

LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR

governor often assumes the responsibilities generally assigned to that position, including keeper of records, recorder of rules and regulations, publisher of state constitutions and statutes, and officer in charge of the validation of official records (often referred to as the “keeper of the state seal”).

Diversity in the Lieutenant Governorship

Like most state offices, the lieutenant governorship is more diverse than ever before. Offices that were once the exclusive domain of white males are increasingly being held by white women and, to a lesser degree, by people of color. The lieutenant governorship has been less elusive for minority group members than the governorship. Indeed, as of 2008, only two African Americans (both men) have been elected as state governors. Women fare better at these top two executive spots. For instance, in 2004, there were 9 female governors and 17 female lieutenant governors. At the same time, 4 minority group members held the office of lieutenant governor: James Aiona of Hawai'i (Chinese, Portuguese, and Hawaiian descent), Cruz Bustamante of California (Latino), Michael S. Steele of Maryland (African American), and Jennette Bradley of Ohio, who is the first female African-American to hold the position of lieutenant governor in the United States. Additionally, African-American David Paterson, the former lieutenant governor of New York, was installed as governor in early 2008 when Governor Eliot Spitzer, whom he served under, resigned in the wake of scandal. The lieutenant governorship will most likely become increasingly diverse in the coming years. Since the lieutenant governor position is often a political stepping-stone, the presence of minorities and women in this office bodes well for the possibility that more members of minority groups will be elected to higher offices in states and in the federal government.

Historically, even some people holding the office have viewed lieutenant governors as weak and unimportant; such an assessment is no longer valid in most states. In addition to the many roles these officials serve within state government, lieutenant governors also often serve as a link between the public and their state govern-

ments. Lieutenant governors are making the most of newly developed information technologies to forge connections with the citizenry and respond to their concerns. This informational or constituency service role, in addition to the legislative leadership role served by most lieutenant governors, raises the visibility of lieutenant governors and may bolster their positions as many of them attempt to advance to the governorship.

—Margaret R. Ferguson

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LOBBYING

Lobbying is the practice of contacting government officials in an attempt to influence their decisions. Lobbying is carried out by individuals known as lobbyists, who may be either unpaid activists with an interest in an issue or professionals paid to advocate on behalf of an association, private organization, or government entity. Lobbyists may make their case privately by meeting with officials (“inside lobbying”) or publicly by holding rallies, advertising in the media, or encouraging other citizens to contact governmental officials (“outside lobbying”). In common usage, the term *lobbying* generally refers to inside lobbying conducted by professional lobbyists who are attempting to influence legislative outcomes.

Lobbying is an essential part of the policy process in all state capitals. Lobbyists provide information to government officials on the benefits and costs of existing and proposed policies. They also supply officials with sensitive information about the inner workings of the policy process, including intelligence about the plans and strategies of other

government officials and interest groups. In addition, lobbyists send signals to officials about which issues are most salient among their constituents, which may be helpful in assessing the electoral consequences of policy decisions. If lobbyists provide these kinds of information more effectively and efficiently than their competitors, then they can expect to have influence over the policy process.

While lobbyists offer a broad spectrum of perspectives on most debates, not all interests are represented fairly or equally. For example, teachers' unions and large businesses are almost always well represented on state policy matters, while the interests of single-parent families, the homeless, and immigrants are usually underrepresented in state debates. Indeed, lobbyists are often paid substantial salaries precisely because of their ability to win concessions on behalf of their clients and at the expense of less well-represented constituencies.

Organization and Power

The most populous interest communities are in retail and business services (20% of all state lobbyists), manufacturing and production (17%), health (14%), and finance, insurance, and real estate (13%). However, the exact composition of lobbying communities varies from state to state because of differences in state economies and political cultures. For example, teacher's unions are particularly strong in New Jersey where the New Jersey Education Association is rated as one of the most effective lobbying organizations in the state. In Texas, meanwhile, the chemical industry is a powerful lobbying force, largely because it constitutes about one-third of the state's economy.

