

Resolved: In the United States, organized political lobbying does more harm than good. 1

Pro Case

In this round, it is important to define two terms 1. Political lobbyist, and 2. Organized political lobbying. According to Princeton, a lobbyist is, “someone who is employed to persuade legislators to vote for legislation that favors the lobbyist's employer” and lobbying is the act of attempting to influence the government. Today, we will prove that organized political lobbying does more harm than good because 1. It undermines and subverts the democratic process and 2. Although the practice is open to all, it is used by the few.

Contention 1: Organized political lobbying causes more harm than good because it undermines the democratic process.

Ideally, lobbying would be an institution available for all Americans to participate in, but reality indicates the opposite. Lobbyists, since they are concerned only with passing legislation favorable to them are thus only interested in promoting their agendas. The University of Wisconsin has shown that lobbyists use legislators as political “proxies” to pass their political agendas. That is, the legislator becomes the indirect voice of the lobbyist. According to Adelaide University and the Center for Tobacco control, lobbyists influence legislators through campaign contributions, “gifts” and charitable donations to legislators’ pet programs. Lobbying mandates an even greater extension of this tactic, however, and that tactic is corruption. The Institute for the Study of Labor exposed this trend when it demonstrated that political lobbying and corruption were intrinsically linked. A study conducted by Richard Damania, a lobbying expert, stated, “A growing body of evidence suggests that political corruption is ... closely linked to the lobbying activities of special interest groups.” Although this corruption can be difficult to identify because of its clandestine nature, anecdotal evidence abounds. In 2007 former defense contractor John Wilkes bribed representative Randy Cunningham with \$100,000 dollars in

Resolved: In the United States, organized political lobbying does more harm than good. 2

exchange for a \$20 million earmark which he received. Then again, Wilkes bribed Cunningham with \$700,000 and this time received an \$80 million defense contract for his now defunct company. The whole process involved prostitutes, liquor, and private jets. At the end of it all, \$1 million were laundered, and Cunningham was convicted of receiving more than \$2.4 million in bribes. This is only one of the many examples of the corruption that plagues the American lobbying system, and thus, since lobbying encourages the undemocratic use of corruption and bribery, it does more harm than good.

Contention 2: Although lobbying is open to the many, it is used only by the few.

Today, my opponents will try to paint a picture of democratic harmony lobbying creates. Although that is the theoretical purpose of the institution, reality once again paints a different picture. According to a study conducted by Professor Damania of Adelaide University, the more money a lobbyist group has, the more it can influence the government. OpenSecrets.org, a website dedicated solely to monitoring lobbyists, has confirmed this conclusion. This creates a trend whereby richer factions are able to promote their agendas at the expense of the less fortunates'. The oil industry, specifically the Exxon Mobile lobby, is an excellent example of this. Tyler Slocum of Cleveland news stated that, "they're in a much better position than other industries to draw upon financial resources for their lobbying effort." Exxon's political actions evince this, since Exxon used political lobbying to convince the Senate to lift a drilling ban, repeal expansions of renewable energy, and lift taxes on the oil industry that resulted in keeping America dependent on foreign oil. The Center for Tobacco Control analyzed 32 million tobacco lobby documents and arrived at the same conclusion. The tobacco lobby deliberately used legislators as proxies – virtually bribing them – and was able to reduce tobacco company taxes, repeal anti-smoking policies, and defeat clean air legislation. The most damning evidence of all,

Resolved: In the United States, organized political lobbying does more harm than good. 3

however, is that tobacco corporations deliberately used lobbyists to stop the American Stop Smoking Intervention Study, or ASSIST. ASSIST was a program that helped smokers quit their habit, yet was removed because of the influence tobacco corporations have in government.

In conclusion, my opponents may attempt/(may have attempted) to convince you that today's debate comes down to a question of democracy, but in reality, it comes down to something much simpler. It comes down the difference between theory and practice, and although in theory, organized political lobbying may be good, in practice it does far more harm than good. Thank you.