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STATEMENT OF GROUPS & INDIVIDUALS OPPOSING LEADERSHIP'S PROPOSED
RULES CHANGES IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES - file

"I believe there are more instances of the abridgement of the freedom of the People by the gradual and silent encroachment of those in power than by violent and sudden usurpations."

James Madison
June 16, 1778

Those words are just as true today, as they were two hundred years ago. The leadership in the House of Representatives is attempting to stifle debate on important issues by pushing through a series of rules changes that will limit the offering of amendments to appropriations bills and make it almost impossible to force Constitutional amendments out of committee and onto the floor.

The founding fathers saw the House of Representatives as the people's voice in government. The House is supposed to be the chamber where the people's concerns are debated and ideas explored.

The rules changes that are now being contemplated will prevent the House from working its will and serving as a truly deliberative body. These rules would allow a leadership "elite" tyrannic control over what House Members will have the opportunity to debate and vote on.

Generally, rules of procedure are designed to protect the rights of a minority and allow the majority to work its will. These rules are designed to block any minority from bringing their ideas to the view of the full House and to prevent the majority from expressing views that are contrary to the opinions of the leadership.

In the past, House majorities have made use of the existing rules to block the use of funds for forced busing, abortion, and the enforcement of gun registration regulations. These same "limiting

amendments" have also been used to restrict funding of pork barrel projects because of environmental concerns, such as the recent vote to stop the Clinch River project; defense expenditures have been limited, the most recent example being the MX vote; foreign policy also has been affected, such as Congress' restriction of funds for U.S. incursion into Cambodia. None of this would be possible under the leadership's proposed rules.

The existing rules have been used to call Constitutional amendments from committee and allow the whole Congress to debate and vote on very important amendments. In the past, the amendment to repeal prohibition was brought to the floor by discharge petition, as were the Equal Rights amendment and most recently the Balanced Budget amendment.

The issues that existing rules have allowed to move from behind the doors of committees and onto the floor of the House cut through party lines and affect all people of all political persuasions.

The leadership of the House is showing the contempt they have for the people's representatives. We urge the leadership to withdraw the rules changes, and failing that, we urge the Members to vote against such undemocratic procedures being put in place in the people's House.

Mrs. Judie Brown
American Life Lobby

Bob Tobin
Ad Hoc Committee in Defense of Life

Don Todd
American Conservative Union

Larry Pratt
Gun Owners of America

Paul A. Brown
Life Amendment PAC

Peter Gemma
Pro-life PAC

Gregory Butler
Coalitions for America

William H. Shaker
National Tax Limitation Committee

Robert Heckman
Fund for a Conservative Majority

Nellie J. Gray
March for Life

James D. Davidson
National Taxpayers Union

Ronald Madison Dees
Public Service Research Council

Douglas Johnson
National Right to Life Committee

Dr. Ronald S. Godwin
Moral Majority, Inc.

Thomas Olson
Conservatives Against Liberal
Legislation

Mark Gallagher
National Committee for a
Human Life Amendment

Fred L. Smith, Jr.
Council for a Competitive Economy

John W. Snyder
Citizens Committee for the Right
to Keep and Bear Arms

Peter T. Flaherty
Citizens for Reagan

Neal Blair
Free the Eagle

Dick Dingman
Kingston Group

Morgan Norval
Journalist