

By By Barney

FRANK'S SEAT UP FOR GRABS

You thought Kim Jong-Dead's supporters crying for the pot-bellied dictator was bad. When Barney Frank, 71, announced his retirement on Nov. 28, the drive-bys went into deep mourning. Most were wringing their hands, worried who will be the next LGBT — lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender — leader in Congress, now that Barney Frank's seat is wide open.

The media was shaken; Frank's announcement caught everyone by surprise. After all, if having a prostitution ring run out of your basement couldn't embarrass you to retire, what would? Turns out, it was redistricting — making everything harder for the 16-term Congressman. He couldn't handle abandoning the fisheries, he said, so he decided to pull out.

"I'm wearing a New Bedford Whaling Museum tie," he declared at his press conference. "I've spent 20 years working on the fishing industry. None of the fishing industry areas will be in the district that I would be running in. I can't walk away from the fishing industry. I can't walk away from people I've grown personally close to and say, 'Well, I'm sorry ... I don't have time to do you.'"

Among the fisheries, the feeling was mutual. As *The New Bedford [MA] Standard-Times* headlined it: "FISHING INDUSTRY BEMOANS 'BIG SHOES TO FILL.'" This despite *The New York Times* calling Frank "prickly." (Can you imagine if I said that?) *The Times* also called him a "tart-tongued liberal." Okay, but in this case the "tart" was Steve Gobie, Frank's former roommate-prostitute. For whom he fixed 33 parking tickets and was reprimanded by Congress in 1990. "I should have known better," Frank told the House.

But the very next year, Frank — whom the left lauds as a genius — helped his lover, Herb Moses, get a job at Fannie Mae. While he was on the committee that regulated it. The Fannie Mae senior vice president who hired Moses, Gerald McMurray, just happened to be a Frank campaign donor "and once worked for the congressman," reported *The Boston Herald*. An ethical conflict? "Nonsense!" snapped Frank.

He leaves in his wake the global economic meltdown precipitated by the subprime mortgage fiasco for which he is largely responsible. History will judge Frank's most memorable line not to be one of his frequent putdowns of conservatives, but this, from Sept. 11, 2003: "Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac are not facing any kind of financial crisis. The more people exaggerate these problems, the more pressure there is on these companies, the less we will see in terms of

affordable housing." Thanks to Frank's ardent Fannie protection, the whole corrupt enterprise took the economy over the cliff.

After Frank's retirement announcement, President Obama noted that the House of Representatives "will not be the same without him." True. He has vastly improved the institution by leaving it.

