

to the floor in the 89th Congress and gave the select committee its first opportunity to help lift and maintain the standards of the House.

This was the first time in history that the House of Representatives ever had such a committee. Prior to that the Senate Select Committee on Standards and Conduct was established. A House committee has been recommended by the Joint Committee on the Organization of Congress.

There are over, or at least in the House, 40 resolutions before the committee which call for a House Select Committee on Standards and Conduct.

Mr. Chairman, I must add to this positive statement in support of reestablishing the House Select Committee on Standards and Conduct, some comments concerning the recent action by the House Administration Committee. A Subcommittee on Ethics and Contracts was set up by the House Administration Committee apparently to kill the committee which I am supporting today before your committee—supporting along with dozens of other House Members.

I am not competent to look into the motives of this move, announced to the press as an action to “obviate” the broader House Select Committee on Standards and Conduct.

However, I do believe that neither a subcommittee of the House Administration Committee nor the mother, its full committee, is in a position to do what the public has a right to demand and is demanding. In the first place, that committee has only jurisdiction in the field of House accounts and Federal elections matters.

According to the rules of the House of Representatives (rule XI specifically), the Committee on House Administration can look into matters dealing only with elections, accounts, and other housekeeping matters. There is one section of the rules which says the committee can look into “measures relating to the election of the President, Vice President, or Members of Congress; corrupt practices; contested elections; credentials and qualifications; and Federal elections generally.”

The phrase “corrupt practices” in this section relates directly to elections, and cannot be construed to deal with general congressional ethics. The positioning of this phrase in the midst of provisions relating solely to elections is clear evidence of the legislative intent to restrict this phrase to election matters.

Also, I may say the legislative history in the background of how the House Administration Committee was set up shows this as well and the way in which they got their authority from the previous Elections Committee. Moreover, even aside from that, a long line of court decisions so restricts it. The only interpretation this phrase has ever had deals with elections.

The jurisdiction which the House Administration Committee does have is broad with regard to the expenditure of House funds, and I would assume for instance, that bills relating to nepotism in the House would continue to be handled by the House Administration Committee while ones of general application throughout the entire Federal employment would continue to go to the House Committee on Post Office and Civil Service.

Mr. Chairman, one of the main purposes of the House Committee on Standards and Conduct would be to reassure the public that matters