



June 2, 2004

Judicial Ethics

To the Editor:

Your May 27 editorial "Judicial Ethics Under Review" addresses Chief Justice William H. Rehnquist's appointment of a committee to review judicial ethics and discipline in response to my remarks before the Judicial Conference in March. You state, "Congress and the public should watch closely and insist that any changes raise the standard of judicial conduct." You may be assured that we will.

But it is difficult to understand your professed concern for judicial ethics in light of your previous criticism of the Judiciary Committee's inquiry into the admittedly illegal sentencing practices of Judge James Rosenbaum of Minnesota ("A Judicial Witch Hunt," April 30, 2003).

While it may be a quaint notion to your editorial board, the fundamental "ethical" obligation of every judge is to follow the law faithfully. The Judiciary Committee will continue to fulfill its constitutional oversight of the judiciary consistent with that principle. I welcome the action of the chief justice.

F. JAMES SENSENBRENNER JR.
Chmn., House Judiciary Committee
Washington, May 28, 2004