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February 8, 2006

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SWIFT AND HYNES CALL FOR CONGRESS TO KEEP IT SIMPLE ON LOBBY REFORM

Washington, DC – Before a packed hearing room this afternoon former Member of Congress Al Swift (D-WA) and Bob Hynes testified on lobby reform before the Senate Committee on Rules and Administration.

Suggesting that Congress needs to respond to the recent scandals surrounding the lobbying profession, the duo offered a package of simple and straightforward reforms that include:

- Banning all gifts and entertainment outright such as theater, golf and sporting events.
- Require committee approval for all travel by Members of Congress and staff, whether paid for publicly or privately. Disclosure by the committee of jurisdiction authorizing the travel as well as disclosure by the Member of Congress on his or her official website.
- Lifting all rules pertaining to meals but require full disclosure including information about who paid, what interests were represented and the cost of the meal.

Proposing two guiding principles, Swift said that “Members of Congress and their staffs are here for one purpose only – to conduct the public’s business. So what is useful for that ‘business’ is what the rules should be about. And whatever package of reforms are finally enacted, keep it simple.”

Asked why two lobbyists would agree to testify in favor of changes that might complicate the way they do their jobs, Bob Hynes responded, “some basic reform is necessary and can be accomplished without going overboard with an overly complex system of rules no one will understand and will ultimately be riddled with loopholes.” He added, “most lobbyists are honest, law-abiding individuals that follow the rules; and remember, those who are in trouble today were caught under the current rules.”

Former Rep. Al Swift (D-WA) served eight terms, retiring in 1995. Bob Hynes served as Minority Counsel to the House Rules Committee from 1964-1973. He was also President Gerald Ford’s floor staffer when he was Republican leader of the House. Both are lobbyists with the firm Colling Murphy Swift Hynes, LLC.