

October 3, 2006

Dear Colleague:

The calls for Speaker Hastert's immediate resignation are unwarranted and fundamentally unfair.

In all of life, hindsight is 20/20. Perhaps the incident was not handled perfectly; few things ever are. But the Speaker's staff and Congressman Shimkus acted promptly when they were informed of former Congressman Foley's inappropriate behavior. Indeed, it appears from what we know now that all our Republican leaders acted on the information that they were provided regarding this matter.

Congressman Shimkus and the former Clerk of the House issued a stern warning to Mr. Foley when they learned of his actions. And, there is no evidence to date that their warning was ineffective in restraining Mr. Foley from further inappropriate behavior. From the evidence we have now, it appears that all of the salacious messages which have surfaced since this story broke occurred before Congressman Shimkus and the Clerk warned Mr. Foley. The investigations now under way which Speaker Hastert initiated may reveal that the warnings did not work, but that is all the more reason to await the result of those investigations.

Those calling for the Speaker's resignation are demanding that we act before all the facts are known. That is not called for.

It is worth noting that at least two newspapers and perhaps numerous other news outlets have known of the original e-mail exchange for months. And, after conducting their own inquiries, they decided not to publish the story or pursue the matter further. In the words of the *Miami Herald*, "Some newspapers – including this one – knew of this message as well and did not find it worthy of a news story because it seemed innocuous." The FBI also knew of the matter in July, conducted a review, and decided not to take any action.

Those of us who know Denny Hastert know that he is a good and decent man in a tough job. Before coming to Congress he both taught and coached high school students. In Congress, he has fought vigorously, and at times almost single-handedly to protect America's youth from the scourge of illegal drugs. His lifelong dedication to America's youth is unquestionable. He deserves to be treated fairly, not railroaded out of office.

To demand his resignation, based on the current facts and before the full investigation that he has called for is completed, is unwarranted and wrong.

Each of us must evaluate the facts once they are all known. I hope we will all act fairly.

Sincerely,

John Shadegg