

**From:** [webmaster@assembly.ab.ca](mailto:webmaster@assembly.ab.ca)  
**To:** [ResourceStewardship Committee](#)  
**Subject:** Lobbyists Act - RESPONSE September 20, 2016 12:20 PM  
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PART A: Submitter Contact Information

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City/Town: Edmonton  
Registered? No

PART B:

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1. Are you currently or have you previously been a registered lobbyist in Alberta?  
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No

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2. In which jurisdiction(s) elsewhere in Canada, if any, are you currently (or were previously) a registered lobbyist?  
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NONE

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3. Feedback  
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Thank you for this opportunity to provide some input.

For the past 33 years I have operated an international practice that provides management consulting advice to the largest law firms in the world. I joke with friends that while I proudly reside in Canada, I don't work in Canada. Most of my work takes my throughout the U.S., and I have also had the privilege of traveling to and working in some 47 different countries.

These days many of my American friends and clients will overtly declare that if either Clinton or Trump is elected, depending on which of these two they feel most acrimony toward, they plan on moving to Canada. While I laugh, my experience has confirmed for me, that it really doesn't matter which of those two is ultimately elected in the U.S., because the country is not and will not ever in the foreseeable future, be run by the Republicans or by the Democrats. Sadly, it is run by the Lobbyists.

I do not think that any Albertan coming before your distinguished Committee will have spent time, as I have, working intimately, on the inside, with one of the top ten largest Lobby firms in Washington DC. I will confess that upon returning home from a week there some four years ago, I told my spouse that no matter how hard I tried I could not wash the stench off and that I would never, under any circumstances or for any amount of money, repeat that experience. And when that same firm called again, about a year ago, I politely declined their offer to return. You see Washington DC has transitioned into a "government of the money, for the money, and by the money."

My rude assertions are not only from first hand experience and from watching the behavior of politicians obsessed with fundraising, but can also be verified by investigative journalists and New York Times best selling authors who have written such exposes as Extortion: How Politicians Extract Your Money, Buy Votes and Line Their Own

Pockets by Peter Schweizer, Dark Money by Jane Mayer and many others.

For my part, back in the early 80's I served as the General Manager of the Alberta Chamber of Commerce for a number of years. In that capacity I facilitated the development, codification, and compilation of Policy recommendations coming from the business community all throughout the province for presentation to our Alberta Government Premier and the various Ministers – in a specially constituted meeting that was held once per year, at the invitation of the Government. In those days, business people in various towns and cities would submit their policy ideas at a local level, debate and finally vote for those they felt most important. Those policy ideas would then come before the provincial Chamber where over two days representatives from the various local Chambers would debate, argue and ultimately vote to adopt specific policies that were then brought before the Alberta Government for their consideration.

It was during my years of serving as General Manager that one of those annual Alberta Government policy presentation meetings resulted in Premier Peter Lougheed being given a message from the Alberta business community that he did not like, causing him to abruptly leave the meeting and a subsequent uproar in the media across the province. While these situations may occur the Provincial Government knew that those Policy recommendations came from protracted and debated discussions all across the province and were not the thinking of one powerful individual or one organization looking out for only their best interests.

Which raises the question: How is it in the public interest to have individual lobby consultants? Who is really being served by their presence?

We all know full well that they only represent the interests of individuals or specific organizations looking to influence decisions in their own selfish best interests. We also know that corporations, unions and individual citizens concerned with an issue can certainly join or create an organization of others who share that same concern and make a collective representation to Government. Concurrently, any Government Minister or Department, concerned for the views of Albertans can easily organize town hall meetings across the Province to directly solicit the views of Albertans.

SO, WHY DO WE NEED LOBBYISTS AT ALL?

What we do need is to be very careful that we learn the lessons apparent from our neighbors in the U.S. where it now takes a \$1 Billion to run for President, only to then be unable to really make any progress on issues of importance because of the power of Lobbyists!

PART C: HOW DID YOU HEAR ABOUT THIS REVIEW?

- Newspaper (Print)
- Newspaper (Online)
- Facebook
- Twitter
- Other