Twitter Thread by Leslie McAdoo Gordon



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I am a wife.

You know why?

Because I'm a married woman.

So the controversy over the "gendered" language in the new House Rules is as follows.

1. The House Rules contain an anti-nepotism (you can't hire your own relatives) provision.

2. To make that make sense, there's a definition of who is included in the meaning of a relative.

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3. That definition is found in Rule XXIII, clause 8(c)(3). This■■is what the definition said in the Rules for the last Congress (the 116th). It uses words like mother, father, wife, husband, daughter, son, etc. Words that convey gender. /2

(A) that meetings for the resolution of differences between the two Houses occur only under circumstances in which every manager on the part of the House has notice of the meeting and a reasonable opportunity to attend;

(B) that all provisions on which the two Houses disagree are considered as open to discussion at any meeting of a conference committee; and

(C) that papers reflecting a conference agreement are held inviolate to change without renewal of the opportunity of all managers on the part of the House to reconsider their decisions to sign or not to sign the agreement.

(4) Managers on the part of the House shall be provided a unitary time and place with access to at least one complete copy of the final conference agreement for the purpose of recording their approval (or not) of the final conference agreement by placing their signatures (or not) on the sheets prepared to accompany the conference report and joint explanatory statement of the managers.

(b) A point of order that a conference committee failed to comply with paragraph (a) may be raised immediately after the conference report is read or considered as read. If such a point of order is sustained, the conference report shall be considered as rejected, the House shall be considered to have insisted on its amendments or on disagreement to the Senate amendments, as the case may be, and to have requested a further conference with the Senate, and the Speaker may appoint new conferees without intervening motion.

13. It shall not be in order to consider a conference report the text of which differs in any way, other than clerical, from the text that reflects the action of the conferees on all of the differences between the two Houses, as recorded by their placement of their signatures (or not) on the sheets prepared to accompany the conference report and joint explanatory statement of the managers.

RULE XXIII

CODE OF OFFICIAL CONDUCT

There is hereby established by and for the House the following code of conduct, to be known as the ''Code of Official Conduct'':

1. A Member, Delegate, Resident Commissioner, officer, or employee of the House shall behave at all times in a manner that shall reflect creditably on the House.

2. A Member, Delegate, Resident Commissioner, officer, or employee of the House shall adhere to the spirit and the letter of the Rules of the House and to the rules of duly constituted committees thereof.

3. A Member, Delegate, Resident Commissioner, officer, or employee of the House may not receive compensation and may not permit compensation to accrue to the beneficial interest of such individual from any source, the receipt of which would occur by virtue of influence improperly exerted from the position of such individual in Congress.

4. A Member, Delegate, Resident Commissioner, officer, or employee of the House may not accept gifts except as provided by clause 5 of rule XXV.

5. A Member, Delegate, Resident Commissioner, officer, or employee of the House may not accept an honorarium for a speech, a writing for publication, or other similar activity, except as otherwise provided under rule XXV.

6. A Member, Delegate, or Resident Commissioner—

(a) shall keep the campaign funds of such individual separate from the personal funds of such individual;

(b) may not convert campaign funds to personal use in excess of an amount representing reimbursement for legitimate and verifiable campaign expenditures; and

(c) except as provided in clause 1(b) of rule XXIV, may not expend funds from a campaign account of such individual that are not attributable to bona fide campaign or political purposes.

7. A Member, Delegate, or Resident Commissioner shall treat as campaign contributions all proceeds from testimonial dinners or other fundraising events.

8. (a) A Member, Delegate, Resident Commissioner, or officer of the House may not retain an employee who does not perform duties for the offices of the employing authority commensurate with the compensation such employee receives.

(b) In the case of a committee employee who works under the direct supervision of a member of the committee other than a chair, the chair may require that such member affirm in writing that the employee has complied with clause 8(a) (subject to clause 9 of rule X) as evidence of compliance by the chair with this clause and with clause 9 of rule X.

(c)(1) Except as specified in subparagraph (2)—

(A) a Member, Delegate, or Resident Commissioner may not retain the relative of such individual in a paid position; and

(B) an employee of the House may not accept compensation for work for a committee on which the relative of such employee serves as a member.

(2) Subparagraph (1) shall not apply in the case of a relative whose pertinent employment predates the One Hundred Thirteenth Congress.

(3) As used in this paragraph, the term ''relative'' means an individual who is related to the Member, Delegate, or Resident Commissioner as father, mother, son, daughter, brother, sister, uncle, aunt, first cousin, nephew, niece, husband, wife, father-in-law, mother-in-law, son-in-law, daughter-in-law, brother-in-law, sister-in-law, stepfather, stepmother, stepson, stepdaughter, stepbrother, stepsister, half brother, half sister, grandson, or granddaughter.