Lobbying strength depends not only on economics, but also on political organization. When one group becomes organized, its opponents are moved to mobilize as well. For example, in many states (such as Iowa, Oregon, and New Mexico), nurse anesthetists have lobbied for legislation to waive physician supervision of their work. In response, anesthesiologists have attempted to block these changes and maintain their prerogatives in this area. Thus, action by one interest group usually leads to organized reactions by its opponents. Yet political

strength also depends on the ability of interest groups to work together. When interest groups coordinate their lobbying through informal networks or formal coalitions they are often more effective than when they lobby alone.

Regulation

Lobbying is protected by the U.S. Constitution under the First Amendment's guarantees of freedom of speech and the right to petition the government. Nonetheless, lobbying is generally regarded as an unseemly activity because lobbyists are perceived by the public at large as advocates for special interests at the expense of the public interest. In an effort to curb abuses, states regulate lobbying through registration and reporting requirements, as well as through limitations or prohibitions on gifts from lobbyists to government officials.

Partly as a result of a series of well-publicized scandals, almost all states strengthened their lobbying ethics laws during the 1990s and 2000s. Increases in regulation were especially notable in several southern states, such as South Carolina, Kentucky, Mississippi, and Florida, which passed substantially stronger ethics laws during the 1990s. South Carolina, for example, went from having one of the weakest regimes of lobbying regulation in 1990 to implementing what was arguably the toughest regime in the nation in the 2000s. Penalties for violating lobbying laws vary markedly from state to state, ranging from misdemeanors that carry fines to felony charges that can lead to prison time. States such as Kentucky, New York, Michigan, and Pennsylvania level relatively strict punishments on violators, while states such as South Dakota, Virginia, Wyoming, and North Dakota are relatively lenient with offenders.

Women as Lobbyists

Lobbying remains one of the last bastions of traditional "Good Ol' Boy" networks in many state capitals. Women have been slow to enter into state lobbying arenas, at least relative to their progress in gaining elected office. Historically, women were almost completely excluded from state lobbying, but the profession started to become more

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receptive to women in the 1980s. By the mid-1990s, women constituted roughly one-quarter of the lobbyists at the state level. Women remain especially underrepresented among contract lobbyists (who work for many clients), as opposed to in-house lobbyists (who work within one organization and serve only that client). Female lobbyists also tend to have fewer years of experience than their male counterparts.

The influx of female lobbyists has contributed to changes in state lobbying environments, partly because of the ways that they differ from male lobbyists. For example, female lobbyists tend to be more ideologically liberal than male lobbyists and they are more likely than men to lobby for religious, charitable, and citizens' groups. As women approach parity with men in state capitals, they are likely to continue to raise new agendas and offer unique perspectives on policy issues.

Lobbyists and lobbying will probably continue to grow at the state level in the 2000s and 2010s along with the expansion of state economies and populations. Inevitable scandals will likely prompt state legislatures to tighten ethics laws even further, including more requirements for detailed reporting and harsher penalties for offenders. In addition, "Good Ol' Boy" networks may be approaching their last hurrah, for women are becoming a more accepted and dominating force in state capitals. Despite its importance to the state policymaking process, lobbying is unlikely to cease being a suspect activity any time soon.

—Michael T. Heaney

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LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Local governments are subdivisions of the states, and they provide governance for substate regions and localities. Local governments are often called the governments closest to the people, and they provide for most direct public services, including police and fire protection, emergency assistance, gas, electricity, water, sewers, sanitation, cable television, education, health care, cemeteries, roads, streets, bridges, public transportation, ports, courts, jails, social welfare, restaurant inspections, and weights and measures enforcement (e.g., gas pumps). Although local governments provide for such services, they rarely produce all these services. They may, for example, provide franchises for one or more cable TV companies to operate within their boundaries, and many municipalities contract with private firms to collect trash. Local governments are also arenas for citizen participation and direct contact with public officials.

Local government is not mentioned in the U.S. Constitution. The people of each state establish their own local government system through their state constitution. The legislature then enacts laws covering the details of local government and authorizing the creation of specific local governments. Local governments have no inherent powers, nor do citizens possess an inherent right of local self-government. Local governments obtain their forms of government and their powers from the states, which can reduce or revoke local powers, take over a local government, or even abolish specific local governments (although this rarely occurs). The state also mandates that local governments perform certain functions and provide