

From *Human Events*:

## **Pelosi Censors Republicans**

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July 16, 2009

Monday night Democrats voted to shut down the U.S. House Representatives rather than allow a handful of Republican Congressmen to speak on the floor. What could have been so offensive or frightening about our discourse that Speaker Pelosi felt she had to protect her party by gagging free speech in the House?

In fact, we had planned to speak on the lack of transparency of the House since Democrats took control. We had planned to criticize Speaker Pelosi for repeatedly denying Members, the media, and the public to right to read legislation before it was voted on. We were set to discuss House Majority Leader Steny Hoyer's statement last week that if his Members were required to read the Democrats' healthcare reform package before it was voted on, it would fail.

So the Speaker obviously feels that if the public is truly aware of her party's agenda, they will reject it. She is now making sure the public is kept in the dark by trampling the centuries-old democratic traditions of the House.

What are those traditions? Every day that the House is in session, following the final vote of the day, representatives are allowed the privilege of free speech on the House floor in what is known as Special Orders. They may speak for one minute, five minutes, or one hour segments, and must request their time in advance. Time is allocated equally to both parties on a first-come basis.

Since the advent of live C-SPAN coverage of the House, this has provided a national televised outlet for both Republicans and Democrats to speak to the nation on topics they feel were not adequately addressed during regular order in the House, during which the Democrat majority has the parliamentary ability to limit debate and speeches.

Special Orders therefore frequently serves as a political safety valve if the party in the majority becomes too dictatorial during debate, using their majority status to truly oppress the minority's ability to debate and offer amendments.

That is now the case in the House, with the Democrat majority under Pelosi repeatedly rejecting House rules to ram a far-left agenda through before the public has time to learn what is actually in the bills.

This is what we were committed to bring to public light.

House rules require a bill be publicly posted for three days before it can be voted on. That basic rule was written by none other than Thomas Jefferson as part of the original rules package of the House, as it is essential to the survival of representative democracy.

The House can waive that rule if it chooses on specific occasions. The Republican-controlled House chose to waive it when considering the Patriot Act in 2001 following the terror attacks of 9-11. They thought there was enough of a national defense emergency to just bring the bill to the floor for a vote.

But Nancy Pelosi and her House Democrats have chosen to ignore the rule on every major issue taken up by the House this year, including:

**The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act - The Obama Stimulus:** This one just had to pass that very day because time was a-wastin' in getting those new jobs coming. We couldn't wait for Members to read it. But then the President waited four days to sign it into law while he spent the weekend in Chicago, and months later none of the new jobs have come into existence.

**The Children's Health Insurance Program Reauthorization (SCHIP):** Speaker Pelosi couldn't wait on this one either, although the deadline for reauthorization was still two months away.

**The Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act:** Lilly was peddled as covering decades-old wage discrimination cases, but after waiting 20 years, Congress couldn't wait one more day to let Members actually read the thing.

**The Omnibus Public Land Management Act of 2009:** No excuses at all on this one. They just didn't want the details known.

**The Omnibus Appropriations Act of 2009:** This one has been languishing since last October, but we suddenly had to pass it that day.

**The AIG Bonus Tax Act:** This had to get through right then, don't mind the details, we just had to go after those bonuses. Only when we read what passed after the fact, the bill contained waivers for all of the same executives the bill was supposed to reign in, many with curiously close ties to Treasury Secretary and tax cheat Tim Geithner.

**The Supplemental Appropriations Act of 2009:** No rush whatever on this one time-wise, the Democrats just didn't want people talking about the hundreds of billions given to foreign banks that should have gone to our troops.

**The American Clean Energy and Security Act/National Cap-and-Trade Energy Tax:** No excuse was offered on this one, the Speaker just didn't want anybody reading Henry Waxman's 300 page amendment he sneaked in overnight before we were forced to vote. Three weeks later, the Senate shows no intention of taking up the bill before the opening day of dove season, if then.

There s a reason all these bills are listed. The list constitutes every major policy bill undertaken by Congress this year. House Democrats are not just waiving the three-day rule -- they have destroyed it, and are intentionally pushing their agenda to the floor with blindfolds on the media and the public.

This constitutes an astonishing and chilling acceleration of the assault on representative democracy that began in earnest this January.

Representative democracy works when a U.S. Representative listens to the input of their constituents, and votes the way the majority of their district would vote. Only a Representative can t listen if no one has ever seen the bill, or had time to provide input. They have to vote blind, which for too many, is voting the way their leadership tells them.

This is what Republican House Members were going to the floor to say Monday night. We were set to decry the loss of openness in the House.

Instead, we were met with a slammed door by Democrats, who are now committed to burying truth along with democracy.

The Democrats are the majority -- for now. They chose to silence debate on the floor by gagging House Republican Members from using their historical right to speak after the close of the day. But they cannot stop us from speaking outside the halls of Congress and letting the American public know the truth about their ongoing attack against the very foundations of a free Republic.