

PROFILES AND STEREOTYPES OF LOBBYISTS IN OKLAHOMA

JAMES A. DAVIS
Oklahoma State University
with
SAI METLA
JOSH HERLAN
Oklahoma State University

The authors surveyed registered Oklahoma lobbyists by mail during the winter, spring, and summer of 2006. The results were used to develop a preliminary picture of lobbyists and lobbying in Oklahoma. The responding lobbyists evinced political attitudes typical of the Oklahoma political culture of several years ago. Their incomes are lower than lobbyists in other states although their education levels are at least as high. The proportions of minority and female lobbyists are lower than in the population and electorate. They do compare favorably with lobbyists in other states. Lobbyists are often stereotyped as too numerous, too moneyed, too powerful, and too little concerned with the public interest. Oklahoma lobbyists are not as numerous relative to legislators as lobbyists are in most other states. By several attitudinal indicators, they do not see lobbyists generally as too powerful. However, Oklahoma lobbyists are increasingly concerned about the power of money in lobbying and about professional ethics.

Introduction: The authors mailed four waves of questionnaires to 369 lobbyists registered with the Oklahoma Ethics Commission during the winter, spring, and summer of 2006. The number of questionnaires completed and returned was 163 (i.e., 44%). The results should add some definition about lobbying in Oklahoma – a topic too little addressed. For instance, in what ways do Oklahoma lobbyists reflect the political culture of Oklahoma? How do Oklahoma lobbyists compare demographically with lobbyists in other states? Do Oklahoma lobbyists fit public stereotypes of lobbyists – i.e., too many, too moneyed, too powerful and too negligent of the public interest?

OKLAHOMA LOBBYISTS AND THE POLITICAL CULTURE OF OKLAHOMA

Partisanship: The percentages of lobbyists placing themselves in one of seven partisan categories in our survey are as follows: *Strong Democrat* – 28 percent, *Not-So-Strong Democrat* – 17 percent, *Independent, but leaning Democratic* – 6 percent, *pure Independent (no party leanings)* – 7 percent, *Independent, but leaning Republican* – 10 percent, *Not-So-Strong Republican* – 10 percent, *Strong Republican* – 21 percent. If “strong” and “not-so-strong” self-descriptions are added together for Democratic as well as for Republican lobbyists and if “leaners” are included with the Independents, there are three sorts of identifiers rather than seven. In that case, a little less than half (i.e., 45%) of the respondent/lobbyists consider themselves Democrats, a little less than one-fourth (23%) Independent and a little less than one-third (31%) would be Republican.

Similarly, in the mid-1980s, almost half of a survey of 915 Oklahomans identified themselves as Democratic. A little less than one-quarter were Independents and a little more than one-quarter Republican (Wright 1985). These are fairly close to the percentages given above for present day Oklahoma lobbyists (D = 45%, I = 23%, R = 31%) except that present day lobbyists are slightly less Democratic and a little more Republican than the Oklahoma voters of 1985.

Exit polls of 1,577 Oklahoma voters in the 2004 presidential elections revealed significantly fewer self-identified Democrats (i.e., 40%) than in the past. There were also proportionally fewer Independents (16%)

but significantly more Republicans (i.e., 43%) (CNN.com. 2004). Thus, today's Oklahoma lobbyists seem to be somewhere between the state electorate of the mid-eighties and the electorate of today in their partisanship. Lobbyists have been lobbying in Oklahoma for an average of over eleven years. Perhaps their years of experience in lobbying - often a second career - help explain their resemblance to the electorate's partisanship patterns of a decade or so ago.

Many observers believe there is a lasting shift away from Democratic allegiance toward independency and the Republicans in the Oklahoma electorate. OSU undergraduate Tim O'Neil found evidence of that in a survey of 202 Oklahoma presidential voters (O'Neil 2006). These observers explain the Oklahoma House going Republican in 2004 as symptomatic of this shift. As noted, about 45 percent of the sample considered themselves to be Democrats as compared with 31 percent who identified with the Republican Party. So Democrats allegiants are more numerous among lobbyists than are Republican allegiants.

