

CRS Report for Congress

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Interest Groups and Lobbyists: Sources of Information

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Summary

Interest groups, including those who actively lobby, continue to play a role in the American legislative process. After years of congressional efforts to improve disclosure of interest groups, the Lobbying Disclosure Act (LDA) of 1995 (P.L. 104-65) and the Lobbying Disclosure Technical Amendments Act of 1997 (P.L. 105-166) were signed into law on December 19, 1995, and April 6, 1998, respectively. Both laws seek greater disclosure of interest groups' activities and more accuracy in reporting their spending. Information on lobbyist registrations and on interest groups in general is available from a variety of online and printed sources, including files available for public inspection.

This report provides a list of directories and online services that offer background on the interest groups and lobbyists who focus on legislation in Washington. Many of the works listed are available to congressional staff in the CRS reading room and research centers and to constituents in large public and research libraries. Also included is a list of governmental and nongovernmental offices that maintain files on lobby groups, their registrations and finances, and other similar details. Web addresses are given where available. This report will be updated yearly.

Printed Listings of Registered Lobbyists

Political Finance. Hedgesville, WV, Amward Publications, Inc. Monthly.

This publication provides analysis of judicial opinions and of legislative and interpretive rulings which may have an impact on administering and enforcing campaign finance and lobbying laws and regulations. A free recent edition of *Political Finance* is available on the Web (see below).

Publications Listing Groups by Area of Interest

The Capital Source. Washington, National Journal Group, Inc. Semiannual (spring and fall).

This directory provides coverage of government, media, and corporate officials. Its sections on interest groups, trade and professional associations, and political consulting and lobbying firms list many Washington-based lobbying groups, with contact information and executive directors' names.

Encyclopedia of Associations. Farmington Hills, MI, Gale Group. Annual.

This three-volume listing of nonprofit American membership organizations of national scope is arranged by broad categories. It gives details on the location, size, objectives, and other aspects of some 22,000 trade associations, professional societies, interest groups, labor unions, and fraternal and patriotic organizations. There are name and keyword indexes.

Government Affairs Yellow Book: Who's Who in Government Affairs. Washington, Leadership Directories, Inc. Semiannual.

This directory profiles more than 19,000 government affairs experts who represent the interests of businesses, professional organizations, interest groups, and government institutions before federal, state, and local governments. Private organizations are listed alphabetically. Federal government organizations are listed in two alphabets, first by department, then by agency. State, city, and county government sections are organized alphabetically by state, city, and county names, respectively. Each listing gives the organization's name; address; contact; organizational description; any political action committee; the Washington, D.C., office's address and telephone number; lobbying firms representing the group on the federal, state, and municipal levels; and other pertinent details. Subject, geographic, personnel, and master indexes are provided.

Legal Times: Law and Lobbying in the Nation's Capital. Washington, *Legal Times*, part of American Lawyer Media, Inc. Weekly.

This newspaper has articles on Washington's law and lobbying communities. In June 2000, *Legal Times* launched its biweekly newsletter, *Influence: The Business of Lobbying*. It focuses on the business of lobbying, ranging from firm assignments and earnings to business strategies and mergers. *Influence* can be found on the Web as *Influence Online* (see below).

National Trade and Professional Associations of the United States. Washington, Columbia Books, Inc. Annual.

This directory lists more than 7,600 trade associations, labor unions, professional societies, and similar national groups. Many have offices in Washington, D.C., that lobby on federal legislation of interest to their members. Among the details provided for each group are its annual budget, a brief history, and dates and sites of its annual conventions. It contains subject, geographic, budget, executive, and acronym indexes.

Public Interest Profiles. Washington, Congressional Quarterly, Inc. Biennial.

This selective guide to more than 200 public interest and policy groups has been compiled by the Foundation for Public Affairs, which maintains a national, nonpartisan clearinghouse on public interest groups and corporate public affairs programs cooperatively with the Public Affairs Council. Each group's in-depth profile includes basic details, as well as ratings of its effectiveness and political orientation. Profiles are grouped into 12 subject categories.

Washington [year]. Washington, Columbia Books, Inc. Annual.

This work provides information on nearly 5,000 businesses, government agencies, national associations, international and national affairs organizations, law firms, and cultural organizations in the Washington, D.C., area. It is arranged by broad subject categories, with brief listings of key officials in each entry. It also has a "National Affairs" section, which is a selective list of nonprofit activist organizations and special interest lobbying groups in the Washington area. *Washington 2002* is due out in summer 2002.

Washington Information Directory. Washington, Congressional Quarterly, Inc. Annual.

This guide to Washington, D.C.-area governmental and private organizations is arranged in 20 broad subject areas. Under each area, pertinent federal departments and agencies, congressional committees, and private nonprofit organizations are listed.

Washington Representatives. Washington, Columbia Books, Inc. Annual.

