



**NORTH CAROLINA CENTER FOR
PUBLIC POLICY RESEARCH INC.**

News Release

For release on Tuesday, August 20, 1996:
May be broadcast Tuesday a.m. and may
appear in Tuesday newspapers.

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**Hot Issues Bring New Faces Into Rankings of 50 Most Influential Lobbyists,
Says Center**

Hog waste spills. Concealed weapons. Crime victims' rights. All of these were hot issues during the 1995 General Assembly, and lobbyists who worked the halls of the legislature on behalf of such issues garnered influence, according to the latest rankings of the 50 most influential lobbyists, released today by the N.C. Center for Public Policy Research. The number of lobbying teams reached an all time high in 1995, while the collective influence of women lobbyists declined. The rankings are based on surveys of all legislators registered lobbyists, and capital news correspondents.

For the first time since 1989, new faces appear in the top five spots of the most influential lobbyists, although all of the top five are still contract lobbyists. Contract lobbyists are those who represent multiple clients on a contract basis. Zebulon D. Alley, who represents 18 clients with business and industry interests, continues his reign as North Carolina's most influential lobbyist. Roger W. Bone, with 14 business clients, moved up one spot to second. Don Beason, representing 16 business clients, vaulted to third from 32nd, the largest jump in the rankings. Rounding out the top five spots are attorney John T. Bode at fourth, representing 8 health care and business clients, and former legislator J. Allen Adams, who fell three spots to fifth, representing 18 arts, health care, and business clients.

Other trends in the rankings of the most influential lobbyists

- *Only 20 percent of the 50 most influential lobbyists this year are women, and none of them rank in the top 25.*
- *Lobbying in teams is on the rise because the power base in the General Assembly is no longer centralized.*
- *The latest rankings show record turnover among the most influential lobbyists, with 18 new faces moving into the top 50, and 20 lobbyists dropping out of the rankings.*
- *With Republicans now the majority party in the N.C. House, Republican lobbyists moved into the ranks of the most influential.*

Hot Issues Move Lobbyists Into the Rankings

"Each session, some issues dominate the legislature's attention," says Ran Coble, the Center's executive director. "Lobbyists working on these issues tend to move up in the rankings. For example, in 1995, hog waste spills, repealing the ban on concealed weapons, and crime issues created windows of opportunity for lobbyists to exert their influence -- and they did."

Spills of hog waste which endangered the water quality of the Neuse River and other rivers and streams in North Carolina caused the legislature to increase regulation of large hog farms. Lobbyists representing the N.C. Pork Producers Association ranked among the most influential, including Roger Bone (2nd); Walter Wilson Cherry (40th); and Joyce B. Peters (42nd). William E. (Bill) Holman, who represents four environmental groups, ranked 7th.

Lobbyists for the National Rifle Association (NRA) succeeded in legalizing concealed weapons and also ranked among the most influential newcomers to the rankings. Joseph McClees of New Bern, representing 13 clients including the NRA, ranked 16th; and Jeff Freeman, the NRA's in-house lobbyist, ranked 19th.

Lobbyists working on criminal justice issues also did well in the rankings. Catherine Gallagher Smith of the N.C. Victim Assistance Network ranked 38th after successfully lobbying for a bill authorizing a proposed amendment to the North Carolina Constitution for crime victims' rights, which will be on the ballot in November for voter approval. Other lobbyists did well because prison issues -- repealing the prison cap, allowing prisons to be run by private companies, and amendments to the structured sentencing laws -- were at the forefront of the General Assembly's agenda. Franklin Freeman, Secretary of Correction and legislative liaison for the Department, finished 48th in the rankings. Don Beason (3rd) and Jennie Dorsett (tied for 50th), representing the U.S. Corrections Corporation, also ranked among the most influential. Jack Hawke also represents the Corrections Corporation of America and finished 46th.

