

## CASTLE: HOUSE LOBBYING REFORM BILL FALLS SHORT OF NECESSARY CHANGES -- MAY 23, 2007

Washington D.C. -- Delaware Congressman Mike Castle today expressed his disappointment that H.R. 2316, the 'Honest Leadership and Open Government Act', does not go far enough in strengthening transparency and accountability in the laws governing lobbyists and elected officials. In response, Castle today submitted five amendments to the House Rules Committee for consideration which work to strengthen the bill. These amendments make up several elements of his Accountability and Transparency in Ethics Act, H.R. 97.

"This bill is long overdue and still fails to address necessary elements of transparency and accountability. To strengthen the bill, I have submitted five amendments to the Rules Committee -- all of which should be considered by the full House, including an outside Independent Commission on Investigations; a two-year lobbying ban; requiring ethics training for lobbyists as we now do for members and staff; and a prohibition of paying family to work on campaigns," Castle said.

Outlined below is a description of the five amendments submitted by Rep. Mike Castle to the House Rules Committee for consideration:

- Establish an Independent Commission on Investigations for Ethics Violations -- Amendment would create an independent body, consisting of former Members and retired federal judges, to investigate claims of unethical or illegal actions by Members or staff and to report findings and recommend disciplinary action to the Committee on Standards. The Speaker and Majority Leader must agree on the chair of the Commission, and no Commissioner may have lobbied in the five years prior to his/her term.
- Extend the "Revolving Door" from one-year to two-years -- Extends to two-years the lobbying ban for former members of Congress, senior staff, and executive branch officials.
- Sense of Congress regarding lobbying by immediate family members -- Amendment states that it is the sense of Congress that the use of a family relationship by a lobbyist who is an immediate family member of a Member of Congress to gain special advantages over other lobbyists is inappropriate.
- Prohibiting payment of campaign funds to immediate family members of candidates -- Amendment to prohibit a campaign committee or leadership PAC of a candidate or Federal office holder from making payments to a spouse or immediate family member of candidate for services provided. Exempts nominal reimbursements under \$500.
- Requiring 8-hour ethics training for lobbyists each Congress -- Amendment requires all registered lobbyists to complete a mandatory 8-hours of ethics training, conducted by the House Committee on Standards, each Congress. Ethics training would include the code of conduct and disclosure requirements applicable to Members, officers, and employees of the House, including rules relating to acceptance of gifts (including travel and meals), and financial disclosure requirements under the Ethics in Government Act of 1978. Failure to complete ethics training each Congress would be subject to penalties. (An identical amendment was adopted in the House in the 109th Congress).

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