

109TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. RES. 153

Raising a question of the privileges of the House.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MARCH 15, 2005

Ms. PELOSI submitted the following resolution; which was laid on the table

RESOLUTION

Raising a question of the privileges of the House.

Whereas the Constitution of the United States authorizes the House of Representatives to “determine the Rules of its Proceedings, punish its Members for disorderly Behaviour, and, with the Concurrence of two thirds, expel a Member”;

Whereas, in 1968, in compliance with this authority and to uphold its integrity and ensure that Members act in a manner that reflects credit on the House of Representatives, the Committee on Standards of Official Conduct was established;

Whereas the ethics procedures in effect during the 108th Congress, and in the three preceding Congresses, were enacted in 1997 in a bipartisan manner by an overwhelming vote of the House of Representatives upon the bipartisan recommendation of the ten member Ethics Re-

form Task Force, which conducted a thorough and lengthy review of the entire ethics process;

Whereas in the 109th Congress, for the first time in the history of the House of Representatives, decisions affecting the ethics process have been made on a partisan basis without consulting the Democratic Members of the Committee or of the House;

Whereas the Chairman of the Committee, and two of his Republican colleagues, were dismissed from the Committee;

Whereas, in a statement to the press, the departing Chairman of the Committee stated “[t]here is a bad perception out there that there was a purge in the Committee and that people were put in that would protect our side of the aisle better than I did,” and a replaced Republican Member, also in a statement to the press, referring to his dismissal from the Committee, noted his belief that “the decision was a direct result of our work in the last session”;

Whereas the newly appointed Chairman of the Committee improperly and unilaterally fired nonpartisan Committee staff who assisted in the ethics work in the last session; and

Whereas these actions have subjected the Committee to public ridicule, produced contempt for the ethics process, created the public perception that their purpose was to protect a Member of the House, and weakened the ability of the Committee to adequately obtain information and properly conduct its investigative duties, all of which has brought discredit to the House: Now, therefore, be it

- 1 *Resolved*, That the Speaker shall appoint a bipartisan
- 2 task force with equal representation of the majority and

1 minority parties to make recommendations to restore pub-
2 lic confidence in the ethics process; and be it further

3 *Resolved*, That the task force report its findings and
4 recommendations to the House of Representatives no later
5 than May 2, 2005.

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