9. A Member, Delegate, Resident Commissioner, officer, or employee of the House may not discharge and may not refuse to hire an individual, or otherwise discriminate against an individual with respect to compensation, terms, conditions, or privileges of employment, because of the race, color, religion, sex (including marital or parental status), sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, age, or national origin of such individual, including by committing an act of sexual harassment against such individual, but may take into consideration the domicile or political affiliation of such individual.

10. (a) A Member, Delegate, or Resident Commissioner who has been convicted by a court of record for the commission of a crime for which a sentence of two or more years' imprisonment may be imposed should refrain from participation in the business of each committee of which such individual is a member, and a Member should refrain from voting on any question at a meeting of the House or of the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union, unless or until judicial or executive proceedings result in reinstatement of the presumption of the innocence of such Member or until the Member is reelected to the House after the date of such conviction.

(b) A Member, Delegate, or Resident Commissioner who has been indicted for or otherwise formally charged with criminal conduct in any Federal, State, or local court punishable as a felony for which a sentence of two or more years' imprisonment may be imposed should submit his or her resignation from any standing, select, joint or ad hoc committee, and any subcommittee thereof, on which he or she serves, and should step aside from any party caucus or conference leadership position he or she holds, unless or until judicial or executive proceedings result in acquittal or the charges are dismissed or reduced to less than a felony as described in this paragraph.

11. A Member, Delegate, or Resident Commissioner may not authorize or otherwise allow an individual, group, or organization not under the direction and control of the House to use the words ''Congress of the United States,'' ''House of Representatives,'' or ''Official Business,'' or any combination of words thereof, on any letterhead or envelope.

12. (a) Except as provided in paragraph (b), an employee of the House who is required to file a report under rule XXVI may not participate personally and substantially as an employee of the House in a contact with an agency of the executive or judicial

4. The proposal for the new Congress (the 117th) was to change that definition to “non-gendered” language. Each new Congress adopts its own Rules at the beginning of its session, shortly after being sworn in. The *changes* to the old Rules are proposed in a House Resolution. /3

5. This year that was House Resolution 8. It proposed to change that definition of “relative” in section XXIII.8(c)(3) - & only in that section - to “non-gendered” language. ■■

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rules.house.gov

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(Original Signature of Member)

117TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. RES. _____

Adopting the Rules of the House of Representatives for the One Hundred Seventeenth Congress, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Mr. HOYER submitted the following resolution

RESOLUTION

Adopting the Rules of the House of Representatives for the One Hundred Seventeenth Congress, and for other purposes.

Resolved,

SECTION 1. ADOPTION OF THE RULES OF THE ONE HUNDRED SIXTEENTH CONGRESS.

The Rules of the House of Representatives of the One Hundred Sixteenth Congress, including applicable provisions of law or concurrent resolution that constituted rules of the House at the end of the One Hundred Sixteenth Congress, are adopted as the Rules of the House of Representatives of the One Hundred Seventeenth Congress,

with amendments to the standing rules as provided in section 2, and with other orders as provided in this resolution.

SEC. 2. CHAN[redacted]

6. House Resolution 8 passed, of course, so when the House publishes the nicely printed copy of the Rules for the 117th Congress, the “non-gendered” language will be used in the definition of relative, so: parent, spouse, child. Words that don’t convey gender. /5

7. This change does NOT change the definition of “relative” for any other purpose or any other Rule or any law or for debates on the House floor. It only changes it for the anti-nepotism provision in the House Rules.

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8. However, it may be a harbinger of things to come, such as requiring that all House materials or legislation use “non-gendered” language.

9. Resolution 8 for example also changed the word “Chairman” to “Chair” for example.

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10. This is both good & bad. The original point of switching to “non-gendered” language was good. It was to stop using generally applicable words that by their meaning EXCLUDED women, such as “Chairman.” It was/is a recognition that women can hold such positions.

/8

11. But that only makes sense if the word you’re changing is a gendered word for something that could be a person of either gender, like a committee chair.

12. Some words, however, are gendered precisely because only one gender can constitute that word- like mother.

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13. Changing to “non-gendered” words for things that are by definition gender specific is wrong, idiotic, anti-feminist, & anti-equality. It erases people.

14. So changing from gendered to non-gendered words must be done carefully. Where it increases equality, great.

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15. Where it erases people, it should not be done.

16. There are many instances for example where changing to “parent” will be more equal & also more efficient.

17. There will also be instances in which eliminating the word “daughter” only serves to erase women.

/11

18. There is a movement in our culture to erase gender, under the guise of “equality.” Sometimes what that movement proposes IS advancing equality for women, but increasingly it is also eliminating & harming the status & rights of women &

girls.

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