

105TH CONGRESS  
1ST SESSION

# H. RES. 79

Amending the Rules of the House of Representatives to discourage frivolous ethics complaints.

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## IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

FEBRUARY 26, 1997

Mr. BURTON of Indiana submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Rules

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# RESOLUTION

Amending the Rules of the House of Representatives to discourage frivolous ethics complaints.

1       *Resolved,*

2       **SECTION 1. FRIVOLOUS ETHICS COMPLAINTS.**

3           (a) Clause 4(e)(2) of rule X is amended by adding  
4 at the end the following:

5           “(G)(i) At any time, the committee may, by an af-  
6 firmative vote of a majority of its total membership, deter-  
7 mine that a complaint filed against a member is frivolous  
8 and baseless.

9           “(ii) The committee may make such a determination  
10 if it deems that the complaint filed against a member has

1 no basis in fact, the alleged violation is of such a minor  
2 and technical nature that it does not reflect discredit upon  
3 the House or its Members, the complaint was filed for  
4 purely partisan reasons and not out of concern for main-  
5 taining the ethical standards of the House, or the com-  
6 plaint is part of a pattern of abuse and misuse of the Com-  
7 mittee on Standards of Official Conduct.

8       “(iii) In the case of any complaint deemed frivolous  
9 and baseless, the committee shall determine the costs of  
10 its inquiry and report such costs to the Committee on  
11 House Oversight, the Clerk of the House, and the public.

12       “(iv) If a complaint deemed frivolous and baseless by  
13 the committee is filed by a Member of Congress, that  
14 member’s ‘Member’s Representational Account’ (MRA),  
15 shall be charged for the costs of the committee’s inquiry.  
16 If such complaint is filed by more than one member, each  
17 member’s MRA shall be charged proportionately.

18       “(v) At its discretion, and by a vote of a majority  
19 of its total membership, the committee may rule that a  
20 member or members who have filed a frivolous and base-  
21 less complaint may repay the costs of the inquiry over a  
22 period of greater than 1 year.

1           “(vi) Alternatively, the committee may, by an affirm-  
2     ative vote of a majority of its total membership, rec-  
3     ommend to the House that the Member or Members re-  
4     sponsible for filing a frivolous and baseless complaint be  
5     fined an appropriate amount.”.

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