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For immediate release:  
Wednesday, January 16, 2008

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## ***Chicago Sun-Times: Congressman Dan Lipinski can't answer ethical questions***

In response to *Chicago Sun-Times* columnist Carol Marin's Jan. 16 piece, "Lipinski inherits ethical questions," Democrat Mark Pera issued the following statement:

"In October we learned that Congressman Dan Lipinski's father — former Congressman turned lobbyist William O. Lipinski — was paying consulting fees to his son's federally paid staff through the All-American Eagle Fund, a state political fund that he had misrepresented to donors as a charitable fund.

I asked then in a formal statement that Congressman Lipinski's staff donate to an actual charity the consulting fees they had collected. We received no response.

In the U.S. Senate, Senate staffers are explicitly banned from interacting with the lobbyist relatives of Senators. I would never permit federal employees under my supervision to carry on a financial arrangement such as this one. If I am elected to office, I will sponsor legislation to make the House ethics rules as strict as the ones that apply to the Senate.

In the months that have passed, my campaign learned that the two Lipinskis, the Congressman and the lobbyist, actually share an office suite in a small building at 5838 S. Archer Ave. We also learned that the elder Lipinski's lobbying clients — such as United Airlines, Burlington-Northern-Santa Fe and the American Association of Railroads — and the clients' employees, have contributed great sums of money to his son's campaign fund.

These issues and others were raised during a spirited discussion with members of the *Sun-Times* editorial board.

As a resident of this district for 25 years, I appreciate the former Congressman's service to our communities. This matter between William Lipinski and Dan Lipinski is not about a father helping a son. It is about the interaction between a federal lobbyist and a U.S. Congressman.

This kind of behavior is inappropriate. What makes it worse is that Congressman Lipinski serves on the House Transportation Committee, which makes decisions that could help his father's clients. According to the *Washington Post*, the father is permitted to lobby that committee.

The solution is simple: Create a clear firewall between lobbying business and Congressional business. The Lipinskis could do that by moving one of the offices to a new location and requiring that their staff work for either the lobbyist Lipinski or the Congressman Lipinski, but not both.



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In addition, Congressman Lipinski should pledge not to accept campaign contributions from anyone associated with his father's lobbying business and he should recuse himself from considering any bill that his father is attempting to influence.

While the general public and the news media see the problem, Congressman Lipinski, as he demonstrated during the *Sun-Times*' endorsement interview session yesterday, does not see anything wrong with the current arrangement. In fact, what wasn't reported in the column is that he initially denied the fact that they shared the same office by parsing the meaning of the word "office."

The appearance of impropriety may be lost on the Congressman, but it's clear to me and it's one of the reasons I am running for Congress. On Feb. 5, we have an opportunity to change the face of politics in Chicago and Cook County. I am an independent Democrat and it's my goal to reform our broken political system. I hope you decide you join the many reformers who are already backing my campaign."

To learn more about our campaign, visit [www.PERAO8.com](http://www.PERAO8.com).

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