

Committee on House Administration
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ELECTRONIC FILING OF DISCLOSURE REPORTS

Dear Colleague;

As many of you know, improving the technological infrastructure and capabilities of the U.S. House has long been a goal of the House Administration Committee. From deploying new wireless capabilities to improving our emergency communications system to looking at new ways to handle the delivery of mail in the wake of the anthrax attacks of 2002, we have come a long way and I am proud of the progress that has been made in recent years.

There is still, however, more that can and should be done to fully utilize available technology to improve communication and disclosure. To that end, I want to tell you about several important directives I issued this week with regard to disclosures filed with the Clerk of the House.

The first directive involves deployment of a new system to electronically handle reports required by House Rule 25 and the Mutual Security Act, including those of privately paid travel, donations to charities in lieu of honoraria, and expenditures for official foreign travel. This system will not only make the House more efficient by reducing staff time for the processing of paperwork, but equally important, it will make the House more accountable and transparent to the American public by speeding the availability of, and increasing the accessibility to, these reports. The system will have full web functionality, and should be completely deployed by December 31, 2005.

The second directive involves changes concerning reports required by the Lobbying Disclosure Act of 1995. Last year, the Clerk deployed an electronic system for handling lobbying disclosures. Approximately 10% of such disclosures were filed using the system. Though small in number, the electronically filed disclosures resulted in a significant reduction in administrative burden and processing time. Additionally, we observed that the faster processing time allows for greater accountability, as reports are more quickly made available for public inspection. To maximize these gains, I have authorized the Clerk to require electronic filing of ALL lobbying registrations, reports, and amendments filed after December 31, 2005.

These new improvements are part of the House Administration Committee's continuing efforts to use technology to bring constituents closer to the House, to strengthen accountability, and to save taxpayers' money.

Should you have any questions, please contact me.

Sincerely,
S/BOB NEY
Chairman