

HON. RON PAUL OF TEXAS February 1, 2006 Statement on H.Res 648

Mr. Speaker, anyone who doubts that empty symbolism often trumps substance in Washington only needs to consider the first item of business for the House of Representatives in this new year: banning former members of Congress who are lobbyists from using the House gym. This bill is being rushed to the floor in order to assure the American people that Congress is “cracking down” on lobbying practices in response to recent scandals

This measure does nothing to address the root cause of the scandals--the ever-growing size and power of the federal government. As long the federal government continues to regulate, tax, and subsidize the American people, there will be attempts to influence those who write the laws and regulations under which the people must live. Human nature being what it is, there will also be those lobbyists and policymakers who manipulate the power of the regulatory state to enrich themselves. I have said before, and I fear I will have plenty of opportunity to say it again: the only way to get special interest money and influence out of politics is to get the money and power out of Washington. Instead of passing new regulations and laws regulating the people’s right to petition their government, my colleagues should refuse to vote for any legislation that violates the constitutional limits on federal power or enriches a special interest at the expense of American taxpayers. Returning to constitutional government is the only way to ensure that our republican institutions will not be corrupted by powerful interests seeking special privileges.