Strong partisanship among the Democratic lobbyists may indicate retrenchment within a political culture marked otherwise by a shift toward the Republican Party. It may be that some weak Democrats and Democratic leaners are becoming Republican as power in the legislature shifts toward the latter. It is likely that Republican House leaders would like to see some of the Democratic lobbyists replaced by Republican lobbyists. In any case, Democratic partisanship is still prevalent among Oklahoma lobbyists although, as with the electorate, this is probably changing toward the Republicans.

Ideology: In the mid-80s about 45 percent of 888 Oklahomans willing to characterize their ideology saw themselves as conservative. Nearly 40 percent saw themselves as moderate and only about 15 percent as liberals (Wright 1985). By 2004, 43 percent of a sample of 1,577 Oklahoma presidential voters described themselves as conservative, 44 percent as moderates, and 13 percent as liberals. (CNN.com.2004). The O'Neil poll of 202 Oklahoma presidential voters in 2004 employed two measures of ideology. One was based on views of social issues and the other economic issues. The results of O'Neal's measures of economic and social ideologies were very similar. About 44 to 45 percent saw themselves as either "very conservative" or

“somewhat conservative.” Some 46 to 48 percent saw themselves as in the middle (i.e., “slightly conservative,” “middle-of-the-road” or “slightly liberal”). But only 6 to 9 percent of the Oklahoma electorate in the O’Neal sample saw themselves as “somewhat liberal” or “very liberal” (O’Neal 2006). If these three surveys suggest any change over time, it is that there is a shift in the Oklahoma electorate toward the ideological middle and away from liberalism to accompany the shift away from the Democrats toward the Republicans.

How in keeping with the electorate are Oklahoma lobbyists ideologically? About 38 percent of the lobbyists identified themselves as either “very conservative” or “somewhat conservative.” Another 46 percent saw themselves in the ideological middle (i.e., slightly conservative, middle of the road or slightly liberal). About 16 percent of the lobbyists saw themselves as either somewhat or very liberal. So both Oklahoma lobbyists (CNN.com.2004) and Oklahoma voters (O’Neal 2006) are predominantly moderate to conservative although lobbyists are somewhat less conservative and slightly more liberal than the electorate. Perhaps these qualifications reflect the greater frequency of Democratic partisanship among lobbyists.

OKLAHOMA LOBBYISTS AND LOBBYISTS IN OTHER STATES

Socio-Economic and Educational Profiles: How well off are Oklahoma lobbyists compared with lobbyists in other states? The typical annual income from lobbying in Oklahoma is \$86,525 (Coleman 2006). Whereas that sounds high to most Oklahomans, it is low when compared with lobbyists in other states. In fact, Oklahoma ranks 44th among the fifty states in the average yearly income for lobbyists (Coleman 2006). Thus, Oklahoma’s lobbyists are affluent but not as well off as lobbyists in most other states.

Most lobbyists across the country are college graduates (American League of Lobbyists 2003, The Catholic University of America 2005). Similarly, less than 2 percent of the lobbyists responding to our questionnaire had no more than a high school education. Another 5 percent had completed no more than two years of college or had an Associate degree from a community college. The highest degree for

46.5 percent was a Bachelors degree. The same percentage (46.5%) had either a Masters degree (31.4%) or a Doctorate (5.0%) or a law degree (10.1%) We can conclude from this pattern that the level of education for Oklahoma lobbyists is at least that of their peers across the states.

Age, Gender and Racial/Ethnic Profiles: It is difficult to establish an average age for lobbyists at either the state or federal levels because it is difficult to find “typical” lobbyists. (Mahood 1990:53) Lobbying is usually a second career (Berry, 1997:103) although lobbyists may continue to lobby for ten to twenty years (Rosenthal 2001:33).

