

Hi, this is Chris Micheli with the Sacramento governmental relations firm of Aprea & Micheli and an adjunct professor at McGeorge School of Law. Today's podcast is to provide an introduction to the lobbying profession. Lobbying is basically advocating on behalf of a client or a cause, generally for payment, or even on a volunteer basis, in order to attempt to influence official action by either legislative or executive branch officials and their staff. Individuals or groups of individuals lobby elected and appointed officials and their staff in an attempt to influence those officials' decisions.

Lobbying at a professional level is done primarily by paid advocates who are employed by companies, associations, or even individuals to advocate on their behalf. Lobbying occurs with personal visits, including office meetings, committee testimony, even telephone conversations. Lobbying also occurs through written communications such as research reports, advocacy letters, grassroots contacts and even the news media. Lobbying can be at times challenging, fascinating, intellectually interesting and at other times perhaps mundane. Some have described lobbying activities as being either direct or indirect lobbying.

Direct lobbying is often defined as meeting in person with legislators and staff and providing them with information relevant to their decision making. Indirect lobbying is usually defined as grassroots advocacy. It's intended to result in contacting elected and appointed officials and their staff by their constituents and other interest groups. Indirect lobbying also involves use of the news media, whether that is free or earned media. The lobbyists who are successful can benefit from the media attention for or against a public policy issue or even a particular piece of legislation or regulation. Generating that positive or negative press coverage is the difficult aspect even for an experienced advocate.

Generally, lobbyists do not require any particular license, certification or degree to engage in the lobbying profession. Most though are experienced in the legislative process and one or more public policy areas. Lobbyists do need to register with a relevant state agency that regulates them. Most lobbyists have college degrees. Many have worked previously in the Legislature or in a state agency. Regardless of who may employ them lobbyists share the same goal of needing to persuade elected officials and their staff regarding legislation and educating them about the interests of their clients.

Working with a coalition is often a productive course of action for a lobbyist in order to be successful in his or her advocacy efforts on behalf of their clients. Hearing from a collective voice lends credibility and increases one's chances of success. In addition, the profession of lobbying involves more than just advocacy. It also includes researching and analyzing legislative or regulatory proposals monitoring and reporting on legislative and executive branch developments attending legislative or regulatory hearings, working with coalitions impacted by the same or similar issues, educating government officials and others on the implications of proposed changes to statutes or regulations, and communicating broadly or narrowly to various audiences throughout the legislative or regulatory processes.

Almost every interest has a lobbying organization. Heck, even lobbyists have their own organizations at both the federal and state levels. While many folks only think of lobbyists as paid professionals, there are also many volunteer lobbyists, whether

paid or volunteer the US Constitution specifies the right to petition government for the redress of grievances under the First Amendment to the Constitution.

As protected speech lobbying will always have an important role in governmental deliberations. In fact, the lobbying profession is a necessary and appropriate part of the political process and a part of our democracy. Decisions made by the federal, state and local governments impact individuals, and groups, and organizations, those who are impacted appropriately want to influence those individuals who make decisions impacting these groups and organizations. Decision-makers want to understand the impacts of their decisions. As a result, lobbyists are needed to communicate the impacts of those decisions.

Ultimately, our public officials must make informed decisions and they must consider information from both sides of a public policy issue. A just and equitable decision will be attained once all the relevant information is provided to these decision-makers and that is the essence of the lobbying profession. Thanks for joining us on this introduction to the lobbying profession.