

(The statement follows:)

STATEMENT OF HON. MORRIS K. UDALL

Mr. Chairman, I wish to associate myself this morning with the resolution offered by the gentleman from Florida (Mr. Bennett). I feel very strongly that the House of Representatives has a responsibility to pursue the matter of ethical standards for its Members, and I believe H. Res. 18, of which my own H. Res. 102 is a companion resolution, is the vehicle best suited at this time to accomplish this end.

As you know, Mr. Chairman, I played a part in the debate on January 10 relating to the seating of a Member accused of violating ethical standards of this body. Because the temper of the country and the Congress demanded action, that Member was denied his seat. However, the fact is that the House has no operative and enforceable set of ethical standards, and except for the most flagrant and celebrated case of unethical behavior, there is no way that the House can enforce even the most minimal standards of conduct on the part of its Members.

Mr. Chairman, the eyes of the country are on the Congress today. I have received hundreds of letters from all over the nation commenting on the Powell case. A great many of these letters have made this point: "All right, you have punished Congressman Powell. Now what are you going to do about others who may have abused their public trust?"

This is a serious question, Mr. Chairman. I don't think we can afford to ignore it. To do so would be to convince many of the detractors of the Congress and of the House of Representatives that the action of last month was, in fact, racially motivated. And it would leave many wondering if the gentleman from New York was not, in fact, a scapegoat for the larger sins of the Congress as a whole.

Mr. Chairman, I do not suggest, as many do, that this House is full of crooks and thieves. On the contrary, I believe nearly all of my colleagues are men of the highest moral and ethical character. What I do not want is for us to relax in this conviction and thus leave our honorable colleagues open for the charge that they want to sweep the whole matter of ethics under the rug.

The proposal you are considering this morning is a modest one. It would simply continue the Select Committee on Standards and Ethics established by the 89th Congress, with one important change. That change would permit the select committee to investigate specific charges against specific Members and recommend action. I think this change is absolutely necessary if the committee is to do the job our many constituents would expect it to do.

In conclusion, Mr. Chairman, I want to make just one more point. Before Congress convened in January, a great many people misread the temper of the country. One of those who failed to read that temper accurately was the gentleman from New York (Mr. Powell). I think some of our own leaders failed to take note of this sentiment. The result was a sequence of actions wholly unexpected by many knowledgeable people only a few days earlier.

Mr. Chairman, my point is that the temper of the country, reflected in those actions in January, is still with us. It won't go away. I think it would be tragic to misread that sentiment again. The people of this nation have become aware, or at least more aware than before, that their servants in the Congress can do wrong. And they want to see the Congress put an end at least to the more flagrant abuses which may be going on.

The resolution you are considering this morning can be an important first step toward establishment of standards for the guidance of Members. I am confident that if your committee decides to re-establish the Select Committee on Standards and Ethics, meaningful progress will be made to establish such standards and clear the good name of the House as a whole.

I strongly urge that H. Res. 18 be favorably reported.

Mr. UDALL. Every day we hear statements on the House floor that Congress is asking for better policing of its Members conduct. One of the big reasons is we refuse to face our problems and meet the needs of modern times and take care of such things as congressional ethics.

I took a small role in this Powell case and I have a covenant with the people I represent and a lot of other people who say, "You are singling out Powell."