

**Washington, D.C.** - Mr. Speaker, I first want to commend my colleague from California for introducing this first step toward reining in the culture of corruption that's been laid bare by the various scandals currently surrounding this institution. I know that broader lobbying reform is on the way. But I want to suggest today that lobbying abuses are part of a more comprehensive problem that is going to require a more comprehensive solution.

Congressional scholars Norm Orenstein and Tom Mann put it this way in a recent article:

"This is not simply a problem of a rogue lobbyist, or a pack of them. Nor is it a matter of a handful of disconnected, corrupt lawmakers taking favors in return for official actions. The problem starts, not with lobbyists, but inside Congress. Over the past five years, the rules and norms that govern Congressional debate and voting have routinely been violated, especially in the House of Representatives, in ways that mark a dramatic break from custom."

Lobbying reform alone is not going to right this ship. We need a comprehensive plan that gets to the root of the problem, the deterioration of our institutions of governance, particularly this institution.

Yesterday, I joined my colleagues Mr. Obey, Mr. Frank and Mr. Allen, along with 130 original cosponsors, in introducing a 14-point plan, House Resolution 659, that would address many of the abuses of power that we've witnessed in recent years. Among other things, our plan would reform the earmarking process, end protracted roll calls, require House-Senate conference committees to actually meet and vote, and ensure that members have time to read and understand what they're voting on.

I'll gladly support the first step that we're taking today. But, unless we enact meaningful and comprehensive reforms of the way this chamber conducts its business, Jack Abramoff will be the least of our concerns.

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