CLEAN HOUSE!

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Nothing could demonstrate more clearly than the House Bank check-kiting scandal, "Rubbergate," just how out of touch is the liberal elite that makes the rules for Congress. The scandal taints the leadership that has ruled the House of Representatives for most of our lives. To be sure, there are plenty of members of Congress who are good, honest people working to reform Capitol Hill to make both its output and its procedures more family-friendly. Among them are dozens of members who unintentionally (and unbeknownst to themselves—the House Bank never told them) bounced a small number of checks. But these honorable exceptions come up against an entrenched leadership that clings ferociously to its perks.

Consider your own family. You may be just getting by, or you may be doing OK, but in any event, you have to live within financial realities. You can't just write a check for any amount you want and have your bank cover it without penalizing you. This limitation affects your life in more ways than you can count. Above all, it gives you a sense of the practical. You have, as they say, good "reality-testing."

Now consider your U.S. Representative prior to the past few weeks. He or she had access to a special private bank that covered overdrafts and asked no questions. We've often wondered why the sky's the limit when some representatives start funding their "compassionate" programs. Now we learn that they have the same lack of discipline in their personal finances. Ronald Reagan used to say it was unfair to charge Congress with spending like drunken sailors. At least the sailors spend their own money!

Unusually insulated from everyday financial reality, many members of the House naturally lack a good reality-test. They have cushioned themselves against the practical effects of high taxes, inflation, the disappearing dependent exemption, and so on. And they have explicitly exempted themselves from most of the laws they write for the rest of us.

The check-kiting scandal has implicated some members of both parties, most of them liberals but a few conservatives, too.

Pro-family citizens will be disappointed to see the names of some of our "heroes" on the list of those who have bounced checks. When this happens, it won't do to say: "They're all corrupt! Throw all the rascals our." We need to ask hard questions. Was the pro-family member kiting checks, that is, deliberately writing drafts on insufficient funds in order to pay for certificates of deposit (C.D.'s) or even to finance his campaign? Or was our member simply careless, or perhaps tripped up by the poor record-keeping in a House Bank notoriously out of control? Simple justice requires that we make careful distinctions.

WE NEED A FAMILY-FRIENDLY CONGRESS

Yet, even the liberal *Washington Post* describes a system that was no system, with monthly "statements" handwritten. We know that those responsible for the day-to-day operation of the House for the past 38 years—the Speaker, the Democratic Majority Leadership, and those who put them there—must bear the brunt of criticism. Speaker Tom Foley was the one who hired the now-disgraced Sergeant-at-Arms Jack Russ and House Postmaster Robert Rota, both of whom have resigned under fire. Even some rank-and-file Democrats have called for reform. "The buck stops here," they cry, pointing to the Speaker's chair. Well, it sure didn't stop in the House Bank!

Today, we have in the House of Representatives a horde of professional politicians. These people acknowledge no limits on what they can legislate on; and who think that princely perks are no more than they deserve for the hard work they do.

Some of the congressmen whose names are turning up on lists of check abusers are people whom I admire, but all the same I've got to say it: This scandal should be the start of a second American Revolution, in which the people demand real accountability, and start to get it. Clean House!

ON THE HORIZON

• Friction increasing among Republican "pro-choice" groups. Article in March 16 *Legal Times* describes **discord between National Republican Coalition for Choice and Republicans for Choice**, group founded by self-described "millionairess" **Ann Stone**. *Times* reported Stone's political action committee has raised more than **$1 million** in two years' existence, but funneled **less than** 10 cents on the dollar to pro-abortion Republican candidates. Rest has gone to network of companies "owned or controlled" by Stone herself. Internecine fighting will further weaken groups' effort to overturn GOP pro-life plank.

• More latitude in **dying** than **schooling?** Trend-setting California faces possible referenda on two major issues in 1992: parental choice in education, and assisted suicide. Proponents of "assistance in dying" initiative reportedly obtained over 560,000 signatures by March 12 deadline — more than needed to place the issue on the fall '92 ballot, but only if at least 70 percent of signatures are **verified** — a tall order, by past experience. Education choice organizers, who relied on professional signature-gatherers, may also fall short. Final results due mid-April.

• Supreme Court decision to accept "homework" assignment may affect many who have evaded the sentence of daily commuting. Court said March 23 it will hear appeal by the Internal Revenue Service of lower court rulings that would greatly expand availability of "home office" deductions to taxpayers. A favorable ruling could vastly **expand** the **range** of **business opportunities for families** and help to remedy the **"family time deficit."** Virginia doctor Nader Soliman did all his administrative work at home while performing anesthesia services at three hospitals, none of which provided him an office. IRS officials insist home office be "principal place of business"; lower courts held for Soliman, applying more flexible standard.