Registered lobbyists in our study of Oklahoma averaged a little more than fifty-one years of age. They averaged a little over eleven years in lobbying. So they, like lobbyists elsewhere (Mahood 1990:5), tend to be in the latter half of their careers. State lobbyists here, as elsewhere, are often at the age at which most people hit their full stride or peak professionally – i.e., early fifties.

Fifty-five percent of a sample of 23,949 Oklahoma voters from the 2004 presidential election were female, and forty-five percent were male. (Oklahoma Voter File: OKSW.Dbf2005) About 72 percent of the lobbyist/respondents in the current study were male. Lobbying has traditionally been a “man’s world” across the United States (Berry 1997: 108-109). In the early 1980s only 22 percent of Washington lobbyists were found to be women (Schlozman 1990:339-382). Similarly, in the early 1990s, between 20 and 25 percent of the lobbyists in Northeastern or Western states were female although the average was estimated to be somewhat lower in Southern states (i.e., 12 – 15%) (Thomas and Hrebentar 1992:162). By 2001, the proportion of state lobbyists who were female was estimated to be up to about 20 percent (Rosenthal 2001:26). Thus, the fact that 28 percent of the lobbyists in this study were female indicates that Oklahoma compares fairly well with other states. Moreover, in keeping with observations elsewhere (Berry 1997:10), 80 percent of the Oklahoma lobbyists felt the trend toward more female (and minority) lobbyists was clearly and increasingly evident these days.

It is true that minorities are still underrepresented in lobbying across the states. (Rosenthal 2001:26) and Oklahoma is no exception. In the current study, there were three Native-American respondent/lobbyists

(i.e. 2%) whereas Native-Americans comprise about 5 percent of the Oklahoma electorate (O'Neil 2006:17) and about 8 percent of the state's population (Statemaster.com 2006).

Likewise, there was only one Afro-American lobbyist (i.e., .6%) in this sample. The Afro-American percentage of the 2004 presidential electorate was 2 percent according to one source (O'Neil 2006:17) although the percentage in the population is higher (i.e., 7.6%) (Statemaster.com 2006). So the percentages of Native and African-American lobbyists are somewhat lower than their percentages in the state's electorate and lower still when compared with the general Oklahoma population. However, the small numbers of minority lobbyists in a sample of only 163 respondents reduce the reliability of these percentages.

PUBLIC STEREOTYPES AND OKLAHOMA LOBBYISTS

Special interests lobbyists are often seen as too numerous, too moneyed, and too powerful (Evote.com 2006). Moreover, the public sometimes questions the ethics of lobbyists (www.thehill.com 2006). What does the evidence from Oklahoma and other states say about these stereotypes?

Are There Too Many Lobbyists Per Legislator in Oklahoma?: The number of lobbyists relative to legislators in Oklahoma is modest when compared with other states. In 2004, there were 440 lobbyists (whether registered or not) in Oklahoma (Rawls, "Hired Guns" 2005). There were 149 Oklahoma legislators, yielding a ratio of about 3 to 1. In our sample of registered lobbyists, there are 369 lobbyists to 149 legislators. That is a ratio of 2.6 lobbyists to each legislator. Only seven states had fewer lobbyists per legislators. These include New Hampshire, Mississippi, North Dakota, Pennsylvania, Vermont and Maine (Rawls, "Hired Guns" 2005). Of these, only Pennsylvania would be considered a large state. The rest are no larger than Oklahoma.

As might be expected, more populous states generally have more lobbyists per legislator given the greater number and variety of interests in larger and more heterogeneous states. The three states with the most lobbyists per legislator were large - i.e., New York (18:1), Florida (13:1) and Illinois (12:1) (Rawls, "Hired Guns" 2005). However, there are

exceptions to this generalization of more lobbyists per legislator in populous states. For instance, California, the nation's largest state, has only 1,032 lobbyists to 120 state legislators – a ratio of 9:1. Pennsylvania, a large state with a large legislature (i.e., 253), has a ratio of only 2 lobbyists per legislator (Rawls, “Hired Guns” 2005).

