

Definition of a Lobbyist

Having defined lobbying activity as attempting to influence government decisions of either a legislative or administrative nature it is now appropriate to define who is required to register. We have concluded that paid lobbyists should be required to register. This naturally would include those who are retained to act on behalf of third parties to advance the views of their clients to government be they foreign or domestic clients. By foreign we mean foreign nationals or foreign governments and those who represent them excluding duly accredited diplomatic or consular officers of a foreign government or members of their staff.

Employees of non-governmental organizations who spend a substantial portion of their time communicating with government with the goal being to exert influence would also be considered to be paid lobbyists. We also wish to make it clear that we do not consider the members and representatives of the various levels of government in Canada and their staffs to be lobbyists when they are dealing with the federal government.

We have concluded that groups or individuals who are paid to organize mass mailing or advertising campaigns to disseminate political advocacy material designed to influence public opinion on matters of government policy or public concern should also be classified as lobbyists and be required to register under the system which we propose.

We have struggled with the question of whether unpaid lobbyists should be required to register as well as paid lobbyists. For example, should the single interest group which forms to deal with one particular matter and whose participants are volunteers be required to register? They are involved for a limited time in attempting to influence public policy. Would registration hurt the ability of these groups to form and achieve their goals?