This is a list of Washington representatives of U.S. trade associations, professional societies, labor unions, corporations, and various special interest and public interest groups. It has four sections: law, lobbying, and public relations firms; companies, associations, and interest groups; federal agencies with contacts for their legislative affairs offices; and all of the people named in the first three sections. It has four indexes: clients by subject/industry; foreign clients by country; PACs (political action committees); and legislative areas. Some 17,000 persons are listed, including trade and professional association officers, corporate public affairs officers, special interest group representatives, and lawyers and consultants who are registered lobbyists.

Selected Electronic Resources

New lobby registrations were listed in the *Congressional Record* until January 1996. That practice ended after the enactment of the Lobbying Disclosure Act of 1995 (LDA), which no longer required new registrations to be published in the *Record*. However, information on pre-1996 registrations is still available through several online services providing historical access to the *Congressional Record*. Brief descriptions of selected Internet sources are provided in this section, with pertinent contact information.

American League of Lobbyists

[<http://www.alldc.org>]
P.O. Box 30005
Alexandria, VA 22310
(703) 960-3011

The American League of Lobbyists is a membership group of registered lobbyists and other professionals interested in lobbying. It works to improve the public image of lobbyists, monitors lobby legislation, and conducts educational programs on the role of lobbyists.

Center for Responsive Politics (CRP)

[<http://www.opensecrets.org/lobbyists/index.asp>]
1101 14th Street, N.W., Suite 1030
Washington, D.C. 20005-5635
(202) 857-0044

This Internet site provides access to *Influence, Inc.*, CRP's annual lobbying report. It gives year-to-year comparisons of lobbying spending on Capitol Hill, background on the issue, and lists of top spenders, and includes the political spending patterns of various industries. It also gives an industry-by-industry spending breakdown and has a searchable database of individual lobbyists, lobbying firms, and client businesses.

GPO Access

[http://www.access.gpo.gov/su_docs]
GPO Access User Support Team
Superintendent of Documents
U.S. Government Printing Office
732 North Capitol Street, N.W., Mail Stop: SDE
Washington, D.C. 20401
(202) 512-1530; main GPO telephone (888) 293-6498

GPO Access provides the *Congressional Record Index*, which can be used to search for pre-1996 lobbyist registrations. Also available are the full texts of many legislative resources, including the *Congressional Record*.

Influence Online

[<http://www.influenceonline.net>]
1730 M Street, N.W., Suite 800
Washington, D.C. 20036
(202) 457-0686

This is the online version of *Influence: The Business of Lobbying*, published by *Legal Times*. It has detailed lobby firm profiles and same-day reporting on new lobby registrations. Several portions of this electronic resource are available only to subscribers, such as a biweekly newsletter, 24-hour access to *Influence Online*, and e-mail alerts on the latest registrations and breaking news.

LexisNexis Group

[<http://www.lexisnexis.com>]
P.O. Box 933
Dayton, OH 45401-0933
(800) 227-9597

LEXIS-NEXIS subscribers have access to full-text coverage of the *Congressional Record*, which can be searched for lobbyist registrations prior to 1996.

Political Finance

[<http://www.politicalfinance.com>]
Amward Publications, Inc.
P.O. Box 1500
Hedgesville, WV 25427
(304) 264-8160

A free recent edition of this monthly newsletter is available on the Web site.

THOMAS

[<http://thomas.loc.gov>]

Initiated by the leadership of the 104th Congress in 1989, THOMAS is a legislative and congressional information system produced by the Library of Congress with information from the House and Senate and available to the public on the World Wide Web. Among its contents is the full text from 1989 to the present of the *Congressional Record*, in which periodic listings of lobbyist registrations were printed before 1996.

Other Sources of Information on Lobbyists

The Clerk of the House of Representatives and the Secretary of the Senate receive and maintain the lobby registrations and semiannual yearly financial reports of those filing as lobbyists under the LDA and its predecessor, the Federal Regulation of Lobbying Act of 1946. The House records are only available in paper form for public inspection at the location given below. The House Web site provides information about the records but does not provide access to the records themselves. In the 107th Congress, H. Res. 48 has been introduced. It would require the Clerk of the House of Representatives to make all lobbying registrations and reports filed with the Clerk under the LDA available on the Internet for public access and retrieval.

Clerk of the House of Representatives

[<http://clerkweb.house.gov/pd/lobby.htm>]
Legislative Resource Center
B106 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515-0515
(202) 226-5200

S. Res. 21 has been introduced in the 107th Congress to require the Secretary of the Senate's Office of Public Records to make lobbyist reports available on the Internet for public access and retrieval. Recently, the Office of Public Records initiated online access

to let the public view filings received by the Office. The initial release of the program includes all documents received after January 1, 1999.

Secretary of the Senate

[<http://sopr.senate.gov>]

Office of Public Records

232 Hart Senate Office Building

Washington, D.C. 20510-7116

(202) 224-0758

The Department of Justice's Foreign Agents Registration Act (FARA) Unit receives registrations and financial information of agents representing foreign governments or political parties in the United States. The records can be inspected by the public at this location:

FARA Registration Unit Public Office

[<http://www.usdoj.gov/criminal/fara>]

U.S. Department of Justice

FARA Registration Unit

1400 New York Avenue, N.W., Suite 100

Washington, D.C. 20005

(202) 514-1145