The average size of state legislatures across the United States is 148 (Rawls, “Hired Guns” 2005). Oklahoma is right at the norm with 149 legislators (48 in the Senate and 101 in the House). In Washington, D.C., the current ratio of lobbyists to members of the U.S. Congress is about 9:1 (Office of the Clerk of the U.S. House 2006). In 2004, there was an average of a little more than five lobbyists per state legislator across the fifty states. Although the size of the Oklahoma legislature is at the norm, there are fewer Oklahoma lobbyists per legislator – i.e., 3:1 (Rawls, “Hired Guns” 2005). While the Oklahoma average of three lobbyists per legislator does not seem to be a lot less than the national norm of 5 to 1, Oklahoma had 440 lobbyists in 2004 as compared with the norm of 785 across the states. Moreover, Oklahoma's lobbyist-to-legislator ratio is about 39th in the nation (Rawls, “Hired Guns” 2005).

If Oklahoma lobbyists are not as numerous relative to legislators as lobbyists in other states, do they feel too crowded relative to one another? Do they think the field is so crowded that the efficacy of individual lobbyists is compromised? The answer from Oklahoma lobbyists is “no.” Slightly more than one in four lobbyists (i.e., 26%) agreed with the statement “lobbying in Oklahoma is so crowded and competitive that one lobbyist can't make much difference anymore.” On the other hand, about three in four (74%) agreed “the competition has not changed much – neither has the individual lobbyist's effectiveness.” So lobbyists in Oklahoma do not appear to overwhelm legislators with their numbers as compared to other states. Moreover, they do not feel so crowded that individual effectiveness is reduced.

Is There Too Much Money in Oklahoma Lobbying?: As noted earlier, Oklahoma lobbyists make a good living when compared to Oklahomans generally but are on the lower end of the scale when compared to lobbyists in other states (i.e., 44th) (Coleman 2006). But how much do they spend lobbying as compared with lobbyists in other states? Oklahoma lobbyists reported spending a total of only \$125,000 on lobbying in 2004. Of the 42 states for which figures were reported,

only North Dakota lobbyists spent less (Rawls, “State Lobby Totals” 2005). However, Oklahoma lobbyists are not required to report such major expenditures as campaign contributions or many sorts of catered events (Ethics Commission State of Oklahoma 2006). Campaign contributions from interest groups are reported by the candidates that receive them in Oklahoma. As a result, Oklahoma lobbyists appear not to be big spenders when compared to lobbyists in other states. However, that conclusion has to be seriously qualified by the exclusion of major lobbying expenditures such as campaign donations in Oklahoma.

Given such disparities and the resulting reservations about comparability, can any guidance be gained from attitudinal data supplied by the Oklahoma lobbyists themselves? It might be borne in mind that lobbyist/respondents in this study were not asked about their own expenditures but about expenditures for Oklahoma lobbyists generally. The reason for that was to encourage detachment and reduce subjectivity in their observations.

So, how big a part does money play in lobbying according to Oklahoma lobbyists? Only one in five agreed with the statement “Lobbying is becoming so high-dollar in Oklahoma that some interests can’t afford to play anymore” whereas four in five felt “Lobbying takes money but old or even new interests can still play if they’ve got other political resources.” **Table 1** shows how money compares to other resources such as information, communication, constituency resources and leadership.

As may be seen, nearly sixty percent of the lobbyist/respondents said they “very often” saw reliance on “money - political fund-raising and contributions to campaigns and other political activities” these days. “Communication - formal and informal communications with decision-makers and opinion leaders as well as the public and constituents” is a distant second. “Communication” is followed closely by “leadership and access - number of contacts, political credibility, and skills in persuasion, organizing, motivating, framing issues, public relations, timing, strategizing, etc.” and “information - use of legal research or analysis, technical expertise, public policy research and strategic/tactical insights, etc.”

