

Chris Micheli: Hi, this is Chris Micheli - a principal at the Sacramento governmental relations firm of Aprea & Micheli and an adjunct professor at McGeorge School of Law in its Capital Lawyering program. Today's podcast is on the types of lobbying clients and services provided.

There are several different types of clients that contract lobbyists have, each requiring different levels and types of services. Some clients are at a low end of the service spectrum while other clients are at the very high end, requiring daily attention.

Contract lobbyists may have a myriad of clients in different industries while others may specialize in specific types of clients - such as transportation, or in healthcare, or insurance. Regardless of the subject matter of the client's interest there are essentially the following four types of clients: monitoring, lobbying, consulting, and procurement. So let's take a look at each one.

Monitoring: Some clients simply desire to know what is happening at the Legislature and/or with regulatory agencies and the Governor's office. This type of client requires a lobbyist to monitor relevant legislation and regulations, sometimes budget items and politics generally involving particular issue areas or industries. Some may be focused on a single issue area, while other clients may require monitoring multiple state agencies as well as the Legislature, such as all of the environmental agencies.

As a result of monitoring legislation and regulations, lobbyists may work with their clients to develop strategic plans, designed to meet their near term and long term objectives. Included in these strategic plans are usually an analysis of the political landscape, framing the issue, identifying potential allies and opponents, and developing action items, establishing timelines, and regularly reviewing the status of the plan and adjusting it when it's necessary.

The next type of servicing is lobbying. Other clients desire lobbying services to be provided by their contract lobbyist. These services can range from supporting or opposing legislation or regulations, or sponsoring bills, to make specified changes in the law. The same applies at regulatory agencies when rulemaking activities are undertaken to add, repeal, or amend existing regulation.

Naturally, there are different levels of lobbying services that can be provided to clients ranging from writing and distributing letters, to meetings with staff and legislators, and testifying before legislative committees of both houses of the Legislature.

With lobbying clients, there are different levels of service, generally depending upon the client's needs. There are some clients who might only care about one bill the entire legislative session - either supporting it, or opposing it, or being the sponsor of it. On the other hand, some clients take positions on dozens or more bills each year. These types of clients may have more than contract lobbyist or one dedicated lobbyists to service the client's lobbying need.

There are essentially three types of lobbying - legislative lobbying, regulatory advocacy lobbying, and budget advocacy. The legislative advocacy - legislative consulting and advocacy services usually include research and analysis of policy issues, daily monitoring of legislation introduced and amended, and advocacy for and against legislation affecting clients.

Regulatory advocacy is similar. The state's regulatory process, it's an integral part of developing California's public policy, but it's a world unto its own with separate rules. Lobbyists help their clients meaningfully engage in the public comment period and the formal hearings held by regulatory agencies when they engage in their quasi-legislative activities, as well as navigating the agency process for adopting and amending regulations.

And then the third type of lobbying is the budget advocacy. The adoption of California's state budget is often the single most important act of the Governor and the Legislature because it sets the state's spending priorities and policies which may prove to either harm or help a client's business. Moreover the budget process is being used these days to adopt policy changes which can sometimes be developed outside of the public hearing process with little input from the policy committees.

The next type of client and service is consulting. Another type of client is one that doesn't require lobbying or advocacy services, but instead desires to retain a lobbyist to provide consulting or advisory services. These types of clients want active advising regarding what they should be doing such that the lobbyist provides political advice or consulting to the client, such as how to navigate the legislative or regulatory processes, without actually advocating.

Lobbyists can help clients understand and effectively maneuver through the elections process as well. In each election cycle, lobbyists identify viable candidates for open seats, meet with potential candidates, analyze election campaigns, and recommend these candidates - who they believe are most likely aligned with their client's interest. And in each election cycle, lobbyists may assist clients in thoughtfully deploying their political contribution to candidates and statewide ballot committees.

The last type of lobbying, or consulting services provided by lobbyists is procurement lobbying. This last type of client is involved with a different type of lobbying. It's trying to secure contracts for the purchase of goods or services by the state of California.

Now, procurement clients don't require registration as a lobbyist under the Political Reform Act. And the work may not be traditional lobbying, as the client often has a sales person and so perhaps the lobbyist is merely arranging meetings. Although, with some clients, you may actually pursue budget funding for a particular agency in order for that agency to purchase services or goods from your client.

Procurement services can include high-level executive briefings at state agencies and departments, consulting with your clients in getting executive support for the purchase

of those good and services, perhaps assisting with the RFP process to result in successful procurements.

Now, contract lobbyists regularly work with the Department of General Services on procurement and state agency purchasing issues. They might also work with agencies for soliciting client product and services. So the procurement work, while it's not registered as lobbying, it is lobbying of a different type.

That's a quick look at the four types of lobbying clients and services. I hope you've gotten something from this podcast. Thanks for joining.