

Legislative Agenda 2013

Enact the Lobbyist Disclosure Enhancement Act

The Lobbyist Disclosure Enhancement Act would ensure that those who are paid to lobby register as lobbyists and would create more transparency around lobbyists' interactions with Members of Congress.

Background

Under the Lobbying Disclosure Act, lobbyists who are paid to influence Congress and the executive branch must register and report certain activities. The required disclosures are often vague and fail to cover many of the most influential people in the influence industry. The "Lobbyist Disclosure Enhancement Act" would fix several of these loopholes and significantly increase disclosure.

The bill would increase transparency of lobbyists' activities by:

- **Improving Disclosure on Lobbying Reports** – Currently all lobbyists have to disclose whether they met with the "House" or "Senate," essentially useless information. This bill would require lobbyists to disclose which Members they lobbied, and if they meet with staff to report the office or committee.
- **Closing the 20 Percent Loophole** – Currently individuals who spend less than 20 percent of their time lobbying do not have to register. This bill would close that loophole and require all paid lobbyists who make two or more lobbying contacts to register.
- **Speeding Up Registration of Lobbyists** – Under current law, lobbyists can lobby for 45 days, or a month and a half, without ever registering. This bill would require registration within 5 days of making a lobbying contact or being hired to do so.
- **Improving Disclosure of Lobbyist Contributions** – At this time, lobbyists only have to report their campaign contributions twice per year. This bill would require lobbyists to report their campaign contributions quarterly in order to conduct more up-to-date oversight.
- **Improving Enforcement by Creating a Lobbyist Disclosure Enforcement Task Force** – Despite the findings of the GAO report that lobbyist reporting errors are occurring, not a single settlement or civil action has been taken since 2005, in large part because no staff are dedicated to pursuing such cases. This bill creates a special task force to investigate potential violations of the "Lobbying Disclosure Act."