

**Campaign Legal Center • Common Cause • Democracy 21
League of Women Voters • Public Citizen • U.S. PIRG**

VOTE NO ON THE RULE ON H.R 4975 UNLESS IMPORTANT
STRENGTHENING AMENDMENTS TO THE BILL ARE MADE IN ORDER

April 26, 2006

Dear Representative:

H.R. 4975 is scheduled to be considered on the House floor on April 27. Our organizations recently wrote to you to express our strong opposition to this bill, which fails to provide real and effective reforms to address the corruption, lobbying and ethics scandals in Congress.

The organizations include the Campaign Legal Center, Common Cause, Democracy 21, the League of Women Voters, Public Citizen and U.S. PIRG.

We strongly urge you to vote against the rule on H.R. 4975, unless a number of important strengthening amendments are made in order for House floor votes, including the bipartisan package of individual amendments being offered by Representatives Christopher Shays (R-CT) and Marty Meehan (D-MA).

The Shays-Meehan package of strengthening amendments includes individual amendments that would:

- Establish an Office of Public Integrity in Congress to assist the House Ethics Committee in enforcing the House ethics rules;
- Require that Members pay charter costs for company planes made available by corporations and others for Members' travel;
- Ban gifts to Members, including payments to finance parties to "honor" or recognize Members at the national conventions;
- Require lobbyists to disclose to the public the various ways in which they provide campaign funds and financial benefits to assist Members; and
- Require disclosure of the huge sums being secretly spent by professional lobbying firms and lobbying organizations on grassroots campaigns to stimulate lobbying of Congress by the public, including multimillion dollar advertising campaigns.

Other important strengthening amendments also need to be made in order for floor votes, including amendments to provide permanent, not temporary, restrictions on privately-financed trips for Members, and to curb the revolving door by increasing the period of time during which former Members are prohibited from lobbying their former colleagues.

It is critical that House Members be able to vote for real lobbying and ethics reforms when H.R. 4975 reaches the House floor. This will not happen unless Members are given the opportunity to vote on the strengthening amendments set forth above.

We also strongly urge you to support these amendments on the House floor.

A modified closed rule that allows Members to vote on only a few strengthening amendments rather than the numerous amendments needed to make H.R. 4975 real reform legislation is no more acceptable than a closed rule, and should similarly be defeated.

The issues involved in this legislation deal with the way our democracy functions. It is essential that they be considered under a fair and democratic process.

We strongly urge you to oppose any rule on H.R. 4975 that does not allow Members to vote up-or-down on the important strengthening amendments set forth in our letter.

We also strongly urge you to vote against H.R. 4975 if it is not strengthened on the House floor by successful amendments to effectively address the corruption, lobbying and ethics scandals in Congress.

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