structure and discipline in the classrooms across this country?

(Mr. CONYERS asked and was given permission to speak out of order for 1 minute.)

CIRCUMVENTION OF COMMITTEE ON THE
JUDICIARY'S JURISDICTION

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, I have sent the Speaker, the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. NEWT GINGRICH) a letter that I want to put in the RECORD which deals with the fact that he has asked for a special committee to review any reports submitted by the independent counsel, Kenneth Starr. In my view, I say to him any such circumvention of the Committee on the Judiciary's historic duty would set a poor precedent and clearly indicate an intent to politicize this matter, rather than give it any sober and objective scrutiny.

Coming several months before the midterm elections, I believe the American public would also see the abandonment of regular order as signaling a partisan witch-hunt. This is especially important in light of the bias that you, you being the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. GINGRICH), have demonstrated in your recent public comments.

The letter referred to is as follows:

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY,
Washington, DC, April 29, 1998.

Hon. NEWT GINGRICH,
Speaker, U.S. House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. SPEAKER: During the course of the past several months, news reports have repeatedly quoted you and your office as contemplating the circumvention of the House Judiciary Committee and the formation of a special committee to review any report submitted by Independent Counsel Kenneth Starr pursuant to 28 U.S.C. 595(c).

In my view, any such circumvention of the Judiciary Committee's historic jurisdiction would set a poor precedent and clearly indicate an intent to intensely politicize this matter rather than give it any sober and objective scrutiny. Coming several months before the midterm elections, I believe the American public would also see the abandonment of regular order as signaling a partisan witch hunt. This is especially important in light of the clear bias you have demonstrated in your recent public comments concluding the existence of illegal conduct prior to your even reading or considering the report to the House.

In fact, if one looks closely at this matter, it is hard to see how one could contemplate any other venue than the House Judiciary Committee, which clearly has both the expertise and experience to handle any such report.

The Independent Counsel Statute itself (the Ethics in Government Act, 28 U.S.C. 591, *et seq.*) is the legislative product of the House Judiciary Committee. The Committee continues to be engaged in oversight of the Act, has conducted hearings on the Act, and shortly will be responsible for reauthorization of the Act.

Discussion of any underlying criminal statutes that may be contained in the report are under the jurisdiction of the Committee, and again, are subject to continuing scrutiny.

The House Judiciary Committee is the one Committee with the experience of handling grand jury materials, the secrecy of which both federal law and House precedents require.

As you know, I have repeatedly questioned Kenneth Starr both because of the tactics he employs and due to the numerous conflicts of interest that have beset his investigation from the start. If this matter is to be transferred to the House, it would be most unfortunate to taint any process from the outset