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Washington, DC - Congresswoman Doris O. Matsui (CA-5) spoke on the need to comprehensively reform Congress as the Rules Committee considered a narrow bill (H. Res. 648) to merely limit the access of registered lobbyists who are former Members. She emphasized the need to not only address the practices of lobbyists, but also the Congressional practices that empower the corruption of Congress. The legislation is expected to be debated on the floor of the House on Wednesday, February 1, 2006.

“Reform of lobbyist practices and the practices of the House of Representatives is long overdue and I’m pleased that we are at least taking a first step towards reform,” said Congresswoman Matsui. “However we need to look deeper at how this great institution works on a day-to-day basis. This is about honest government. Our constituents should have confidence in their elected representatives. And they should have confidence that the decisions we make aren’t taking place in back rooms and in the middle of the night. If they’re truly in the best interests of the country, every aspect of the work we do here in Congress should be able to ensure public scrutiny in the light of day.”

Congresswoman Matsui has joined with her Democratic colleagues in the House to introduce a comprehensive reform package. The Honest Leadership and Open Government Act of 2006 will be introduced this week and will include provisions to:

- ~ Ban gifts and travel from lobbyists.
- ~ Kill the K Street Project that trades legislative access for Republican only employment.
- ~ Stop the revolving door between government and lobbyists by extending the lobbying ban to two years.
- ~ End the “dead of night” special interest provisions and require disclosure of earmarks.
- ~ Prohibit cronyism in key appointments.
- ~ Eliminate contracting abuses like those benefiting Halliburton.

I welcome this first change, but make no mistake: this must be the first small step of many steps toward restoring the faith of the American people in our government. It is time to clean-up Congress and put the priorities of the American people ahead of those of the special interests.”

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