According to lobbyists, the political resource least relied upon was “constituency resources – their votes, unity, reputation inside and outside government, affluence, available time and education levels.”

TABLE 1

Reliance by Lobbyists on Various Political Resources

Reliance on such political resources as . . .	Rarely If Ever	Less Often	More Often	Very Often
..information – i.e., use of legal research or analysis, technical expertise, public policy research and strategic/tactical insights, etc.	3.8 % N = 6	12.0 % N = 19	50.6 % N = 80	33.5 % N = 53
..money – i.e., political fund-raising and contributions to campaigns and other political activities, etc.	1.2 % N = 2	8.9 % N = 14	30.4 % N = 48	59.4 % N = 94
..communication - formal and informal communications with decision-makers and opinion leaders as well as the public and constituents.	0.0 % N = 0	4.4 % N = 7	52.5 % N = 83	43.0 % N = 68
..constituency resources – i.e., their votes, unity, reputation inside and outside government, affluence, available time and education levels.	4.6 % N = 7	26.1 % N = 40	47.1 % N = 72	22.2 % N = 34
..leadership and access - i.e., number of contacts, political credibility, and skills in persuasion, organizing, motivating, framing issues, public relations, timing, strategizing, etc.	0.0 % N = 0	9.0 % N = 14	54.0 % N = 84	37.0 % N = 58

SOURCE: Author's calculations using response data from questionnaire.

Are Oklahoma Lobbyists Too Powerful?: By several indicators, Oklahoma lobbyists would give a qualified “no” to that question although their assessments are somewhat mixed. Again, to lessen the problem of subjectivity, lobbyists were asked about lobbying techniques evident across the field of lobbying - not about their own use of particular tactics. Still, these judgments are attitudinal and, consequently, less objective than factual information would be.

Several of the lobbying techniques listed in **Table 2** would probably be considered pressure tactics by most observers because they involve pressure or, at least, the potential for it. These are bold faced among the lobbying techniques given in Table 2. They include “(c) sharing information with people in the media,” “(d) political fund-raising and contributions to campaigns and other political activities, etc.,” “(e) publishing voting records of candidates or elected officials,” “(h) directly trying to persuade officials of interest’s needs and views,” “(j) getting influential constituents to contact officials directly,” “(k) mounting grassroots lobbying efforts (e.g., letter writing, etc) and/or developing grassroots lobbying organizations,” and “(n) filing suit or otherwise engaging in litigation.”

As noted earlier, Oklahoma lobbyists see “fund-raising and contributions to campaigns and other political activities” as the most relied upon lobbying resource. Fund-raising and campaign contributions are also among the most important lobbying techniques. “Directly trying to persuade officials of interest’s needs and views” (h) is as likely to be employed as fundraising and contributions. “Getting influential constituents to contact officials directly” (j) and “mounting grassroots lobbying efforts” (k) are generally considered pressure tactics. Both are seen increasingly often by lobbyists in Oklahoma.

At the same time, other pressure tactics are not particularly evident. For instance, “sharing information with people in the media” (c) could be seen as an attempt to pressure public officials as could “publishing voting records of candidates or elected officials” (e). Neither of these appears to lobbyists to be on the increase to any great extent in Oklahoma. Similarly, the preponderance of respondent opinion holds that “filing suit or otherwise engaging in litigation” (n) is actually “less often,” or “rarely, if ever, seen these days.”

TABLE 2

Reliance by Lobbyists on Various Tactics

How often do you see each of the following LOBBYING TECHNIQUES used by Oklahoma interest representatives today? (1) Rarely If Ever These Days, (2) Less Often These Days, (3) More Often These Days, (4) Very Often These Days

