Mr. OBEY. Mr. Chairman, years ago Senator Proxmire from my State used to have the Golden Fleece Awards. He was a good friend of mine. One year he made a whole lot of fun of a study on Polish pigs. They had a field day with it. Funny name, strange-sounding grant. Well, guess what? That study led to the development of a new blood pressure medicine which millions of people use today. The know-nothings in the Congress at that time would have eliminated that study. I do not think that would have been a good outcome.

I have served on the subcommittee that deals with NIH for a long time, and the one thing I came to understand very quickly is that the day that we politicize NIH research, the day we decide which grants are going to be approved on the basis of a 10-minute horseback debate in the House of Representatives with 434 of the 435 Members in this place who do not even know what the grant is, that is the day we will ruin science research in this country. We have no business making political judgments about those kinds of issues.

I would ask the following questions of the gentlemen who are offering this amendment: Can they tell me what score each of the grants received in the peer review process? Can they tell me who is on the peer review committee that takes a look at each of these in the study circles? Do you have objection to any of the persons who are on those study sections? I think the gentlemen have an obligation to answer those questions if they are going to bring something like this to the floor with no notice and no understanding of what these grants do.

Now, I would say that I do not have any idea what these grants do. I can imagine, though, that perhaps this study on so-called sexual arousal, that perhaps it is one way of trying to determine how you prevent child molestation or rape. I can also imagine with respect to the longitudinal study on sexual behavior of old men, NIH says this: "Without a better understanding of age-related changes in men's sexual functions, physicians may assume that declines in function are normal when they actually reflect early symptoms of disease such as diabetes and heart disease."

With respect to the study that relates to intervention for drug-using women sex workers, let us say you do not have any sympathy at all for the sex workers or their partners. I am concerned about the innocent partners of those partners. What about the wives of persons who go to these sex workers and then wind up getting disease? I think we ought to know as much as possible how to prevent transmission of disease, and what role drug use has in that process.

So without knowing anything about these, I return to my basic principle: We have NIH for a reason; we have peer review for a reason. I would rather trust the judgment of 10 doctors sitting around a table than I would 10 politicians sitting around a table when we decide how to allocate taxpayer money for those grants.

The reason NIH is there is so none of us bring our political biases to the table, and that is the way it ought to remain.