

I believe a move is long overdue on the part of Congress to start chipping away at a belief that is both unfair and untrue and which has been in the making for more than 150 years.

Recent adverse comments by our constituents and in the news media are not something new. Congress has had during its history frequent crises, during which a Member or group of Members have been accused of wrongdoing.

Some of the charges made were true and some were based on emotionalism and some were of a more dubious nature. I do not intend to recount the history of this legislative body. Suffice it to say that we are all more or less familiar with the subject.

The resolution calling for establishment of a Select Committee on Standards and Conduct is a good start toward the goal of giving the American people a picture of Congress which is closer to the truth.

Since we are the only ones authorized to take action against our own Members, it seems to me that it makes sense to have a bipartisan committee, which I hope will act in a non-partisan manner, to investigate allegations of wrongdoing and more important, to make recommendations to prevent actions which will sully the name of Congress.

At the present time, it seems to take a great deal of public outrage to force Congress to act upon such allegations. It is my hope that such a committee as is suggested will take the lead and initiate corrective measures before the public makes a demand.

Even the creation of the Select Committee on Standards and Conduct will be criticized by some. No doubt, in creating this committee, we are admitting that it is needed. I don't think we should be afraid to make such an admission.

I thank the Chairman and the distinguished Members of this committee for giving their attention to this very important subject and for giving me this opportunity to express my views.

STATEMENT OF HON. SILVIO O. CONTE, ON HOUSE RESOLUTION 43

Mr. Chairman, I want to thank this distinguished committee for affording me the opportunity to present my views on the very important legislative proposals now under consideration, namely the establishment of a Select Committee on Standards and Conduct in the House of Representatives.

As we have learned with striking force in the past few months, this issue is one of the most important to come before the 90th Congress.

I introduced House Resolution 43 on the first day of the present session in the belief that the establishment of such a Select Committee could no longer be ignored. Events of that day have only confirmed and strengthened my own convictions on this point.

Under the provisions of House Resolution 43, the Select Committee would be given power to investigate alleged violations of established standards of conduct by a member or employee. Such standards, in turn, would be established by the House independently, or at the recommendation of the Select Committee.

Most importantly, any allegations of misconduct or violation of the standards of the House would have to be submitted to the Select Committee in the form of a complaint, either in writing or orally under oath, made by or submitted to a Member of the House.

The Select Committee would then undertake an investigation in accordance with the complaint and subsequently make recommendations to the House for possible resolutions of censure for its consideration and action.

I might remind the distinguished Committee that I had sought on several occasions during our debates in the matter concerning Adam Clayton Powell on the first day of the present session to introduce an appropriate amendment to the rules of the House. At first I sought to reestablish the Select Committee, and later to set up a Standing Committee on Standards and Conduct.

Because of the parliamentary procedures under which we conducted our debates that day, I was not given the opportunity to present either of these amendments. I subsequently redrafted my proposal and introduced it as House Resolution 43.

It was clear to many in the House in the previous Congress that such a Select Committee was necessary, primarily to solidify an ethical and moral code based on the solemn oath each of us takes as members of the House of Representatives. It was deemed necessary as a means of establishing uniformly accepted and understood standards to govern our own conduct and to evaluate the conduct of