Reliance on techniques such as. . .	(1) Rarely If Ever	(2) Less Often	(3) More Often	(4) Very Often
a. engaging in informal contacts with officials (i.e., socializing)	3 % N = 4	18 % N = 29	31 % N = 49	49 % N = 78
b. promoting interest's public image through media campaigns	14 % N = 23	24 % N = 38	48 % N = 77	14 % N = 23
c. sharing information with people in the media	13 % N = 21	26 % N = 41	41 % N = 66	20 % N = 28
d. political fund-raising and contributions to campaigns and other political activities, etc.	1 % N = 2	9 % N = 14	30 % N = 48	60 % N = 94
e. publishing voting records of candidates or elected officials	18 % N = 29	21 % N = 34	46 % N = 74	15 % N = 24
f. testifying at official hearings (either legislative or executive)	5 % N = 8	23 % N = 37	48 % N = 76	24 % N = 39
g. use of legal research or analysis and technical expertise	2 % N = 3	17 % N = 27	54 % N = 86	28 % N = 44
h. directly trying to persuade officials of interest's needs and views	0 % N = 0	4 % N = 6	37 % N = 55	59 % N = 91
i. helping government officials plan legislative strategy	6 % N = 9	20 % N = 31	48 % N = 76	26 % N = 41

TABLE 2 (cont'd)

Reliance by Lobbyists on Various Tactics

How often do you see each of the following LOBBYING TECHNIQUES used by Oklahoma interest representatives today? (1) Rarely If Ever These Days, (2) Less Often These Days, (3) More Often These Days, (4) Very Often These Days

Reliance on techniques such as. . .	(1) Rarely If Ever	(2) Less Often	(3) More Often	(4) Very Often
j. getting influential constituents to contact officials directly	2 % N = 3	6 % N = 9	40 % N = 65	52 % N = 84
k. mounting grassroots lobbying efforts (e.g., letter-writing, etc) and/or developing grassroots lobbying organizations	4 % N = 6	8 % N = 13	41 % N = 65	48 % N = 76
l. attempting to influence appointments to public office	11 % N = 18	23 % N = 37	47 % N = 75	18 % N = 28
m. affecting the policy application process – i.e., the interpretation and implementation of new decisions or policies	4 % N = 7	25 % N = 39	51 % N = 80	19 % N = 30
n. filing suit or otherwise engaging in litigation	30 % N = 47	39 % N = 61	34 % N = 34	9 % N = 14

NOTE: Lobbying techniques shown in bold are considered pressure tactics by most observers because they involve pressure or, at least, the potential for it.

SOURCE: Author's calculations using response data from questionnaire.

Summary statements by lobbyists also indicate the balance is tipped towards less rather than more pressure tactics. Only about one-third of the lobbyist/respondents felt “lobbying techniques are increasingly high pressure these days.” Two-thirds agreed that “lobbying these days involves no more high pressure tactics than it used to.” When the party leadership in the House or Senate is used as a point of reference, 79 percent agreed that “party leadership within the legislative chamber has more influence on the legislative process than do lobbyists.” Only about 21 percent felt “lobbyists have more influence on legislative behavior than does the chamber’s party leadership.”

In sum, Oklahoma lobbyists do not see their colleagues as overwhelming in either their numbers or their power. However, the importance of fundraising or contributing to campaigns, while perhaps not overwhelming, is increasingly evident among Oklahoma lobbyists when compared with other political resources and other lobbying techniques.

How Public-Minded Are Oklahoma Lobbyists?: There is a mixed evaluation of professional ethics among lobbyist/respondents in this study. Exactly half (i.e., 50%) saw “the minimization of personal conflicts of interests by lobbyists” “rarely, if ever” or “less often these days.” The other half saw the minimization of personal conflict of interests “more often,” or “very often these days.” Similarly, lobbyist/respondents were about as likely to see more (53.5%) as less (46.5%) evidence of “responsiveness by lobbyists to the public good.” Some 56 percent agreed that “as a rule, lobbyists in Oklahoma are becoming more trustworthy and ethical.” However, a healthy 44 percent felt “there are as many shady deals and underhanded tactics in Oklahoma as there ever were.”

