

## April 27, 2006: Republicans Choke: R's Squander Last Chance to "Reform" Their Corrupt Congress

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#### Rs Squander Last Chance to "Reform" Their Corrupt Congress

Prevent Tougher Dem Substitute; Block Dem Amendments to: Ban Gifts, Shut Down K-Street Project, End Special Interest-Dead of Night Provisions, Ban Insider-Trading in Congress, Require Public Disclosure of Earmarks, and much, much more...

Washington, DC - On Wednesday night at about 11:30 p.m. the House Rules Committee reported a restrictive rule providing for the consideration of H.R. 4975, the so-called Lobbying Accountability & Transparency Act of 2006. The rule and the bill are scheduled for the House Floor today.

"The Republican Leadership has once again blocked tough reform measures from even being considered by this body. In the process, they have truly squandered their last real chance to reform this corrupt Congress," said Rep. Slaughter.

She added, "An historic opportunity to change how Washington works has been lost. It is a sad spectacle for our Congress, and our Country. This Republican bill now has absolutely no chance of enacting meaningful change and reform, just as they intended."

The rule provides only one hour of general debate controlled by the Majority Leader and the Minority Leader or their designees. A total of 74 amendments were submitted to the Rules Committee on this bill, 21 by Democrats, 43 by Republicans and 10 bipartisan amendments.

The rule provides for consideration of only 9 amendments, and only 1 Democratic amendment.

## R's Strip Language to Study Lobbyist Employment Contracts

Additionally, the rule through self-executing language strikes a section of the bill that calls for a GAO study of employment contracts of lobbyists.

That section was a Democratic amendment by Rep. Scott of Virginia that was previously adopted in the Judiciary Committee markup.

## R's Reject Open Rule on their "Reform" Bill: Prevent Open Debate and Consideration Instead

I offered a motion to consider the bill under an open rule process was rejected by the Rules Committee majority by a straight party-line vote of 2-9.

The rule blocks a number of worthwhile and responsible amendments including the following which were all rejected in the Rules Committee with no Majority members voting to support any of the amendments:

## Democratic Honest Leadership, Open Govt. Act Too Tough for Republicans

An amendment in the nature of a substitute offered by Representative Slaughter consisting of the text of H.R. 4682, the Honest Leadership and Open Government Act of 2006 which, among other things, would ban gifts from lobbyists, and organizations that retain or employ lobbyists, shut down the K Street Project, end the practice of adding special interest provisions in the dead of night, require the public disclosure of earmarks, and toughen lobbyist disclosure requirements and enforcement.

#### R's Vote to Allow Insider Trading in Congress

An amendment by Representatives Baird and Slaughter which would prohibit securities trading by Members and staff based on nonpublic information relating to pending or prospective legislative action, require additional reporting by Members and employees of Congress of securities transactions, and require registration and reporting by political intelligence firms.

#### R's Vote Against Regulating Influence Peddling in the Administration

An amendment by Representatives Davis (VA) and Waxman that would: (1) require all political appointees and senior officials in Federal agencies and the White House to report the contacts they have with private parties seeking to influence official government action; (2) deem lawyers, lobbyists and executives appointed to high-level government positions to have a prohibited conflict of interest if they take official actions affecting their former clients or employers within two years of entering government; (3) restrict activities of procurement officials as they pass between the government and private sectors; (4) provide whistleblower protections for national security personnel; (5) eliminate the use of unregulated "pseudo-classifications" such as "sensitive but unclassified" or "for official use only;" and (6) require the Federal government to disclose its role in funding or disseminating advertising and communications and prohibits the expenditure of funds on unauthorized propaganda.

#### R's Reject Tougher Lobbyist Disclosure Requirements

An amendment by Representative Van Hollen which requires that a lobbyist disclose the "solicitation and transmission" of a campaign contribution on behalf of a candidate and also requires the disclosure of the fact that a lobbyist is a treasurer of a campaign or a chair of a political committee. This amendment was adopted 28-4 when the Judiciary

Committee marked up H.R. 4975. Then, without explanation or justification, it was stripped from the final version of bill by the Republican leadership.