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SCHAKOWSKY PLEDGES TO SUPPORT EFFORTS TO END INFLUENCE OF MONEY AND SPECIAL INTERESTS IN CONGRESS

WASHINGTON, DC - U.S. Representative Jan Schakowsky, a Chief Deputy Democratic Whip, today released the following statement following the unveiling of the Congressional Democrats' Honest Leadership and Open Government Act. In addition to supporting the Honest Leadership and Open Government Act, Representative Schakowsky is a co-sponsor of the Special Interest Lobbying and Ethics Accountability Act.

Representative Schakowsky's full statement is below:

The GOP leadership in Washington has operated under a clear principle: the U.S. Congress is for sale to the highest bidder. Money can buy access and legislation. At the expense of the American people, the Republican Party has served K Street lobbyists and their special interest agenda.

As energy prices skyrocketed to record heights last year, the Republicans passed two energy bills that provided billions of dollars in giveaways to oil and gas companies instead of bringing down prices and investing in new fuel sources.

Instead of creating a prescription drug benefit that holds down costs, Republicans produced a plan which prohibits Medicare from negotiating to bring down drug costs and lets drug companies and insurers earn big profits at the expense of seniors.

For more than a year, Democrats in the House and Senate have proposed significant lobbying and ethics reforms that would restore this body as the People's House instead of the house of special interests. In my first term in the Illinois legislature, I proposed an all-out ban on legislators accepting gifts from lobbyists. I still stand by that proposal today and will vigorously support all aggressive efforts to end the influence of money and special interests in Congress.

Today's Democratic package sends a strong message: the interests and well-being of the American people, not money and influence, must be our guide.