

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 will be discussing another of my rules for lobbying - never speak on behalf of another entity or purport to represent its position without specific, clear, definitive, precise authorization. Violating this rule potentially can get you into more trouble than any other. Obviously, intentionally misrepresenting someone else's position is unspeakably bad, and in most instances it's likely to be a career ender. Let me repeat that for emphasis. Intentionally misrepresenting someone else's position is likely to be a career ender.

Inadvertent misrepresentation is almost as bad, and its potential is what gives rise to this rule. Imagine that you're testifying at a committee hearing and are asked what position on the bill in question has been taken by Entity X, which you do not represent and which is not present at the hearing. Suppose further that based on your good faith belief, you state that Entity X supports the bill and as a result, the bill passes the committee. In fact, Entity X opposed the bill. Likewise, suppose your inaccurate statement that Entity X opposes the bill results in the committee defeating the bill. I can't help thinking of the Southwest Airlines ad tagline, "Wanna get away?"

Not convinced? Think about it this way. How would you react if you represented Entity X in the preceding hypothetical?

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