

WASHINGTON, DC – Today, Congressman Mike Honda (D-CA) issued the following statement regarding lobbying reform legislation scheduled for a U.S. House of Representatives vote on Wednesday, May 3, 2006:

“The ongoing Republican ‘lobbying reform’ charade is a case study of foxes guarding the henhouse. The bill scheduled for a House vote tomorrow is the capstone of a years-long pattern of institutionalized corruption and contempt for the American public on the part of many of its elected representatives.

“Having permitted if not encouraged the blatant abuse of public office for personal and partisan gain, many on the other side of the aisle now ask the country to believe that they will repair a system they themselves have perverted. Their empty rhetoric is attested to by the meaninglessness of their proposed legislation.

“The Republican leadership has stripped from its so-called ‘Lobbying Accountability & Transparency Act’ provisions that would have required lobbyists to report the very shenanigans that sent Jack Abramoff and former Rep. Duke Cunningham to federal prison, and forced former Republican Majority Leader Tom DeLay to resign his seat.

“Hardworking Americans who place their trust in Members of Congress lose out when lobbyists are granted special access to and influence over the legislative process. The public is paying a steep price for the cost of the culture of corruption instituted by the Republican Congress.

“Congress should instead be addressing real reforms, such as those detailed in H.R. 4682, the Honest Leadership and Open Government Act introduced by the House Democratic leadership, which would ban gifts from lobbyists, end ‘dead of night’ special interest provisions, prohibit cronyism in key appointments and eliminate contracting abuses.

“Unfortunately, House Republicans appear poised to leverage the same majority status that brought about this state of affairs, to pass hollow, disingenuous legislation.

“The cycle of corruption will end only at the ballot box this November. Tanking poll numbers, and general public exasperation with failed Republican policies across the board show that the American people are preparing to make them pay the price for their arrogance and disdain for the general welfare.”