

ALA Supports HR 5112, the “Executive Branch Reform Act of 2006”

On April 6, 2006, House Committee on Government Reform Chairman Tom Davis and Committee Ranking Member Henry Waxman introduced the **Executive Branch Reform Act of 2006** (H.R. 5112). The same day the Committee unanimously approved the bill and reported it to the full House. The legislation would institute landmark reforms of the Executive Branch of the federal government.

The bill would:

End Secret Meetings Between Lobbyists and Executive Branch Officials. The legislation requires all political appointees and senior officials in federal agencies and the White House (other than President, the Vice President, and their two chiefs of staff) to report the contacts they have with lobbyists and other private parties seeking to influence official government action. The reports, which will be filed quarterly and maintained on a searchable public database at the Office of Government Ethics, must disclose the dates of meetings, the parties involved, and the subject matters discussed.

End the Use of “Pseudo-Classifications.” The bill bans the use of “pseudo-classifications,” such as “sensitive but unclassified” or “for official use only,” to withhold unclassified information from the public – unless the designations are authorized by statute or regulations. The legislation would require the development of regulations and standards governing the use of any information control designations by federal agencies.

Provide Protection to National Security Whistleblowers. The legislation would give these national security personnel whistleblower protections equivalent to those that other federal employees have. Currently, federal employees who work on national security issues have no effective recourse if they are the victims of retaliation after disclosing abuses.

Ban Covert Propaganda. The bill requires the federal government to disclose its role in funding or disseminating messages within the United States.

The bill would also create a federal ban to prevent lobbyists who enter government from handing out favors to their former clients and bar executives who worked for private contractors from awarding contracts to their former employers when they enter government. The bill also closes multiple loopholes in the law governing when government procurement officials can be hired by companies to whom they previously awarded contracts.