

# AMERICAN FEDERATION OF LABOR AND CONGRESS OF INDUSTRIAL ORGANIZATIONS



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## **LEGISLATIVE ALERT!**

(202) 637-5090

April 27, 2006

Dear Representative:

The AFL-CIO urges you to oppose the rule providing for consideration of the Lobbying Accountability and Transparency Act of 2006 (H.R. 4975) and to oppose final passage of this legislation.

The rule for consideration of H.R. 4975 provides for the text of the 527 Reform Act (H.R. 513) to be added to the bill. This procedure is a cynical attempt to use the Lobbying Accountability and Transparency Act as a vehicle to restrict independent political activity by organizations representing workers, consumers, and other ordinary Americans. Lobbying reform legislation should not be used as an excuse to discourage grassroots participation in the democratic process, or to reopen the Federal Election Campaign Act. The rule for H.R. 4975 is also objectionable because it denies consideration of more meaningful substitute proposals for lobbying reform.

H.R. 4975 temporarily modifies rules for congressional travel and lobbying disclosure requirements, but does not ban gifts from individuals who have an interest before Congress, does not address the issue of member travel on corporate-owned jets, and does not contain meaningful enforcement measures. Generally, it does nothing to curtail the disproportionate influence that corporations and wealthy special interests exercise in the legislative process.

H.R. 4975 would not help restore integrity to the legislative process or curb the lobbying excesses that have enabled corporate interests to drown out the voices of ordinary citizens. Instead, it would skew federal election law to the advantage of business corporations over unions and other Section 501(c) non-profit groups because businesses typically can continue to spend for political purposes in tax-neutral ways.

For these reasons we urge you to oppose H.R. 4975 and the rule providing for its consideration. Thank you for your consideration of our views.

Sincerely,

William Samuel, Director  
DEPARTMENT OF LEGISLATION