

## April 13, 2005 - Republicans Clamp Down on Democracy Once Again

### ANOTHER CLOSED RULE

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This Time to Silence Voices and Prevent Debate on the Bankruptcy Bill

Washington, DC - This evening in the House Committee on Rules, Chairman David Dreier and the Majority voted on a straight party line to close the upcoming Bankruptcy Bill from any amendments on the House floor, clamping down on the democratic process in the House of Representatives once again.

The Most Abusive Majority in History is only Getting Worse

In fact, since the 105th Congress, the number of amendments allowed on the bankruptcy bill has declined EVERY CONGRESS. The 109th Congress has been the worst ever, with ZERO amendments allowed on the legislation, as the following chart demonstrates:

In fact, only one rule during the entire 109th Congress has been an open rule, and that was on an appropriations bill. This serves as just one more example of the arrogance of this Republican Majority and clearly shows their leadership is getting worse, not better, as time moves on.

"Here we go again, Another important issue, another closed rule by the Republicans. This Majority is arrogant and out of control. Their unethical assault on our democratic values must stop," said Rep. Slaughter after the meeting. "It's just more proof that this is the most abusive and unethical Majority in Modern Congressional History."

Real Americans Pay the Price:

The passage of this closed rule, which prevents the House of Representatives from considering any amendments, also provides an excellent example of how the documented arrogance of this Majority is directly affecting the lives of everyday Americans. As a result of this rule preventing any amendments on the House floor:

## Veterans and their Families

- Men and women fighting for our country in Iraq and Afghanistan will NOT be exempted from the bankruptcy bill's so-called "means test."

- An amendment by Rep. Marty Meehan of Massachusetts (amendment # 23) would have protected disabled veterans who have developed financial problems due to their combat service, but will not be allowed.

- Another amendment (amendment # 12), which required credit counseling agencies to provide free services to men and women who have recently left the military after serving in combat zones will not be allowed for consideration.

## Family Members with Health Problems

- Several amendments intended to protect people who file bankruptcy because they or a family member is experiencing a serious, costly illness will not even be considered.

- Every single Rules Committee Republican voted against even considering an amendment offered by Rep. Zoe Lofgren of California (amendment # 12) that would protect people whose medical costs total more than 50% of their annual income.

## Americans who have their Identity Stolen

- People who are forced into bankruptcy as a result of identity theft will get no help from this Republican Congress. **REPUBLICANS WILL NOT EVEN ALLOW THE HOUSE TO CONSIDER THE ISSUE.**

- For instance, the Majority has prevented consideration of an amendment offered by Rep. Adam Schiff of California (amendment # 11) that would protect consumers who find themselves with large debts because criminals have stolen their Social Security numbers and other personal identification information.

"Americans should forget everything they ever learned about how a bill becomes a law. Tom DeLay and the Republicans in Congress have stamped out debate, dissention and democracy at every opportunity. And it is the American people who pay the price," added Slaughter.