

SHAYS IS A HYPOCRITE

DAVID LIGHTMAN'S NEWS STORY [APRIL 20, "SHAYS JOINS AN ADVERSARY'S ETHICS EFFORT"] GOT IT WRONG.

AFTER NINE TERMS IN CONGRESS, REP. CHRIS SHAYS, R-4TH DISTRICT, HAS BECOME A MASTER OF THE FLIP-FLOP. FIRST, HE CRITICIZED THE SO-CALLED DELAY RULE, WHICH WOULD HAVE PERMITTED TOM DELAY TO CONTINUE AS HOUSE MAJORITY LEADER SHOULD HE BE INDICTED FOR VIOLATING FEDERAL CAMPAIGN FINANCE LAWS.

IN JANUARY, HOWEVER, MR. SHAYS QUIETLY VOTED WITH MR. DELAY TO GUT THE POWERS OF THE HOUSE ETHICS COMMITTEE AND MAKE IT VIRTUALLY IMPOSSIBLE FOR THAT COMMITTEE TO EVER LAUNCH INVESTIGATIONS INTO NEW ALLEGATIONS AGAINST MR. DELAY. THEN IN MARCH, MR. SHAYS PULLED ANOTHER SCREECHING U-TURN, SIGNING ON TO WEST VIRGINIA DEMOCRAT REP. ALAN MOLLOHAN'S BILL TO RESTORE THE ETHICS COMMITTEE'S POWERS, THE SAME POWERS THAT MR. SHAYS VOTED TO ELIMINATE JUST SIX WEEKS EARLIER.

BUT MR. SHAYS' FLIP-FLOPS WERE JUST BEGINNING. HE PERFORMED ANOTHER BREATHTAKING ABOUT-FACE BY VOTING TWICE AGAINST "DISCHARGE PETITIONS" INTRODUCED BY DEMOCRATIC MINORITY LEADER NANCY PELOSI THAT WOULD HAVE FORCED THE ETHICS BILL THAT HE CO-SPONSORED TO THE HOUSE FLOOR FOR A VOTE.

MR. SHAYS ALWAYS MANAGES TO HAVE IT BOTH WAYS: LOOKING VIRTUOUS BY STANDING UP TO TOM DELAY, BUT LINING UP BEHIND HIM TO TAKE AWAY THE ETHICS COMMITTEE'S POWERS; SIGNING ON TO THE DEMOCRATS' BILL TO RESTORE THE ETHICS COMMITTEE'S POWERS, BUT QUIETLY DOING TOM DELAY'S BIDDING BY BLOCKING THAT BILL FROM EVER COMING UP FOR A VOTE.

THAT'S NOT COURAGE, THAT'S HYPOCRISY.

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