

TEXAS VS WASHINGTON

The State of Washington tackles the issue of lobbying very differently than Texas. In 2007, one ranking of attempts to regulate lobbyists and their activities placed Washington as first in the nation, while Texas ranked twelfth.ⁱ Among the points of comparison was the fact that in 2005, lobbyists spent over \$173 million lobbying in Texas and only \$37 million in Washington. In Texas, there are nine registered lobbyists with the state government for every member of the state legislature. In Washington, the ratio is six lobbyists per member of the state legislature. More telling is the fact that seventy of the lobbyists in Texas are former members of the legislature now hired to lobby their former colleagues. In Washington, only fifteen former members of the state legislature work as lobbyists.

When it comes to defining and registering lobbyists and their activities, the two states differ in a number of areas. As the table comparing Texas with Washington shows, Washington's regulatory environment provides a more detailed accounting of the activities of lobbyists who attempt to influence the state government than does that of Texas.

THINKING Critically

- ★ Which provisions of Washington's lobbyist regulations not found in Texas do you find the most attractive?
- ★ How do you think such provisions would change the dynamics of money in Texas politics?

Lobbying in Texas and Washington State

Activity Regulated	Texas	Washington
Register if lobbying executive	Yes	Yes
Register if lobbying legislature	Yes	Yes
Minimum spent to qualify as a lobbyist	\$500	\$0
Must provide photo with registration form	No	Yes
Must report compensation	Yes	Yes
Must itemize all spending	No (only over \$25)	Yes
Campaign contributions disclosed on registration form	No	Yes
Lobbyists' employers must file spending report	No	Yes
Online registration and reporting allowed	No	Yes
State conducts audits of lobbyist reports	No	Yes

i. The Center for Public Integrity, "In Your State—Washington" and "In Your State—Texas," www.publicintegrity.org/hiredguns/iys.aspx (accessed August 11, 2010).

Source: Compiled by the authors from data available at The Center for Public Integrity, "Lobby Disclosure Comparisons 2003," 2007, www.publicintegrity.org/hiredguns/comparisons.aspx (accessed August 11, 2010).