

TIMELINE OF LOBBYING & ETHICS SCANDALS IN THE 109TH CONGRESS

The 109th Congress has been marked by a long string of lobbying and ethics scandals. The following timeline traces these scandals from search warrants and arrests to plea agreements and resignations.

September 2005

- **September 19:** David Safavian, former Chief of Staff for the General Services Administration, arrested and charged with lying and obstruction in relation to the Jack Abramoff investigation.
- **September 28:** House Majority Leader Tom DeLay (R-TX) indicted for criminal conspiracy related to 2002 Texas state elections. He steps down as Majority Leader but vows to return.

November 2005

- **November 21:** Michael Scanlon, associate of lobbyist Jack Abramoff and former Communications Director for Rep. DeLay, pleads guilty to conspiring to bribe a congressman and other public officials.
- **November 28:** Rep. Randy "Duke" Cunningham (R-CA), a member of the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Defense, pleads guilty to accepting \$2.4 million in bribes from defense lobbyists and tax evasion. He resigns from Congress.

January 2006

- **January 3:** Lobbyist Jack Abramoff pleads guilty to fraud, tax evasion and conspiracy to bribe public officials. He agrees to cooperate with the ongoing investigation.
- **January 7:** Rep. DeLay announces that he would not seek to regain his position as Majority Leader. Race begins for his successor.
- **January 11:** Brent Pfeffer, former aide to Rep. William Jefferson (D-LA), pleads guilty to charges of aiding and abetting bribery of a public official and conspiracy.
- **January 17:** Rules Committee Chair David Dreier (R-CA) and Speaker Dennis Hastert (R-IL) outline key principles for a lobbying reform package including: a ban on privately-funded travel; stronger gift ban; ban from House Floor and gym for former Members who lobby; doubling of "cooling off" period for Members and senior staff to two years.



February 2006

- **February 16:** Representatives Marty Meehan (D-MA) and Chris Shays (R-CT) introduce a bill to create an Office of Public Integrity an independent, non-partisan office to investigate ethics complaints and inquiries in Congress.
- **February 24:** Defense contractor Mitchell Wade pleads guilty to paying Rep. Cunningham more than \$1 million in bribes.

March 2006

- **March 29:** Senate passes Legislative Transparency and Accountability Act of 2006 (S. 2349).
- **March 31:** Tony Rudy, former Deputy Chief of Staff to Rep. DeLay and Jack Abramoff associate, pleads guilty to conspiracy charges.

April 2006

- **April 3:** Rep. DeLay announces he will resign from Congress.
- **April 18:** Freddie Mac agrees to pay a record \$3.8 million fine to the Federal Election Commission (FEC) for illegal fundraising raising activities most of which benefited Rep. Michael Oxley (R-OH), Chairman of the House Banking Committee which has jurisdiction over Freddie Mac.

May 2006

- **May 3:** House passes The Lobbying Accountability and Transparency Act (H.R. 4975) by a vote of 217-213. The bill contains almost none of the reforms outlined by House leadership on January 17, 2006.
- **May 3:** Businessman Vernon Jackson pleads to bribery of a public official and conspiracy to bribe a public official. Filings make clear that the unnamed Congressman is Rep. Jefferson.
- **May 8:** Neil Volz, an associate of Jack Abramoff and former Chief of Staff to Rep. Bob Ney (R-OH) who had stepped down as House Administration Committee Chairman, pleads guilty to conspiracy. The unnamed Congressman implicated in the agreement is unmistakably Rep. Ney.
- **May 20:** Rep. Jefferson's Capitol Hill offices are searched by the FBI.
- **May 23:** Senate does not accept House amendments to S. 2349 in H.R. 4975 and requests a House-Senate conference, appointing Senators Trent Lott (R-MS), Ted Stevens (R-AK), Mitch McConnell(R-KY), Chris Dodd (D-CT), and Daniel Inouye (D-HI) as conferees. No House conferees are named.

June 2006

- **June 9:** Rep. DeLay officially leaves Congress.



- **June 9:** House Speaker Hastert and Senate Majority Leader Bill Frist (R-TN) call for a completion of the Conference Report on lobbying and ethics legislation before the July 4th recess.
- **June 15:** House Democrats vote to strip Rep. Jefferson of his Ways and Means committee assignment while the federal bribery investigation continues. Members approve the move after Jefferson repeatedly refused to step aside.
- **June 20:** David Safavian, former Chief of Staff for the General Services Administration, is found guilty of four felony counts of lying and obstruction with regard to Jack Abramoff investigation.
- **June 22:** Senate Indian Affairs Committee releases the report “Gimme Five’ – Investigation of Tribal Lobbying Matters” summarizing its investigation of Jack Abramoff.
- **June 22:** Dissatisfied with the House- and Senate-passed bills, Representatives Shays and Meehan introduce the Ethics and Lobbying Reform Act of 2006 (H.R. 5677).

July 2006

- **July 7:** Rep. DeLay’s then-defunct ARMPAC pays an FEC penalty of \$115,000 for misstatements of financial activity, failure to report debts and obligations, and failure to properly allocate expenses between federal and non-federal accounts.
- **July 26:** House Speaker Hastert, Majority Leader John Boehner (R-OH) and House Rules Committee Chairman Dreier announce that the House will pursue earmark reform after the August recess if an agreement is not reached in conference on the lobbying bills.

August 2006

- **August 11:** Roger Stillwell of the U.S. Department of Interior pleads guilty to charges related to the Jack Abramoff scandal.

September 2006

- **September 14:** House passes limited earmark measure.
- **September 15:** Rep. Ney pleads guilty to conspiring to commit fraud, violating federal lobbying laws and making false statements.
- **September 29:** Rep. Mark Foley (R-FL) resigns amid allegations of inappropriate conduct with House Pages. House raise questions over a possible cover up by House leadership dating back to 2004.