Four lobbyists have been ranked among the most influential for almost fifteen years, demonstrating that they have clout even when they are not lobbying on hot issues. Zeb Alley, representing business interests, has been ranked in the top five since the Center began its lobbyist rankings in 1981. Bill Holman, representing environmental concerns, finished 7th -- his seventh consecutive finish in the top ten. Sam Johnson, ranked in the top five from 1981 to 1994, is still among the most influential at 14th. And, Ronald Aycock, representing the N.C. Association of County Commissioners, has been ranked among the most influential since 1983.

Women Lobbyists Lose Clout

Only 20 percent of the 50 most influential lobbyists this year are women, and none of them were ranked in the top 25. In the 1991 rankings, 28 percent of the top lobbyists were women, and in 1993, 22 percent were women. The average ranking of women in the rankings fell from 31st in 1993 to 39th in 1995.

Leslie Bevacqua was the only woman to gain ground in the rankings, moving up four spots to 27th. She represents six clients -- Education Everybody's Business Coalition, Glaxo Wellcome Inc., Hospice for the Carolinas, Clariant Corporation, the N.C. Housing Finance Agency, and NC Healthy Start Foundation. "I am surprised that women were not ranked higher; it certainly seems that more women are becoming registered lobbyists," says Bevacqua. "The 1995 session, though, was different because the House leadership was different. My style of lobbying, however, didn't change because I work with everybody -- every legislator, every committee member, not just those in power. In fact, I had an entree with the people in leadership positions this session precisely because I had worked with them when they were not in power."

Team Lobbying More Popular Than Ever

"In 1981, when the Center began surveying to identify the most influential lobbyists, very few lobbied in teams," says Coble, the Center's executive director. "Now, because each party controls one house and power is more dispersed in the legislature, lobbying in teams is much more frequent." In 1995, lobbying in teams reached an all-time high with 27 two-member teams, 5 three-member teams, and 2 four-member teams.

"Lobbyists are no stronger than their client base," says Roger Bone, one of the most influential team lobbyists, at 2nd. "My role is quarterbacking the team."

Many of the traditional lobbying powerhouses at the General Assembly increased their clout by sending multiple lobbyists to Raleigh. Two corporations have four lobbyists ranked among the most influential: BellSouth Telecommunications, Inc. contracts with Zeb Alley (1st), Don Beason (3rd), and Lawrence Bewley (13th) to represent their interests, with Bryan Houck (49th) then employed in house at BellSouth. Sprint contracts with Roger Bone (2nd) and Joyce Peters (42nd), with Tom Morrow (17th) and Brenda Dougherty (tied for 43rd) employed as lobbyists in house. Five corporations and organizations retain three lobbyists each: First Union Corporation, R.J. Reynolds Tobacco Company, Citizens for Property Rights, N.C. Optometric Society, and N.C. Pork Producers.

Jennie Dorsett (tied for 50th) and Don Beason (3rd) do not share office space, nor do they work with or for each other, but they do work as team lobbyists sharing several clients. "Things at the legislature are a lot more complicated then they were 10 years ago," says Dorsett, a former legislative staff member. "Team lobbying is therefore very effective."

Highest Turnover Ever in the Rankings

The latest rankings show record turnover among the most influential lobbyists, with 18 new faces moving into the top 50, and 20 lobbyists dropping out of the rankings. Brad Wilson, legislative liaison for Gov. James B. Hunt Jr. in 1995, is the highest ranked newcomer at 15th. Wilson since has left this position and now works with Blue Cross & Blue Shield. Other lobbyists who broke into the top 50 include former legislator Dan DeVane (20th), legislative liaison for the N.C. Department of Transportation; Ken Eudy (23rd), representing the N.C. Press Association and Healthsource N.C.; Cecil Banks (26th), representing the N.C. Association of Educators; Eugene Ainsworth (28th), representing R.J. Reynolds Tobacco Co.; John Fitch (30th), then representing the State Employees Association of N.C.; Hawk Johnson (39th), representing Miller Brewing Co. and Philip Morris U.S.A.; Jerry Schill (45th), representing the N.C. Fisheries Association; Jack Hawke (46th), representing nine clients; and former legislator Alexander P. (Sandy) Sands (tied for 50th), representing seven clients.

