

**PUBLIC CITIZEN • COMMON CAUSE • DEMOCRACY 21 • U.S. PIRG
CAMPAIGN LEGAL CENTER • LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
May 2, 2006

Contact: Angela Bradbery (202) 588-7741
Mary Boyle (202) 833-1200
Catie Hinckley (202) 736-2200
Sara Conrath (202) 263-1332

Sham Lobbying Reform Bill to be Voted on by the House with No Chance for Meaningful Amendments

Reform Groups Urge Lawmakers to Defeat the Measure, And Draft Real Reform

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Tomorrow – May 3rd – the House of Representatives is expected to vote on a “lobbying reform” bill (H.R. 4975) that does almost nothing to rein in the lobbying abuses and congressional ethics scandals that have racked Capitol Hill. The legislation is an extremely disappointing outcome of months of public outcry for Congress to bring undue influence peddling and corruption under control.

Our organizations – the Campaign Legal Center, Common Cause, Democracy 21, League of Women Voters, Public Citizen and U.S. PIRG – strongly urge the House to reject H.R. 4975 as woefully inadequate and go back to drafting a genuine lobbying reform measure.

Not even professional lobbyists seem inconvenienced by the weak and ineffective lobbying reforms contained in H.R. 4975.

“That little thing?” joked Paul Miller, president of the American League of Lobbyists, when asked about how the legislation would affect his business.

The key House sponsor of the bill agreed. “I do not know of anyone who is ecstatic with this piece of legislation,” said House Rules Committee Chairman David Dreier (R-Calif.).

H.R. 4975 is not lobbying reform; it is a fraud. The bill fails to address any of the major problems that have scandalized Congress and the corps of professional lobbyists.

- The bill does nothing to slow the revolving door of congressional members taking lucrative lobbying jobs after public service with the same firms that lobbied them.
- It does not restrict the use of private corporate jets to fly members of Congress around the globe, largely courtesy of corporate interests with business pending before Congress.
- It suspends privately-sponsored travel for members – but only until after the next election.

- The bill does not provide for an independent enforcement mechanism to ensure that Members of Congress comply with the ethics rules.

This weak lobbying reform bill stands no chance of being strengthened on the House floor tomorrow. A gag rule has been attached to the bill by the powerful House Rules Committee forbidding Congress to take up any meaningful amendments to the bill.

The primary function of this legislation is to allow Congress to claim it voted for reform, all the while doing nothing to change business as usual on the Hill.

Our groups will not be a party to this fraud on the American public. We strongly urge Congress not to pass H.R. 4975 and return to the drawing board and draft meaningful lobbying reform legislation that can help restore the integrity of the federal government.

We have a right to expect more from our representatives.

Campaign Legal Center
Democracy 21
Public Citizen

Common Cause
League of Women Voters
U.S. PIRG