THE LOBBY CHANNEL

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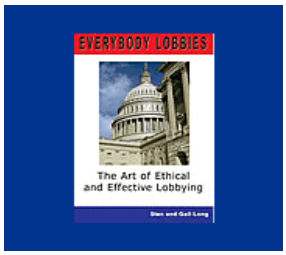
NOVEMBER. 2004, VOL 1. ISSUE 2



the Lobbyist

NEWSLETTER

IT's positively amazing how closely the good intentions and solid goals of the Lobby Channel align themselves with current news and happenings of our political and social world.

editor's note:

We would like to share some of these events with you and see if you agree that the tasks assumed by lobbyists can be quite important and of real consequence to many people, both in and out of government.

The other question is how many of our readers really look seriously upon taking an active and lucrative part in the process.

IN THE NEXT FEW PARAGRAPHS, we are going to be quite frank and maybe a little surprising because we have to face up to the fact that all lobbying is **NOT** carried out in particularly desirable or ethical ways.

Why? because some actions cloaked in the **garment of "lobbying**" are nothing short of "influence peddling," casting a dark and unacceptable shadow upon the legitimate exercise of the right of free speech guaranteed by our Constitution.

The Lobby Channel was formed to stress a proper and important emphasis upon lobbyists to strongly uphold the ethical and honest practices of one of (if not the oldest) professions in the world.

One of the most interesting and challenging events in the field of lobbying concerns the manner which Congress approaches the general subject of lobbying.

Many members are quick to disavow any connection with a "lobbyist". The same member is often found accepting campaign funds from the same sources. The records also portray a surprising number of retired congress people, as well as **other high placed ex public officials** who are swift in becoming a lobbying consultant. They backward or hesitate to use their former position and the contacts made while in office, to pursue and usually secure highly paid lobbying assignments.

Actually, there are few more experienced in the lobbying field than seasoned public officials themselves. Remember one thing, once they have been a member of Congress, they retain perks not enjoyed by other hard working lobbyists, such as the privilege of going on the floor of the House or Senate at will, and of course the open door camaraderie with former fellow members. This cannot be justifiably

criticized but it also does not need to be overlooked.

The basic rule in lobbying is to be sure your actions and those you represent are squeaky clean and will not come back to haunt you or the profession you represent.

Let's take a look at a case in Washington as reported recently in the Los Angeles Times. You decide how this would rate on the "ethics scale".

The government of **El Salvador** wanted help **extending** immigration benefits to its citizens in the U.S. **Lobbyist Alberto Cardenas**, described as a star of Republican fundraising, was retained. The lobbyist was confident that a "round of consultations and meetings with Bush administration officials would get them the extension of time they wanted.

IN LESS THAN TWO WEEKS EL SALVADOR GOT JUST THAT.

Cardenas opened an international lobbying firm in washington boasting of his political credentials. His firm represents five Latin American and Caribbean governments that were aware of his political connections.

The Times quoted him as saying,
"Everyone I've talked to was familiar with my involvement in the president's campaign in Florida. Obviously my political involvement over the years provided us with the access we needed."

Our Stand

The recounting of this incident is only one of dozens of similar cases. It is not to imply that anything of a dishonest nature though more than a few eyebrows are raised. It does emphasize the the road to access, paved with a record of political contributions is the surest, and sometimes only way to a destination sought by both the honorable and the dishonorable. We've all heard of the "fixer" who boasts of "connections" with the important powers that be. There is little difference between the 'fixer' and today's influence peddler except that **access** has been paid for well in advance. This, when realized by the public, gives vent to wholesale condemnation of the lobbyist **alone.** What is seldom admitted however, it is the equal partner in public office that plays the accompanying note. They say it isn't over till the fat lady sings --

Well, in big time lobbying, it doesn't even begin until all considerations are fully met.

The other day Texas Congressman Tom DeLay commented that if you want to play in his game, you have to play by his rules.

Quoting Fred Wertheimer on lobbying:

"One of the things this shows is that foreign governments that used to work country to country now believe they have to function through the Washington influence money system in order to be heard in Washington" said Fred Wertheimer, president of Democracy 21, non partisan campaign watchdog group. "And that's an extremely damaging comment on the way influence is bought and sold in Washington these days."

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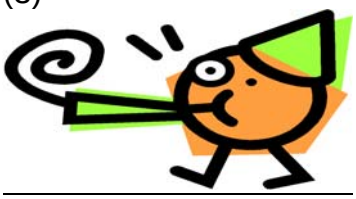

A VERY GOOD BEGINNING for

THE LOBBYIST NEWSLETTER

The reception to our first Newsletter , while not exactly earthshaking, (didn't even make Amazon's best seller list) was, nevertheless, encouraging enough for us to get busy once again.

Frankly, some of the comments, and yes, some of the criticisms , indicated more than ever our hope that **Everybody Lobbies** readers as well as others interested in politics become active participants in lobbying and thus will enjoy the Newsletter.

Particularly, If you have recently begun a lobbying career, let us know and if there is any way we can help you, please be assured we will be happy to do so.

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