

I think all of us are not unaware that we have enacted comprehensive conflict-of-interest provisions to apply to the executive branch and yet have not seen fit to test our own conduct by comparable standards.

The public is not unaware that by Executive order each officer and employee of the executive arm is subject to a comprehensive code of conduct. Yet we have not seen fit to enact a code to govern our own conduct, nor that of the officers and employees of the legislative branch.

The public is not unaware that the major officers of the executive branch are obliged to make disclosure of their financial associations. Yet we have not seen fit to require that for ourselves.

As members of the committee are aware, I introduced three bills at the beginning of this Congress, and others going back to preceding Congresses. House Resolution 87, House Concurrent Resolution 42, and H.R. 1162 have been introduced this year.

Since the introduction of those bills, Mr. Chairman, and in the light of some of the testimony that I have heard here, I do have a few brief additional thoughts, some new thoughts on the subject.

First, I feel very strongly that there should be a permanent and preferably a joint committee, a standing committee to deal with congressional ethics.

I think that it is important that this committee be empowered to take significant action and have powers of enforcement and be able to receive complaints, properly verified, from any citizen.

Second, Mr. Chairman, I think it is imperative that we consider, and I seriously hope that this great Rules Committee will consider, a strong full disclosure bill, quite aside from what action you may take with regard to a separate ethics committee.

I am introducing today a unified package of six bills which I hope will be given some consideration and will sketch the perimeters of a broad approach. I am sure that they are going to require very careful consideration, but first I would urge a bill providing for full disclosure of income, gifts, real estate holdings, creditors, business enterprises in which Members own stocks, bonds, or other securities.

Third, the establishment of a permanent House-Senate committee on ethics and conduct.

Fourth, the formation of a comprehensive code of ethics for Congress including rigorous conflict-of-interest provisions.

Mr. Chairman, I think there is some concern in the Congress and in America generally that concern over the formulation of an ethics committee may result in action on disclosure legislation being deferred, possibly unnecessarily, or indeed totally sidetracked.

I believe that full disclosure is the most effective vehicle for guarding against conflicts of interest in Government service. The refusal to act decisively and with dispatch would constitute, I think, a serious dereliction of our public trust.

I think that in terms of conflict-of-interest legislation that the type of rule that should be set would hold that it is indefensible to have a double standard. I think it is indefensible not to make clear that any Member of this body, or of the Senate, must uphold standards similar to those which we insist that the executive maintain.

I would hope the committee would consider a broad conflict-of-interest standard which would apply to all Members, prohibiting