

In the second session of the 89th Congress, such a Select Committee was created, but the Congress allowed this Committee to be stripped of investigatory powers which must be one of the principal reasons for its existence.

At the close of last year, the Committee issued its final report showing significant achievements, despite this basic lack of power. The report also asked that action be taken early in this session to reconstitute the Committee.

Representative Charles E. Bennett the gentleman from Florida who headed the Select Committee in the 89th Congress, introduced such a measure at the very start of this session. I also introduced a similar resolution calling for the establishment of a Select Committee on Standards and Conduct.

Gentlemen, the prestige of the entire Congress is at stake. The people we serve have expressed doubts, and whether they are well founded or completely unfounded, we must move speedily and decisively to end them.

This can be done only by the establishment of an Ethics Committee, armed with the full powers it needs to establish rules of conduct, and to determine if they are being followed, or where they are being circumvented.

I urge you to use the power of your Committee to make certain that the people of the United States be given the assurance they need to maintain their trust in their elected representatives.

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STATEMENT OF HON. DONALD W. RIEGLE, JR.

I appear before the committee today to support the Bennett bill and to speak in behalf of the people of the 7th District of Michigan in favor of a permanent congressional committee on ethics.

The need for new initiative in the area of congressional ethics and objective standards of personal conduct for congressmen is self-evident. While the case of Mr. Powell has been in the spotlight, public opinion across the country is nearly unanimous in its opinion that Mr. Powell, at the very worst, is only symptomatic of a bigger problem. The integrity of congress is what is at issue—and the growing public cynicism about the congress and its conduct is due to what has been our own ponderous inability to develop some tough, but fair, objective standards of ethical behavior.

I am here testifying today because I believe this committee is handling the most important issue before the House at this time. We've got to restore public confidence in the congress, and that requires some real initiative.

I salute Mr. Bennett for his leadership in ethics reform and I believe that a permanent committee on ethics is an absolutely essential first step.

In the face of growing public cynicism about the personal conduct of members of congress, I believe that it is *first* in the *national interest* that we act decisively to restore what is left of our public respect. When serious doubt arises in the public mind about our conduct here in congress, then our ability to provide the very highest form of national leadership is eroded.

*Second*, it is in our own self interest to act decisively to lift the standards of congressional conduct well above the level of public doubt. Under the present situation, the many suffer for the indiscretions and bad character of the few. The respect and integrity of congress can only be strengthened by a forthright step to establish a permanent ethics committee.

Let me now address the question of why we need a permanent ethics committee. What are its advantages? *Number One*: Is ethics above partisanship? I think the answer is yes. So I think an ethics committee has to be constructed on a basis that places it above partisanship. For this reason, I think it is essential that the committee be composed of an equal number of Republicans and Democrats without reference to the partisan composition of the House.

Now, it has been argued that the majority party ought to have the responsibility of policing ethical behavior in the House. I disagree. One reason for disagreeing is that ethical behavior ought to be above party considerations. A second consideration is that opportunity for abuse of privilege is greater when a member belongs to the majority party in the House, irrespective of which party may be in the majority. Mr. Powell's bad conduct was due, in part, to the fact that he belonged to the majority party in the House and, as such, had special discretionary power on the Education and Labor Committee. While the great bulk of the discretionary power in the House accrues to committee and subcommittee chairman—who by definition are members of the majority party in