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In addition to his association management activities, Larry also provides consulting services to non-profit organizations through his management of HMG’s Non-Profit Resource Center. He specializes in programs dealing with strategic planning, member service and satisfaction, and the creation of management systems designed to improve the performance of associations of all types and sizes.

Several divisions of HMG specialize in assisting persons interested in monitoring and influencing government, including Association Net Services (ANS), PR Florida and the Non-Profit Resource Center (NPRC):

(Logo) Association Net Services designs high-quality Web sites that will enhance an association’s image, attract new members, and provide members with information on member benefits and services. Through its Rapid Web® Program, associations quickly get a presence on the World Wide Web that is dynamic, yet practical and affordable.

(Logo) PR Florida provides targeted public relations plans for organizations. A team of veteran Tallahassee strategists, marketers and government-public relations experts guides PR Florida. Resources and influences reach deep into Florida and include international capabilities. In addition, each public relations effort is specifically tailored to match the needs of the organization with the best possible combination of public relations techniques. The effect of these efforts is that well placed press and publicity results in increased credibility for the organization by consumers, improved stature for the profession, and increased interest, understanding and income for the members of the organization.

(Logo) Non-Profit Resource Center (NPRC) is a collection of trained, experienced consultants and a wide variety of valuable resources designed to meet the current and emerging needs of the non-profit community. Specifically tailored programs are created to assist non-profit organizations in establishing new programs and services or simply energizing or redirecting existing programming in leadership training and development, membership management and marketing, general association management systems and strategic planning services. NPRC also offers in-depth commentary and analysis on various non-profit management topics through its available publications. For information, contact:

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Foreword by H. Lee Moffitt

This concise primer on influencing government can have a powerful impact on Florida’s lawmaking process. It is written for anybody (individual, business or group) with an interest in successfully influencing the legislative process.

The book is a little gem in simplifying what is often a tedious, time-consuming and hectic democratic process. Though the system works well, there are times when such a guide book could be essential to the thousands of Capitol visitors who have an interest in the process.

It is not just for the volunteer lobbyist. I know of major corporations who distribute How to Influence Florida Government at board meetings, associations that depend on it to help members better participate in government, and veteran lobbyists who carry a copy.

This book covers the essentials, from the committee process (including the relatively new House Councils), to political action committees, to the impact of term limits. I commend the authors for sharing their expertise and making it simple enough to understand by every individual and group.

The Honorable H. Lee Moffitt
Former Speaker
Florida House of Representatives
(November 1982-November 1984)

Written November 1998
Introduction

In the past decade, much of the power for making laws has shifted from the federal level to the state capitals. Prior to the shift, if you wanted to influence the federal government you had to be in Washington, DC. And to influence state government, membership in the “good old boy” network was important.

Things have changed in the 1990s for persons seeking to sway state government. The number of registered lobbyists has grown and the influence of political action committees, referendums and special interest groups has taken over where the “good old boy” network left off. Most important, there has been a dramatic rise in the true effectiveness and impact of “citizen coalitions”. More than ever before, grassroots political activity is changing the way our laws are shaped.

This publication is written to help individuals, corporations, associations, businesses and others utilize the resources and methods available to them when trying to influence government officials.

In a “user-friendly” system of government in which interested persons can find readily available information, resources aplenty and responsive officials, success will come to those individuals and organizations that seek changes with merit, are creative in their communications and persistent in their efforts. However, it is also important that we remember that the legislative and rule-making processes are about convincing someone else that you are “right,” not just being “right.” The best legislative proposal will meet with swift defeat without an effective plan to communicate it.

Most people recall their political science textbooks that describe the checks and balances of power achieved by the three branches of government: Executive, Legislative and Judicial. Don’t be fooled by the simplicity of the textbooks or even by today’s flow charts explaining how a bill is passed. It’s just not that easy.

This book describes the forces and influences affecting state laws and rules. Since lobbying is a regulated activity, certain requirements and restrictions apply. To assist new and volunteer "lobbyists," this book reviews a number of “insider tips” for influencing government. If you are new to the process, pay close attention to them.

Due to the complexity of government, a number of appendices are provided for acquiring further information from valuable private and public sector sources1. Finally, for additional assistance, readers are invited to call on the authors in Tallahassee.

The Art of Lobbying

One often envisions an “old-style” lobbyist as a heavy-set (often pot-bellied) Southern gentlemen smoking a “stogie” with a wad of money in his pocket. This image has changed greatly in describing the lobbyist of today. It is far more accurate to describe today’s lobbyist as a professional woman or man carrying a briefcase of valuable facts and a cellular telephone. The number of lobbyists, also known as “power brokers,” has grown consistently and abundantly.

