

The effect of lobbying on public opinion



The Effect of Lobbying on Public Opinion (Administrative Law) of School

Introduction Public opinion counts a lot these days, especially with the rapid spread of information by the use of social networking sites via the Internet.

We had seen how governments are toppled by their citizens much more easily despite having autocratic leaderships. Even the most powerful person in the most powerful country in the world relies on the expert advice of a public relations counsel. The important thing for any American president is to have a positive public opinion on his policies and the administration in general. This is so he can carry out his mandate more easily and even more importantly, win a re-election if needed by implementing his programs.

Discussion Public relations is the practice of having a positive public opinion for oneself. This means projecting a public image of goodwill that essentially entails using the right communications tool between a person or an organization and his or its various publics or stakeholders. A big extent is the use of the right public relations tools to inform and more crucially, shape opinion. It involves influencing the public process of debates, discussions and consultations in order to have good or favorable public opinion. In today's modern society, there is widespread use of lobbyists who are either volunteers or some people paid to speak in one's behalf as an advocate. In this regard, part of lobbying is the intent of influencing the legislative process by having favorable laws enacted in relation to a person's or group's special interests. Before a bill becomes a law, drafts are passed around with their justifications and aimed to judge a public reaction (OECD, 2009, p. 160). The public process – lobbyists are required to meet legislators for several times. In some cases, lobbying brings about good results as it raises public awareness of certain issues. A good example are recent laws

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regarding the prevalence and dangers of school bullying which had not been noticed before until some students committed suicides due to bullying. In this instance, the parents are now re-assured their kids are safe at school because of the advocacy or lobbying by a parent of a bullying victim to introduce new laws or to persuade a legislator to vote in a certain way to approve the proposed bill against school bullying (Walston-Dunham, 2008, p. 63). On the other hand, the legislator has gotten a good idea of how public opinion stands on certain issues as relayed to him or her by the lobbyist or advocacy groups. This assumes of course that lobbying is done in an ethical and transparent manner to all sides of an issue and everything related to it are openly discussed. In general, lobbyists are very well informed (knowledgeable) on the subject or topic of a proposed legislation and its potential effects, especially on the private sector. Lobbyists have an influence on the public process, depending on which side they are on and their priorities. Lobbyists and Public Opinion – while advocates argue that lobbyists in fact are reflective of public opinion, critics point out that lobbyists often represent a very narrow special interest. It is further pointed out they do not represent the majority of the people and exert undue influences. Lobbyists can gather vital information and give valuable insights to legislators without which it is sometimes virtually impossible to make an informed decision on all the bills up for a vote. Conclusion If the lobbyist merely represents a very narrow interest group, then it is not a good way to exercise democracy and it would be much better to just conduct public hearings. However, a role of lobbying is inherent and part of the American political process (Woodstock, 2002, p. 89). It is considered a legitimate process and a good way for ordinary citizens to participate in the policy

development and in refining any proposed legislation (Homan, 2007, p. 410).

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