Fully 72 percent of the lobbyist/respondents felt lobbying is “changing for the *better* in Oklahoma” while 28 percent felt “lobbying is changing for the *worse* in Oklahoma.” If lobbyist give themselves a passing grade, however, they do not believe the public does. Nearly two-thirds (64%) felt “the public’s attitude toward lobbyists is changing for the *worse* in Oklahoma.” Only 36 percent felt “the public’s attitude toward lobbyists is changing for the *better*. . . .”

FINDINGS

Three reference points were used to begin the process of characterizing Oklahoma lobbyists. These included political attitudinal patterns in the electorate of Oklahoma, lobbyists in other states, and public stereotypes of lobbyists. Oklahoma lobbyists are fairly representative of the political attitudes of Oklahomans except that today's lobbyist looks more like yesterday's voter than today's. Lobbyists are more likely to be Democrats and less likely to be Republican than today's electorate. This corresponds with the ideological pattern of lobbyists. They are a little less conservative and a bit more liberal than the Oklahoma electorate. Causes of this apparent lag in political attitudes of lobbyists may be that they have been lobbying an average of over eleven years and like their peers in other states are usually in their second careers and often in early fifties. As a result, their political attitudes may well be a better reflection of a political culture of a few years back. The recent shift to Republican control of the Oklahoma House may speed up a shift toward more conservative, Republican lobbyists even more representative of today's voters.

The demographics of Oklahoma's lobbyists resemble their peers in most respects though not all. While affluent compared with the electorate, Oklahoma's lobbyists are not as well off as lobbyists in most other states. In fact, they are 44th in the nation in their annual income. However, they are at least as well educated.

Females seem underrepresented among when compared with the state's population or electorate. However, nearly 30 percent of the present sample was female which compares well with norms for state lobbyists around the country. African-Americans and Native-Americans are underrepresented among Oklahoma lobbyists when compared with the Oklahomans generally. However, minority lobbyists are a very small part of a small sample (i.e., 163) so their percentages are unreliable.

Some public stereotypes of lobbyists did not apply to Oklahoma at all. For instance, Oklahoma lobbyists are not as numerous relative to legislators as lobbyists are in other states. Whereas lobbyists are often seen by the public as too powerful, Oklahoma lobbyists do not report widespread use by their peers of high powered tactics. Some pressure tactics are becoming more evident or, in fact, very evident. But others are not. In any case, most lobbyists draw the broad conclusion that

lobbying tactics do not create tremendous pressure in Oklahoma. Similarly, a common stereotype of lobbyists being more powerful than legislative party leaders is dismissed by nearly 80 percent of the lobbyist/respondents.

The increasing power of money in Oklahoma lobbying concerned some of the lobbyist/respondents although the summary assessments of too large a role for money were mixed. Money was seen as the most relied upon political resources when compared with communication, leadership and access, information, and constituency resources. Similarly, fundraising and campaign contributions were seen as some of the most effective lobbying techniques. However, nearly 80 percent of the lobbyists believed that while lobbying took money, interests could still participate if they had some of the other political resources. Only 20 percent believed that only moneyed interests could lobby effectively. Still, one must wonder if there is some subjectivity or even defensiveness on the part of lobbyists when they characterize the practices of their own profession in their own state. If so, and if the power of money now observed by lobbyists expands, will the stereotype of the high dollar lobbyist materialize in Oklahoma?

Perhaps the increasing concern by lobbyists about the power of money is related to their concern about professional ethics. In fact, their review of professional ethics is as mixed as their assessments about the role of money. Half of the lobbyists saw personal conflicts of interests being minimized often times whereas the other half saw such minimization as comparatively rare. A little more than half felt trustworthiness and ethics were on the increase among Oklahoma lobbyists. But just a little less than half felt “shady deals” and “underhanded tactics” were as common as ever. Nearly three-fourths of the lobbyists surveyed felt that lobbying is changing for the better in Oklahoma. At the same time, however, nearly two-thirds felt the public’s attitude toward lobbyists was changing for the worse.

