

Castle: House Takes Steps to Keep Spouses Off Campaign Payroll -- July 23, 2007

Washington, DC - Today, the House passed a bipartisan measure authored by Rep. Michael Castle (R-DE) and Rep. Adam Schiff (D-CA), which will end the practice of allowing federal office holders and candidates to employ their spouses on their campaigns. The Campaign Expenditure Transparency Act (H.R. 2630), would amend campaign finance laws to prohibit the spouses of federal candidates from being on the payroll of the candidate's campaign and would also require the disclosure of all other immediate family members who are employed by the candidate's campaign.

Paying family members, particularly spouses, raise several conflicts of interests and the perception that the candidate stands to potentially benefit financially from any compensation paid to a spouse. This bill will end the practice while also increasing transparency for payment to other immediate family member by a campaign. According to the Sunlight Foundation review, at least 19 spouses of House Members earned more than \$636,000 combined during the 2006 election cycle working for their spouse's campaign.

"Members of Congress and Congressional candidates should not pay spouses from campaign funds. I would prefer if HR 2630 went beyond spouses and included a ban to keep all family members off campaign payrolls but this bill will move us in the right direction to eliminate abuse and also minimize the perception of abuse," Castle said.

Congressman Castle's bill, HR 97 would go further to prevent abuse or perception of abuse by closing the family payment loophole. Additionally, Castle's bill would enact real reform in ethics standards and lobbying laws by establishing an independent Investigations Commission to review ethics violations.

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