



Lobbying and Policy Change: Who Wins, Who Loses, and Why

Frank R. Baumgartner, Jeffrey M. Berry, Marie Hojnacki, Beth L. Leech, David C. Kimball

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During the 2008 election season, politicians from both sides of the aisle promised to rid government of lobbyists' undue influence. For the authors of *Lobbying and Policy Change*, the most extensive study ever done on the topic, these promises ring hollow—not because politicians fail to keep them but because lobbies are far less influential than political rhetoric suggests.

Based on a comprehensive examination of ninety-eight issues, this volume demonstrates that sixty percent of recent lobbying campaigns failed to change policy despite millions of dollars spent trying. Why? The authors find that resources explain less than five percent of the difference between successful and unsuccessful efforts. Moreover, they show, these attempts must overcome an entrenched Washington system with a tremendous bias in favor of the status quo.

Though elected officials and existing policies carry more weight, lobbies have an impact too, and when advocates for a given issue finally succeed, policy tends to change significantly. The authors argue, however, that the lobbying community so strongly reflects elite interests that it will not fundamentally alter the balance of power unless its makeup shifts dramatically in favor of average Americans' concerns.

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