CONCLUSIONS

In sum, lobbyists reflect the political culture of Oklahoma today but not quite as faithfully as that of a few years ago. In many ways Oklahoma lobbyists resemble lobbyists in other states although they are

less numerous relative to legislators and less affluent. The respondent/lobbyists in this study seemed to try to assess the pros and cons of Oklahoma lobbying with some balance. However, as noted, there is probably as much subjectivity in the lobbying profession as there is in any other.

What sort of conclusion do Oklahoma lobbyists themselves draw about an overall “grade” for lobbying as a profession in Oklahoma? On a scale of 0 through 5, where 5 was excellent, the average ranking of all respondent/lobbyists was 3.78. That translates into a grade of 75.6 or a solid “C.”

REFERENCES

- American League of Lobbyists: Speakers Bureau. 2003. "Lobbying as a Career." Retrieved August 2006 from <http://www.alldc.org/career.htm>.
- Berry, Jeffrey M. 1997. *The Interest Group Society*, 3rd ed. New York: Longman.
- Coleman, Bill. 2006. "Oklahoma Lobbyists Job Salary." Received from <http://swz.salary.com/salarywizard/layouthtmls/OK/swzl_compresult_state_OK_CM02000070.html on August 17>.
- CNN.Com. 2004. "Election Results." Retrieved from <<http://www.cnn.com/ELECTION/2004/pages/results/states/OK/P/00/epolls.0.html> on August 25>, 2006.
- Evote.com. 2006. "So You Want to Be a Lobbyist." Retrieved from <<http://www.evot.com/features/2001-02/lobbyists.asp> on August 20>.
- Mahood, H.R. 1990. *Interest Group Politics in America*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 53.
- Office of the Clerk of the U.S. House. Telephone interview on August 20, 2006.
- Oklahoma Ethics Commission. Telephone interview on August 20, 2006.
- Oklahoma Voter File: OKSE.Dbf. Retrieved from www.blaemire.com (G305) on March 14, 2005.
- O'Neil, Tim. 2006. "The Present and Future of Party Identification in Oklahoma." Undergraduate Honors Thesis, Oklahoma State University, 17 – 25.

- Rawls, Wendall. 2005. "Hired Guns: Ratio of Lobbyists to Legislators 2004." Retrieved from <http://www.hillnews.com/news/022304/ss_gelak.aspx on August 10>.
- Rawls, Wendall. 2005. "State Lobby Totals 1995-2004." Retrieved from <http://www.publicintrigridity.org/hiredguns/chart.aspx?act=lobbyspending> on August 10.
- Rosenthal, Alan. 2001. *The Third House, Lobbyists and Lobbying in the States*, 2nd ed. Washington, D.C: Congressional Quarterly Press, 33.
- Schlozman, Kay L. 1990. "Representing Women in Washington: Sisterhood and Pressure Politics." *Women, Politics and Change*. Ed. Lewis A. Tilley and Patricia Gurin. New York: Russell Sage, 339–382.
- Statemaster.com.2006."Oklahoman Education Statistics," Retrieved from <<http://www.statemaster.com/state/OK-Oklahoma/edu-education> on August 20>.
- The Catholic University of America: Office of Career Services. 2005. "Careers in Lobbying." Retrieved from <http://careers.cua.edu/handouts/lobbyingcareers.cfm>. August 2006.
- The Hill.com 2004."The Coin of the Realm." Retrieved August 20, 2006 from http://www.hillnews.com/news/033104/ss_gelak.aspx.
- Thomas, Clive S. and Ronald J. Hrebenar. 1992. "Changing Patterns of Interest Group Activity: A Regional Perspective." *The Politics of Interests: Interest Groups Transformed*, Mark P. Petracca, ed. San Francisco, CA.: West View Press, 162.
- Wright, Gerald C., Robert S. Erikson, John P. McIver. 1985. "Measuring State Partisanship and Ideology with Survey Data." *Journal of Politics*: 47, No. 2, 479.