



FROM THE CENTER OUT

The Newsletter of the North Carolina Center for Public Policy Research...A voice for better government
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New Generation of Lobbyists Emerges in the Legislature

The times they are a-changing. The N.C. Center for Public Policy Research unveiled its latest biennial list of the 50 most influential lobbyists in the N.C. General Assembly, and all indications are that a new generation of lobbyists has entered the ranks of the most influential. Nine of the top 50 are entirely new, six have been ranked only once before, and a record number of women appear.

Every two years, the Center surveys all legislators, registered lobbyists based in North Carolina, and the capital news media, asking them to name the most influential lobbyists. This year, nine of the 50 most influential lobbyists are newcomers. Andrew Romanet (28th), lobbyist for the N.C. League of Municipalities, is the highest-ranked newcomer. Other newcomers to the rankings include Craig Souza (34th), with the N.C. Health Care Facilities Association; Ann Duncan (36th), former legislator and contract lobbyist with the law firm of Womble Carlyle Sandridge and Rice; Deborah Ross (37th), representing the American Civil Liberties Union of N.C.; Lynn Holmes (39th), lobbying on behalf of BellSouth; Tommy Harrelson (44th), former legislator and former Secretary of Transportation representing multiple clients; Lou Wilson (47th), representing the N.C. Association of Long-Term Care Facilities; Keith Hundley (48th), representing Weyerhaeuser Company; and Bill Brooks (50th), lobbying on behalf of the N.C. Family Policy Council.

Three of these newcomers represent associations, two are contract lobbyists, two represent single companies, and two are public interest lobbyists. In addition to these nine, six more lobbyists appear in the rankings for only the second time.

"There are new hired guns in town, and they are firing their information at the legislature with increasing influence," says Ran Coble, executive director of the Center. "If you compare names in the rankings of the most influential lobbyists 10 years ago with those released today, you'll find only 12 names on both lists."

Key trends in the rankings of the most influential lobbyists are:

- Nine of the top 50 are new to the rankings, and six have been ranked only once before.
- A record number of women (12) are ranked among the most influential.
- This marks the first time an African-American (Lynn Holmes of BellSouth) has been ranked among the most influential.
- Changes in North Carolina's economy are showing up in the rankings, as few lobbyists representing tobacco, textiles, and furniture are ranked, but more lobbyists for health care, hogs, and homebuilders appear in the rankings.
- Former legislators who are lawyers still dominate the top spots in the rankings.

Part of this new generation of lobbyists is a record number of women ranked among the most influential this year. Twelve women have made the

The 50 Most Influential Lobbyists
Rankings in the 1997 North Carolina General Assembly



a report by the
North Carolina Center for Public Policy Research

rankings, or roughly 25 percent. This parallels the ratio of female to male lobbyists registered with the Secretary of State's office, when at the close of the 1997 long session, 147 of the 551 lobbyists (27 percent), were women.

Leslie Bevacqua, representing N.C. Citizens for Business and Industry, a statewide chamber of commerce, is the highest-ranked woman this year at 12th. This is the highest ranking held by a woman since Alice Garland, formerly with the State Employees Association and now with Electricities of N.C., was ranked 6th in 1989. "Many women lobbyists now are representing the 'pure business sector'," says Bevacqua. "Women used to represent the more traditional women's issues, or social issues. That is not the case any longer. . . . It's all about who you represent and the issues you represent. The men at the top are there because they have multiple clients, with a broad spectrum of issues. As women diversify, they will enjoy more success as well."

A lobbyist may find himself or herself among the most influential in one session and not ranked in another as the issue on which they lobby gains or loses importance in the legislature. For example, lobbyists on health care issues and electric industry deregulation rose this session, while lobbyists for gun issues and the Department of Transportation fell or dropped out of the rankings.

Even with a new generation of lobbyists becoming influential and new issues coming to the fore, the top spots in the rankings are still dominated by former legislators and lawyers. Former legislator and lawyer Zeb Alley, a contract lobbyist for clients in business and industry, continues his reign as the most influential lobbyist for the sixth session in a row. Don Beason has changed places with former legislator Roger Bone at #2 and #3, respectively. Both Beason and Bone are contract lobbyists for multiple clients. Former Sierra Club and environmental lobbyist Bill Holman finished at 4th, the highest ranking ever earned by an environmental or public interest lobbyist. Holman has since moved into the executive branch as Assistant Secretary for Environmental Protection. Phil Kirk of N.C. Citizens for Business and Industry rounds out the top 5. Attorney and contract lobbyist John Bode ranked 6th, and former legislator Al Adams ranked 8th.

This is the ninth 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, as well as who is *not* represented in the legislature," says the Center's Coble.

