

Hello and welcome to Rules for Effective Lobbying, a ten-part Advocacy in Practice mini-series. I'm Ray LeBov. I've worked in and around California's capitol for more than 40 years, first in the Legislature as committee counsel for 17 years, and then as a lobbyist for the past 25 years. I also created and run the Capitol Seminars legislative advocacy training program which is hosted at the McGeorge School of Law in Sacramento, California.

Today we'll be discussing the importance of not ignoring the minority party. There are so many reasons supporting this rule: common courtesy, you may need their votes and not realize it, you will need them on some future issue, they may raise issues that you may not have thought of, no one likes to be ignored.

One particular focal point that I really need to stress involves the role of committee consultants. Every committee in the Legislature has a staff of consultants, which are considered to be consultants to the full committee, but mostly their role is to work significantly with the chair of the committee and the majority party members of the committee.

Every committee also has a minority party consultant and their role is quite different. Obviously, their role is primarily to advise and work with the minority party members of the committee. But let's look at one further aspect of what these two committee consultants do. They do analyses of every bill that's in committee.

Now, on the committee staff, consultants who are primarily serving the majority party, there always are multiple consultants. The minority party, there's always just a single consultant. So you can imagine that their bill load is quite different, and, of course, that's reflected in the analysis they do.

Minority party analysis is much more concise than the analysis that the committee staff does because they're doing three or four, or even more times the number of bills. But significantly, their analyses are different in a number of other very important ways.

Let's look at the majority party, or the committee consultant. Their analyses are public record; they are supposed to be objective and non-partisan - which of course we know is in the eye of the beholder sometimes. As distinguished from that, the minority consultant does an analysis that in fact is private; it's not a public record. It's subjective. It's partisan, even to the point where it makes a recommendation for the minority party members of the committee - either to support, oppose, or not recommendation. And in virtually every instance, the minority members of the party pay great deference to the recommendation that the minority party consultant has made.

So, we've talked at other times that the committee staff is your best friend in Sacramento. Well, right behind them is the minority party staff to the committee for a lot of reasons. We're already focusing on the analysis that they write. Well, coming up to a committee hearing, you're having a dialogue with the minority party consultant, as well as the committee staff, about the analyses that they're writing. So, we've mentioned, of

course, it's private. It's not a public record. But, that doesn't mean they can't show it to you. It doesn't mean can't tell you what's in it. It doesn't mean that they can't give you an opportunity to discuss what they're position is and you might be able to give them arguments to change them from opposition to neutral - for example.

But there's a whole lot of other things that that dialogue can be extremely helpful. Maybe they have ideas that will make your bill a better bill. Maybe just discussing issues that their members have with the bill will mean at least you're not going to be blindsided in committee with being the first time that you've actually heard their arguments and you have no idea [how] to respond to them. So, I could go on and list a whole host of other reasons why it's important to develop such a strong relationship, and strong respectful relationship, with the minority staff to the committee, but that's just one example to add to our laundry list that we have earlier about the importance of not ignoring minority party members.

That's all for this episode of Rules of Effective Lobbying. Tune in next time. Until then, I'm Ray LeBov, and thanks for tuning in.