



COMPTROLLER GENERAL OF THE UNITED STATES  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20548

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The Honorable Peter W. Rodino, Jr.  
Chairman, Committee on the Judiciary  
House of Representatives

Dear Mr. Chairman:

We understand the full Committee will consider H.R. 8494, entitled the "Public Disclosure of Lobbying Act of 1977," during the week of February 13, 1978. At your request, we previously furnished the Committee comments and reports on H.R. 8494, formerly H.R. 1180, and its predecessor in the 94th Congress, H.R. 15.

H.R. 8494 would replace the present lobbying disclosure law, the Federal Regulation of Lobbying Act (2 U.S.C. §261 et seq.), with a comprehensive new statute defining the organizations that must register and report as lobbyists and specifically describing the information that those organizations must disclose. The bill would provide the investigative and enforcement powers needed to make the proposed law effective. And the Comptroller General would be the official with primary responsibility for administering and, to a somewhat lesser extent, enforcing the new lobbying disclosure law.

The purpose of this letter is to confirm our earlier communications with the Committee in which we indicated that we are willing and able to perform the administrative and enforcement functions now contemplated by H.R. 8494, and to allay any concerns to the contrary. Although we have not actively solicited these responsibilities, we think the General Accounting Office, as an agency of the legislative branch of Government, is the most appropriate agency to administer and enforce a disclosure measure that covers lobbying on legislative matters. Finally, we consider the Comptroller General's enforcement duties under H.R. 8494 necessary to the effective administration of any new lobbying law.

Our active involvement in lobbying disclosure began nearly 4 years ago, when we commenced work on a report entitled, "the Federal Regulation of Lobbying Act--Difficulties in Enforcement and Administration." This report was issued April 2, 1975, and revealed the near total

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ineffectiveness of the present lobbying law--both from the standpoint of the law itself, its administration, and its enforcement by the Department of Justice. Since that time, members of my staff have worked closely with the congressional committees considering lobbying disclosure bills in an effort to assist in the formulation of a fair, workable, and enforceable lobbying law.

We hope these efforts and our commitment to an effective lobbying law have proved useful to the Committee. We will provide whatever additional assistance you might require, and we stand ready to administer and enforce the new law. We trust the information in this letter will be helpful to the Committee's efforts to reach agreement on the administration and enforcement provisions of H.R. 8494.

Sincerely yours,

(Signed) ELMER B. STAATS

Comptroller General  
of the United States

cc: The Honorable George C. Danielson  
Chairman, Subcommittee on Administrative  
Law and Governmental Relations  
House Committee on the Judiciary