

United States Senate

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

OFFICE OF PUBLIC RECORDS

How much disclosure is enough?

THE FEDERAL EXPERIENCE IN THE US

Our goal with any public disclosure program is to be plain enough to allow the average 12 year old to go online, research, and write a report on a particular policy matter (*with limited adult guidance*).

- I. History of the role of lobbying and the Federal Statute
 - A. First Amendment to Constitution
 - B. US political marketplace is unlike parliamentary democracies
 - C. US decision makers often benefit from outside lens
 - D. Transparency results from the choreography of interrelated laws

II. Lobbying Disclosure Act of 1995, as amended

A. Key Definitions

1. Lobbyist
2. Lobbying Contact
3. Lobbying Activity
4. Registrant

B. Registration

1. Two kinds of registrants
2. Financial thresholds

C. Reporting

1. Filing schedule
2. Core disclosures

D. Administration: Co-Administration with Clerk of House

1. Advice
2. Forms & Automation
3. Compliance
4. Public Interface

III. 2007 Senate and House Legislation

A. Communalities

1. Quarterly reporting
2. Halving financial thresholds for registration & reporting
3. Mandatory e-filing
4. Mandatory web site for disclosure
5. Campaign finance law intersection
6. Doubled civil penalties for non compliance
7. New web site for outside paid travel
8. Coalition disclosure

B. Senate bill – S. 1

1. Revolving door
2. Identification of state & local lobbying at federal level
3. Web disclosure of number of referrals to US Attorney
4. FARA web site (under Department of Justice)
5. Our office audited annually by GAO
6. Mandatory ethics training
7. Suggests code of conduct for lobbyists/self-policing

C. House bill – H.R. 2316

1. Certification that no gifts were given
2. Web posting of House members' Public Financial Disclosure reports

IV. Senate Office of Public Records Lobbying Disclosure Web site

A. Redesign based upon COGEL user group suggestions

B. Navigating the site

- 1. Boolean searches**
- 2. Searchable versus downloadable**
- 3. Screen shots**

V. Looking to the future

A. More timely release

B. More accurate reporting

C. Integration of 2007 new requirements

D. A downloadable data base

ATTACHMENT 1

SECRETARY OF THE SENATE FEDERAL LOBBYING WEB SITE

U.S. Senate: Legislation | Records Home | Lobbying Disclosure | Microsoft Internet Explorer

File Edit View Favorites Tools Help

Back Forward Stop Home Search Favorites

Address http://www.senate.gov/pagelayout/legislative/g_three_sections_with_teasers/lobbyingdisc.htm Go

Google Go Bookmarks 23 blocked Check Look for Map AutoFill Send to Settings

Lobbying Disclosure

The Lobbying Disclosure Act of 1995 established criteria for determining whether an organization or firm should register their employees as lobbyists. Lobbyists register with the Secretary of the Senate Office of Public Records, which makes these registrations available for public inspection.

New: [Ten Ways to Avoid a Correction Letter](#)

Registration and Filing

- **Filing Deadlines** are August 14* (for January 1 - June 30 mid-year reports); February 14* (for July 1 - December 31 year-end reports).
*Or the next business day if the date falls on a holiday or a weekend.
- The **Lobbying Forms and Electronic Filing Center** has registration and semi-annual filing forms for lobbyists.
- **Senate Lobbying Disclosure Records**, updated daily, can be viewed by the public.
- The **Registrant/Client List of Senate Identification Numbers** is updated twice a month.

Lobbying Disclosure Act Guidance

The Lobbying Disclosure Act Guidance provides information on interpretation of the law by the Secretary of the Senate and the Clerk of the House.

- [Section 1: Introduction](#)
- [Section 2: What is New?](#)
- [Section 3: Definitions](#)
- [Section 4: Lobbying Registration](#)
- [Section 5: Special Registration Circumstances](#)
- [Section 6: Semiannual Reporting of Lobbying Activities](#)
- [Section 7: Termination](#)
- [Section 8: Relationship of LDA to Other Statutes](#)
- [Section 9: Public Availability](#)
- [Section 10: Review and Compliance](#)
- [Section 11: Penalties](#)

Contact Information

Office of Public Records
232 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510-7110
(202) 224-0758
Click the Go button to e-mail us.

Registration Thresholds

Notice regarding January 1, 2005 increase in registration thresholds.

Lobbying Disclosure Act

View the Lobbying Disclosure Act of 1995 and the 1998 technical corrections.
[Lobbying Disclosure Act \(pdf\)](#)
[1998 Technical Corrections \(pdf\)](#)

Virtual Reference Desk

Additional information on lobbying is available on the Virtual Reference Desk.

http://www.senate.gov/legislative/common/generic/lobby_top_ten.htm Internet

ATTACHMENT 2
SECRETARY OF THE SENATE FEDERAL LOBBYING WEB SITE

CONDUCTING A SEARCH OF THE DATA BASE

The screenshot shows a Microsoft Internet Explorer browser window. The address bar contains the URL: `http://sopr.senate.gov/cgi-wir/m_ocr_viewer.exe?DdFn=0`. The browser's menu bar includes File, Edit, View, Favorites, Tools, and Help. The toolbar contains icons for Back, Forward, Stop, Home, Search, Favorites, and other functions. Below the toolbar is a Google search bar and a status bar showing "23 blocked" items and other browser settings.

The main content area of the browser displays a web page with the following elements:

- A logo of an eagle with wings spread, positioned to the left of a "Main Menu" button.
- A header section with the text "Criteria For Query".
- A sub-header: "Choose one or more of the following criteria to build your query".
- A note: "(Use your Ctrl key to select more than one criterion.)".
- A list of search criteria:
 - Registrant Name
 - Client Name
 - Lobbyist Name
 - Amount Reported
 - Date Posted
 - Issue Code
 - Report Type
 - Government Entity Contacted
 - Client Country
 - Client State
 - Filing Period
 - Foreign Entity Country
 - Filing Year
- A "GO!" button at the bottom of the list.

The browser's status bar at the bottom shows "Done" on the left and "Internet" on the right.