

January 3, 2007

Statement of Chairman Doc Hastings and Ranking Minority Member Howard L. Berman
Regarding Certain Conduct of Representative Curt Weldon

The Chairman and Ranking Minority Member, pursuant to Committee Rule 18(a), reviewed a trip taken by Rep. Curt Weldon and a number of his family members in January 2003. Prior to taking the trip, Rep. Weldon contacted the Committee to seek Committee guidance regarding whether the trip complied with gift rule provisions permitting a Member to accept travel and other benefits resulting from outside activities that are unrelated to official duties. Committee counsel advised Representative Weldon, through his staff, that he could not rely on that provision of the gift rule. Representative Weldon then sought a gift rule waiver from the Committee, but withdrew his request prior to receiving a formal written response from the Committee.

While Representative Weldon, through counsel, made a submission to us asserting that he and the trip sponsor concluded that the trip was unrelated to his official duties and was therefore not subject to certain gift rule limitations, we concluded that a number of factors compelled the conclusion that the trip was officially-connected. As a result, the payment by the trip sponsors for the attendance on the trip of several family members of Representative Weldon was prohibited by the gift rule, which at the time permitted such payment for only the Member's spouse or child. We therefore concluded in the middle of this year, and advised Representative Weldon, that he was required to repay to the donors certain expenses of that trip, which exceeded \$23,000.

Representative Weldon, through counsel, has stated his intent to make the repayment, and to notify us when the repayment has been made. We intend to monitor his efforts to repay the expenses and to make further public statements if necessary or appropriate.