The lobbyist rankings are available for \$5.00 from the N.C. Center for Public Policy Research, P.O. Box 430, Raleigh, NC 27602. This publication is a companion piece to *Article II: A Guide to the 1997-98 N.C. Legislature*, which, with the legislative rankings, is available for \$30.50. Both prices include postage and handling. *Article II* is a directory of legislators serving in the 1997-98 session. It includes each legislator's educational background, occupation, bills introduced, committee assignments, the bills they sponsored, voting records on 15 important bills, and rankings of their effectiveness. To order, write the Center at P.O. Box 430, Raleigh, NC 27602, call (919) 832-2839, fax (919) 832-2847, or order through the Center's Website at <http://www.nando.net/insider/nccppr>.

Center Poised To Release Part One of the Study on Higher Education Governance

This fall, the Center will release *Reorganizing Higher Education in North Carolina: What History Tells Us About Our Future*, part one of a comprehensive, four-part study of issues in higher education governance in North Carolina. This first report is an in-depth look into the legislative battle that led to both the creation of a consolidated governing board, the UNC Board of Governors, and the expansion of the University of North Carolina to the sixteen-campus system we have today. It also reveals that many of the policy issues of concern to legislators in 1971 continue to resonate today: how to distribute state resources fairly among a large, diverse group of institutions; how best to protect the university system from potentially harmful political interference; what role the state's five historically black universities should play in the system; how to maintain academic excellence; and how to balance power and flexibility between the central Board of Governors and the individual campus boards of trustees.

The remaining three reports of this higher education study will focus on other issues in higher education. The second report, *Higher Education Governance Among the 50 States*, reviews the three basic types of governance structures currently found throughout the country and compares other systems to our own. This report is entering the final stages, and is scheduled to be released in January. With the third report, the Center will return its focus to North Carolina, by examining in detail the powers of the UNC Board of Governors, the election of the Board by the N.C. General Assembly, and the relationship between the powers of the Board of Governors and those of the 16 local campus Boards of Trustees. Finally, the fourth report will examine the performance of the Board of Governors since its creation in 1971 by addressing several questions: (1) How have the three missions of the UNC System – teaching, research, and public service – fared under the Board of Governors' guidance? (2) Has the Board of Governors allocated money fairly and equitably among the 16 constituent institutions? (3) Does the UNC System, under the leadership of the Board of Governors, provide adequate, affordable higher education opportunities for North Carolinians? and (4) How well has the Board of Governors addressed proposals for new academic programs and eliminated duplicative programs?

Coming soon to a mailbox near you... A Theme Issue of *North Carolina Insight* on Children With Special Needs

The fall issue of *Insight* magazine includes Center research findings and recommendations on: (1) how the state resolves disputes when parents and educators disagree over how a child with special needs should be taught in the public schools; and (2) how state funds are distributed between community-based organizations and state institutions that serve children with special needs. Also included are an overview of issues in special education, such as student discipline and teacher certification, and a look at success stories in educating children with disabilities.

The Center's review of legal issues in special education finds that disputes over children's educational placements take too long to resolve. These cases, called due process hearings, are handled by the N.C. Office of Administrative Hearings. Federal regulations indicate that special education due process hearings should be resolved routinely in 45 days. The Center finds that the Office of Administrative Hearings fails to meet this standard in 90 percent of its cases. Nearly a third of the cases (30 percent) take more than a year to resolve. And while each case grinds on, the child remains stuck in an educational placement that may not be appropriate. To address the problem, the Center offers recommendations with the following two goals: (1) to provide timely resolution of due process hearings in accordance with the law; and (2) to develop a continuum of dispute resolution processes that would prevent due process hearings if at all possible.

Insight also examines the distribution of state funds between state and community-based institutions. The Center finds that the number of people being treated in community mental health programs now represents 93 percent of all persons served – nearly 277,943 people during the 1996-97 fiscal year – but community mental health programs receive only 57 percent of the funding. The Center finds similar discrepancies in the proportion of persons served versus funding levels at other state institutions serving children with special needs. Examples include training schools in the Division of Youth Services, the three N.C. schools for the deaf, and the Gov. Morehead School for the blind. The Center recommends appointment of a legislative study commission to examine the imbalance of dollars going to state institutions in relation to the number of people they serve.



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"The North Carolina Center for Public Policy Research is an independent, nonprofit organization dedicated to the goals of a better-informed public and more effective, accountable, and responsive government."

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- To move the Center's research onto the Internet through the World Wide Web with links at multiple sites such as the university network called Sunsite, Charlotte's Web, Raleigh's Nando.net, Durham's CitySearch, and other computer networks; and
- To allow for future expansion of the Center's independent, nonpartisan efforts to foster informed debate on significant public policy issues facing North Carolina.

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