The high degree of turnover in the rankings can be attributed in part to the rise of the Republican party in the legislature. With the Republicans controlling the N.C. House of Representatives and holding a majority of the 170 seats in the General Assembly for the first time this century, some lobbying firms, corporations, and state agencies added Republican lobbyists to their teams. Three of these Republican lobbyists rank among the most influential: Don Beason (3rd), former director of then-Lt. Gov. Jim Gardner's anti-drug cabinet; Joyce Peters (42nd), former deputy revenue secretary under then-Gov. James G. Martin; and Jack Hawke (46th), former state chair of the Republican Party.

Other Trends in the Rankings

Since the Center began asking legislators and others to name the most influential lobbyists in 1981, lawyers and former legislators have consistently been at the top of the rankings. This time, 20 of the top 50 lobbyists (40 percent) are lawyers, and 10 of 50 (20 percent) are former legislators. But when it comes to the best of the best among lobbyists, former legislators are at the top of the list. Three of the top five, five of the top ten, and nine of the top 25 are former legislators.

"It's not unusual for lobbyists and former legislators to make good lobbyists," says Coble. "Lawyers know the existing laws, how to draft bills, and the implications of amending statutes. Former legislators know the people in the legislature and have more experience with the legislative process and coalition building."

This is the eighth time the N.C. Center for Public Policy Research has released its lobbyist rankings. "The rankings of the most influential lobbyists are useful because voters need to know what key interests have clout with legislators in North Carolina," says Coble. The rankings are based on results from a survey conducted during the fall of 1995 after adjournment of the regular session of the North Carolina General Assembly. All state legislators, as well as 371 legislative liaisons and registered lobbyists based in North Carolina, and 26 capital news correspondents were asked to list the ten most influential lobbyists or legislative liaisons of the 1995 General Assembly session. Survey respondents received a list of the lobbyists and legislative liaisons registered with the Secretary of State.

Ninety-four of the 120 House members (78%) responded to the Center's survey, as did 40 of the 50 Senators (80%), 148 of the 371 legislative liaisons and registered lobbyists based in North Carolina (40%), and eight of 26 capital news correspondents (31%). The overall rate of response was 51%.

During the 1995 session, 500 lobbyists were registered with the Secretary of State, representing 576 different companies or organizations. The Center's calculations of the number of lobbyists avoids double-counting by counting each lobbyist only once, even if they represent more than one client. There also were 286 legislative liaisons representing 44 different state government agencies and licensing boards.

The North Carolina Center for Public Policy Research is an independent, nonpartisan, nonprofit corporation created to study public policy issues facing North Carolina and to evaluate state government's performance. The Center is supported in part by grants from the Z. Smith Reynolds and Mary Reynolds Babcock Foundations, both in Winston-Salem. Additional funding comes from 13 private foundations, 190 corporate contributors, and more than 900 individual and organizational members. The Center publishes *North Carolina Insight* magazine and book-length research reports. Recent studies by the Center have examined the changing relationship between state and local governments, school vouchers, pesticide regulation, state-owned railroads, and how the state's public universities evaluate and reward teaching.

The lobbyist rankings are available for \$5.00 from the N.C. Center for Public Policy Research. They are a companion piece to *Article II: A Guide to the 1995-96 N.C. Legislature*, which is available for \$22.50. Both prices include tax and postage. *Article II* is a directory of legislators serving the 1995-96 session. It includes each legislator's educational background, occupation, committee assignments, the bills they sponsored, voting records, and rankings of their effectiveness. To order the rankings, write the Center at P.O. Box 430, Raleigh, N.C. 27602, call (919) 832-2839, or fax (919) 832-2847.

For more information, call Ran Coble, the Center's executive director, or Mebane Rash Whitman, the Center's policy analyst, at (919) 832-2839.