

Lobbying

Lobbyists use their time to persuade elected officials to support their agenda. The Internal Revenue Service defines lobbying as "asking policymakers to take a specific position on a specific piece of legislation, or that ask others to ask the same"

- ↪ Activities that seek to influence policies, possibly including public demonstrations and the filing of "friend of the court briefs", are termed as "advocacy".



A Brief History

The ability of individuals, groups, and corporations to lobby the government is protected by the right to petition in the First Amendment of the Constitution.

- ↳ Intense lobbying began 1869-1877, during time of President Grant
 - ↳ Most influential lobby's wanted railroad subsidies (in Reconstruction south) and a tariff on wool (in north)
- ↳ Progressive Era reformers (1880s-1920s) frequently attacked lobbyists as corrupting politics.
- ↳ In 1953, in a suit involving a congressional resolution authorizing a committee to investigate "all lobbying activities intended to influence, encourage, promote, or retard legislation," the Supreme Court narrowly construed "lobbying activities" to mean only "direct" lobbying (which the Court described as "representations made directly to the Congress, its members, or its committees"), and rejected a broader interpretation of "lobbying" out of First Amendment concerns.
 - ↳ Prior to the 1980s lawmakers rarely became lobbyists as the profession was generally considered 'tainted' and 'unworthy' for once-elected officials such as themselves; in addition lobbying firms and trade groups were leery of hiring former members of Congress because they were reputed to be 'lazy as lobbyists and unwilling to ask former colleagues for favors'.
 - ↳ New higher salaries, increasing demand and a greater turnover in Congress and a change in the control of the House all contributed to a change in attitude about the appropriateness of former elected officials becoming lobbyists from that time onwards. The route between these roles became known as the revolving door.

Lobbyists use time spent with legislators to explain the goals of the organizations which they represent, to clients they explain the obstacles elected officials face when dealing with issues. They are advocating for their agenda.

- ↪ In 2007 there were over 17,000 federal lobbyists in Washington. “K-Street”
- ↪ While many of these lobbyists are employed by lobbying and law firms and retain outside clients, others are employed by trade associations, companies, and state and local governments.
- In July 2005, Public Citizen published a report on K Street
 - ↪ The report analyzed hundreds of lobbyist registration documents filed in compliance with the Lobbying Disclosure Act and the Foreign Agents Registration Act.
 - ↪ It found that 1998-2005, 43% of the 198 members of Congress who left government to join private life have registered to lobby.
 - ↪ A case study: Bob Livingston, who stepped down as Speaker-elect and resigned his seat in 1999. In the 6 years since his resignation, his lobbying group grew into the 12th largest non-law lobbying firm, earning nearly \$40 million by the end of 2004.
 - ↪ During roughly the same time period, Livingston, his wife, and his two political action committees (PACs) contributed over \$500,000 to the PACs or campaign funds of various candidates.

Arguments in support for Lobbying

- Lobbying is protected by the 1st Amendment to the Constitution (“right to petition the government”)
 - ↳ The practice is an expression of freedom of speech
 - ↳ Lobbying gives voice to the opinions and desires of organized groups such as businesses, advocacy groups, and unions.
- Lobbyists often know more about a topic than those they lobby.
 - ↳ As such, they are experts and actually help the legislator.
- Positive examples of lobbying
 - ↳ NAACP successfully advanced civil rights legislation
 - ↳ Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD) strived to prevent underage drinking and pushes for stricter alcohol policy

Arguments against Lobbying

- Lobbyists are doing a job they are paid for, and have no moral or ethical tie to what they are advocating on behalf of.
- Much unregulated money in the system = corruption
- Lobbyists have brought about bad things
 - ↳ Oil drilling without environmental regulations, for instance

How to become a Lobbyist?

- There are no licensing or certification requirements, but lobbyists are required to register with the state and federal governments. Most lobbyists have college degrees.
 - ↳ Many are former elected officials.
 - ↳ Others have degrees in political science, journalism, law, communications, public relations or economics

Lobbying is a profession full of people who have changed careers, since relevant knowledge and experience are all you really need to become a lobbyist.

Connections = influence = demand for your Lobbying services

How much do Lobbyists make? In DC: %72K - \$250k

↳ Typical salary falls between \$93k – \$159k

↳ COMPARISON: Oregon Governor makes \$98k;

↳ 3,500 state workers made more than Kate Brown in 2021

Medium salary for US governors is \$129k.

Mayor of Portland OR makes \$143k

Medford OR Superintendent salary: \$259k

Oregon football coach makes \$4 million/year

Oregon XC/TF coach makes \$450k/year

↳ Elsewhere (not DC): \$38k – \$100k