

## Fact Sheet for Grassroots Gag Bill

### **Bill Specifics:**

- The Meehan-Shays amendment would regulate paid efforts to encourage citizens to contact their elected representatives.
- By redefining what a "lobbying firm" is, the Meehan-Shays amendment would create a congressional database of individuals and organizations that keep the American people informed about important issues being considered in Washington.
- The new red tape would impact groups like Focus on the Family Action, but would exempt labor unions, corporations, and other membership organizations — as well as activist billionaires like George Soros.
- Groups affected by this bill would be required to submit quarterly reports to Congress, disclosing how much money was spent to update Americans about what their elected officials were doing.
- This brand of "lobbying reform" would not prevent events like the Abramoff lobbying scandal — but it *would* infringe on the rights of concerned citizens to make their voices heard in the halls of power.
- This amendment would stifle every aspect of the First Amendment by infringing on rights to freedom of speech, press, association/assembly, petitioning and religion.
- The Meehan-Shays amendment would impose penalties for failure to comply. While the exact details are unknown at this time, we can expect them to meet or exceed the penalties of Sec. 220 of S.1: up to \$200,000 in fines and up to 10 years in prison.

### **Bill Status:**

- The Meehan-Shays language can be amended into a broader lobby-reform bill at any time until a vote is taken on the House floor. The full vote by the House of Representatives is expected in the next two weeks.

**Take Action:**

1. Please call the Democrats on the House Judiciary Committee, which will consider the bill first. Urge the committee members to not include the Meehan-Shays amendment or any language that would restrict grassroots communication with Congress.

For a list of Judiciary Committee members and their contact information, see:

[http://www.focusaction.org/pdfs/dem\\_house\\_judiciary\\_committee.pdf](http://www.focusaction.org/pdfs/dem_house_judiciary_committee.pdf)

2. Visit CitizenLink ([www.CitizenLink.org](http://www.CitizenLink.org)) for updates on this bill and other ways you can make your voice heard.
3. Sign our "Freedom of Speech" petition to send a clear message to Congress that you want them to oppose any effort to stifle your ability to communicate with your elected representatives. You can sign the petition at: <http://www.focuspetitions.com/105/petition.asp>

**What to Say When You Call:**

- "Please oppose the Meehan-Shays amendment to the lobby-reform bill, or any other legislation that will hamper grassroots communications with Congress."
- "I'd like to urge my representative to oppose the lobby-reform bill **if** it includes the Meehan-Shays amendment or language that would make it more difficult for everyday Americans to communicate with Congress."

*Thank you for standing up in defense of our freedom of speech.*