

NYTimes

Letters to the Editor

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Prosecutor Law: The House Isn't Listless

To the Editor:

As a citizen and as principal sponsor of the House bill for the establishment of an independent prosecutor, I wish to commend you for your strong endorsement of such legislation. I must, however, also express my astonishment at your Nov. 2 editorial suggesting that the House and its Judiciary Committee have been inattentive to such legislation.

You must be aware that a wide segment of the House membership, and the Judiciary Committee in particular, have been moving promptly and resolutely ever since the President took his reckless actions on Oct. 20.

I can testify personally that chairman Rodino and his staff were in their office on Monday, Oct. 22, a legal holiday. He had already prepared a letter to the Acting Attorney General demanding that the integrity and security of the Cox files be assured. That afternoon and evening, Mr. Rodino met personally with the principal sponsors of a court-appointment bill, which was introduced by me with ninety co-sponsors the following day. H. J. Res. 784 has gained a sizable number of additional sponsors in the intervening time.

Chairman Rodino promptly referred the bill to the Subcommittee on Criminal Justice, headed by Mr. Hungate. In a very short time, including all weekend, the hearings were prepared, and witnesses of the highest caliber sought and scheduled. On Monday,

Oct. 30, the subcommittee held a preliminary hearing and reported out one vital section of the bill, the extension of the life of the Watergate grand jury. This will be voted on next week.

On Oct. 30, the subcommittee also opened four days of hearings on the court-appointed special prosecutor. Chairman Hungate has announced that his subcommittee will meet to mark up the bill this Wednesday.

Chairman Rodino and his staff have devoted their full resources to this matter at a time when the House Judiciary Committee has before it more momentous responsibilities than have probably ever been borne at one time by any committee during my decade of service in the House.

I believe you will agree that special-prosecutor legislation, arousing as it does some constitutional questions, ought to be carefully constructed and validated. I believe that the bill that will emerge from the Judiciary Committee will meet rigorous constitutional scrutiny.

I want to assure you that there is a wide determination among members of both bodies of Congress to reaffirm their responsibilities and to reflect the public's commitment to rule of law.

(Rep.) JOHN C. CULVER

Washington, Nov. 2, 1973

The writer, who represents Iowa's Second District, is chairman of the Democratic Study Group, an organization of 170 House members.