

April 25, 2006 - Rules Dems Release Official Minority Views on H.R. 4975

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Democrats: Disingenuous Republican "Reform" Bill Won't Fool American People
Legislation's Contents Reveal Deliberate Attempt by Majority to Avoid Accountability and Suppress Democracy in the House

Washington, DC - Rep. Louise M. Slaughter (D-NY-28), Ranking Member of the House Rules Committee, today released the Democratic Party's Minority Views on H.R. 4975, the "Lobbying Accountability and Transparency Act of 2006."

To view the Democratic views in their entirety, [click here](#).

"In January, Republicans asked us to believe that they were going to reform their ways and help eliminate the corruption they had invited into the House," Rep. Slaughter said. "Apparently, they didn't mean it then, because they definitely don't mean it now."

"This Act won't do a thing to stem the tide of fundamental corruption scandals that have shaken this Republican-led House, and Republicans know it," Rep. Slaughter said. "That's why they blocked every significant Democratic amendment to this bill in the Rules Committee, and instead gave us something that's all bark and no bite."

"Democrats have always doubted the Majority's commitment to reform, but this bill is weaker than any of us could have imagined," Rep. Slaughter continued. "And yet, Republicans are portraying it as a major step forward. This was their chance to clean up their act, and instead they have chosen to try to deceive the American people. Fortunately, I don't think anyone is buying it."

Democrats have several central objections to the Act.

The bill seeks to focus all reform efforts on the work of lobbyists (although most lobbying activities will be allowed to continue unabated under H.R. 4975.)

Democrats have instead always called for Congress to reform itself by enforcing existing ethics rules and by restoring deliberation and democracy to the way the House conducts its business.

"A more serious, more comprehensive proposal to reform Congress would address the procedural abuses that have flourished in the past few years and allowed special interests to capture the legislative process," the views read. "It would also restore accountability and enforcement to the moribund House ethics process."

Furthermore, the Lobbying Accountability and Transparency Act was written in a partisan and undemocratic fashion that intentionally prevented Democrats from having the chance to amend and strengthen the legislation.

As the views read: "Chairman Dreier and the Republican leadership talked constantly about crafting a 'bipartisan' reform proposal, H.R. 4975 is a Republican bill. It does not include any of the major policy ideas put forward by Rules Committee Democrats (H. Res. 686), Minority Leader Pelosi (H.R. 4682), or senior Democratic Representatives Obey, Frank, Price, and Allen (H. Res. 659)."

"Furthermore, as the record of our markup demonstrates, bipartisanship ended with the opening statements. During the hearing, Democratic Rules Committee Members offered 12 separate amendments we believed would strengthen the bill and create a more credible reform package. As the record shows, our twelve proposals did not garner even one vote from our Republican colleagues on the Rules Committee. As we have pointed out before, merely calling a process 'bipartisan' does not make it so."

The complete Democratic views can be viewed by [clicking here](#).

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