

**REPUBLICAN CHANGE OF FILIBUSTER RULE IS ABUSE OF POWER --
(House of Representatives - May 11, 2005)**

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, Republicans have become so arrogant with their absolute power here in Washington that whenever they do not get their way, they try to change the rules of the game. In January, House Republicans ignored protocol and weakened the ethics rules in order to protect one of their leaders, and now Senate Republicans are preparing to change the filibuster rule which has been in place beyond anyone's memory.

Republicans say Senate Democrats are preventing President Bush's judicial appointments from taking the bench, but let us set the record straight. During President Bush's first 4 years in office, the Senate confirmed 204 of his 214 nominees; that is a 95 percent confirmation rate.

The Senate has been so productive in approving Bush's nominees that the Federal court vacancy rate is at its lowest point in 15 years.

Mr. Speaker, the filibuster has been used by Democrats and Republicans for 200 years to protect the rights of the minority party. After 2 centuries, it would be a mistake and an extreme abuse of power by Senate Republicans to change the rules now and eliminate this important check and balance.