

Washington, D.C.—Congressman Earl Blumenauer (D—Ore) issued the following statement today regarding H. Res. 648, a bill introduced by members of the Republican leadership to eliminate former members' access to the floor of the House of Representatives and to the members' gym. The legislation was approved today by a vote of 379 – 50. Blumenauer voted for the legislation.

“Allowing former Members of Congress in lobbying positions to visit the House floor and members' gym not only looks bad, but distorts the legislative process.”

“However, this effort is only a small step toward the comprehensive ethics reform that's needed. This Congress must work together to address recent abuses and ensure Members of Congress and the administration receive independent oversight. I regret that the legislation considered today is so far from what we really need and that it has taken a scandal to enact needed reform.”

Blumenauer also joined more than 150 House Democratic colleagues to introduce the “Honest Leadership and Open Government Act.” This bill represents an aggressive reform package to reverse Congressional Republican excesses and restore the public's trust. Included in this proposal: a ban on travel and gifts from lobbyists; reducing the unprecedented political access given to corporations and lobbying firms; ending the “dead of night” special interest provisions; requiring disclosure of earmarks; and extending the lobbying ban on former members of Congress from one year to two years.

Blumenauer is also a sponsor of another reform effort, H.R. 1642, the Obligation of Funds Transparency Act, introduced by Congressman Jeff Flake (R – Ariz.). This bill would mandate that agencies not fund “earmarks” unless they are contained in the actual language of a bill, rather than a bill report.