



EVERYBODY LOBBIES



LOBBYING TODAY

- a. How it's shaping up in Washington
- b. Statements from the Speaker and Majority Leader
- c. Why some lawmakers may try to minimize reform
- d. Will the public remain silent, if so, how long?
- e. Affect lawmakers in both parties in the Nov. elections?
- f. Latest declarations of congressional intent

IS THERE AN UPSIDE TO THE LOBBYING QUESTION?

- a. For the first time the public shows more than casual interest
- b. It takes two to play the "game of influence peddling"
- c. Ethical lobbyists smeared by a few unscrupulous individuals
- d. This is our opportunity to set the record straight

LOBBYING TODAY -

These days the atmosphere in Washington is **highly charged to say the least**. House members and staff alike display mixed emotions and take varying positions about which way to move. They worry about pending November elections, loss of coveted gifts and privileges, hosted lunches and dinners, all expense paid sports events and of course, the controversial luxury trips you have been hearing about.

Other House members emphasize that contributions or in-kind advantages they receive came to them directly from Indian tribes and they didn't really know Jack Abramhoff or had only met him on one or two occasions.

Staff members are ordered to refuse lunch or dinner invitations, accept no gifts, take no trips,

Members failed to include themselves in that restriction.

As far as some Representatives are concerned, just disavowing any connection with Abramhoff should be enough. If they can do that without passing major changes or reforms in the law, perhaps they can still hang on to the financial and material benefits and privileges to which they have become accustomed.

Indicted Rep. Tom Delay, was replaced by Rep. Roy Blunt (R-Mo., who now has been replaced by John Boehner (pronounced Bayner) of Ohio. Rep. Boehner is frequently criticized for his close working

relationship with large lobby firms on K. St. Upon being elected majority leader he is edging away from new laws of enforcement and suggesting a closer **disclosure of lobbying contacts** instead of outright ban on gifts. He is, understandably, sensitive about banning luxury "fact finding trips! Not surprising since records show that Mr. Boehner has taken quite a few. From a list of members taking trips paid for by special interest groups, a few of his trips include: four to Scottsdale, AZ, six to Boca Raton, Florida, and various times to Rome, Paris and Italy.

Mr. Boehner questions the lobby reforms advanced by House Speaker Dennis Hastert (Ill.) He is joined by other party leaders who are mainly interested in achieving a way to separate lawmakers from lobbyists. In other words, in the public's mind,, lay all the blame that may arise from their activities on lobbyists. Clever?

Here is what **former republican house speaker Newt Gingrich** said to a Rotary Club audience in Washington recently "I think it's very important to understand that this is not just one person (Abramhoff), either. And it isn't about lobbyist corruption either. You can't have a corrupt lobbyist unless you have a corrupt member of Congress or a corrupt staff involved. This is a team effort. I'll tell you what this city's first reaction is going to be. Lawmakers will "turn the scandal into lobbyist bashing, so the same system on the Hill that is unhealthy will protect itself by passing a narrowly drawn anti-lobbyist provision while the

same people go to the same fundraisers to raise the same money with the same cronies in the same manner.

The Abramhoff scandal has to be seen as part of a much larger and deeper problem. Let me quote Lord Acton's famous phrase: **Power tends to corrupt, and absolute power corrupts absolutely.**" End of Gingrich quote

Doesn't that rather say it all?

IS THERE AN UPSIDE TO THE LOBBYIST QUESTION?

For the first time the general public is not particularly surprised but undoubtedly beginning to look at the Congress and the Administration with a more skeptical eye. Question is: Will the public buy the congressman's statement that **"it's all the lobbyist's fault - not ours!**

Lobbying is both a legitimate and essential part of this country's Democratic process. Decisions on every level of government affect people, companies, and institutions. The lobbyist arms himself with information, data which he can back up with research and background data, and provides that to the lawmaker. He answers questions and offers to seek out anything which may prove relative to the issue at hand. That is all a lobbyist is supposed to do. Unfortunately, all too often he is called upon to support, materially and financially, the future campaign of the law

maker he is assisting. These are just the facts of life. What we are seeing in Abramhoff's disgusting use of his power as a lobbyist, is a regrettable magnification of what lobbyists sometimes encounter.

Some one has to step up and clear the record. Perhaps the subject of these charges can never have his crimes expunged from the record but that doesn't mean the lobbying industry cannot take the necessary steps to make the public aware of the true value of a competent, honest, ethical lobbyist's effort.

To those of you who are reading or have read our book on lobbying, Everybody Lobbies, we would invite you to send us your thoughts and ideas on how an organization for that purpose should be formed. Any other ideas and suggestions, comments or criticisms would be very much appreciated.

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