The term “lobbyist” is derived from those persons frequenting the lobby of the Capitol located just outside the chambers2 of the House and Senate. The location is ideal for greeting legislators as they enter and exit the chambers as well as for networking with colleagues and gathering intelligence on the

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1 The appendix includes government and private sector contacts to turn to for information and services. The author does not intend to endorse any of the services, rather the reader is encouraged to consider the services available and to choose services meeting his or her needs.

2 Chamber refers to the hall in which the Senate or the House meets.
issues at hand. The role of lobbyists is described in the legislative and executive branch rules as persons supplying information and opinions to lawmakers and state regulators. Florida state laws require that lobbyists sign up through a lobbyist registration office prior to appearing before a committee or attempting to influence a lawmaker, although there are some exemptions for volunteer lobbyists or individuals representing themselves. (Refer to appendix for information on registration.)

Although wads of money and the “good old boy network” are not as critical a factor in changing laws and rules, they still continue to have a strong effect. This “network” is a result of who you know and how effectively you share and gather intelligence information towards impacting legislation and rules. And while the use of money or gifts in today’s political process is more closely regulated through lobbyist expenditure and political action committee reports, it is still an important part of the political process. Since it takes money to run a campaign, money is still necessary (and appreciated) by political candidates.

Because of the increasing restrictions placed on financial contributions, today’s lobbyists have armed themselves more heavily than ever before with valuable information and other strategies to support their causes. They are able to communicate concisely and effectively under pressure. They often develop strong friendships with lawmakers and their staffs. They build coalitions with other interested groups. And, most likely, the lobbyist is backed by a grassroots campaign that can quickly mobilize to provide a ground-swell of public and/or member support to influence the course of the legislation or rule-making.

When you mention the term “lobbying” to most people, they think of outside consultants making direct, personal contact with legislators. While this is crucially important, there are a number of other essential tasks that must be performed in order for an organization to be successful in its legislative activities. And while several of these are more strategically performed by a professional staff member or outside consultant, many functions are best performed by the organization itself. These include updates on legislative activities, coordination of board involvement in the process, creation of a “key person contact” network between legislators, regulators and your volunteers, establishing “communication trees” and the use of political action committees (PACs). These issues will be discussed in greater detail throughout this book and especially in the chapter on “Effective Communications”. For now, it is important that you understand the fact that you will be more successful by creating a synergy between your lobbyists, the leaders within your organization, your staff and your members than by trying to let any one of these groups work on your legislative and regulatory issues alone.

It is important for organizations to strongly back the efforts of their lobbyists. As a result, however, most members of an organization do not directly interact with legislators. Regardless of the current design of your legislative efforts, there is much that a member of an organization can do for their group. There seems to be a common misconception that the several professionals who make up the organization’s legislative team hold the key to effective legislative representation. Although there is clearly no substitute for effective legal, legislative and regulatory counsel, even the most seasoned lobbyist will admit that the activities of the group itself is vitally important to the process. In fact, the work of the organization and its staff in actively supporting the efforts of the lobbying team can have more to do with the success or failure of an organization’s plans as the efforts of the lobbying team itself.

One thing is certain about good lobbyists—they either speak truthfully, or they won’t have another opportunity to lobby. What this means is that government is not a place where exaggerated statements or untruths can be spoken. “Your word is your bond” is a phrase that many lobbyists know and understand well. You must be truthful and you must only commit to issue positions to which you and your organization are totally committed. Not telling the truth, exaggerating an argument or reneging on a commitment can be devastating. A lobbyist has credibility only once; after it is lost, it is difficult or impossible to recover.

Lobbyist Registration

The interaction between the Executive and Legislative Branches of Florida government and the people of Florida is of primary importance to all concerned. With the significance of the power and decision-making authority afforded to both of these branches, lawmakers wisely created a series of laws
and rules to govern this interaction. Separate laws and rules govern the Executive and Legislative Branches. These laws and rules should be reviewed carefully prior to engaging in the business of influencing legislators or other state regulatory officials. In addition, specific attention should be focused on Florida’s gift law as it applies to the ability of state lawmakers and regulators to receive gifts.

Lobbyists fall generally into one or more categories of engagement. Contract lobbyists work for one or more clients or principals. The best of them may charge fees that exceed $100,000 per issue. Corporate lobbyists usually represent a single organization for which they work—many organizations are also able to employ a staff lobbyist working exclusively for their interests as opposed to retaining a contract lobbyist. Governmental agency lobbyists represent governmental entities and can either be staff lobbyist or an outside contract lobbyist hired by the entity. Volunteer lobbyists are those persons with concerns that arise from time to time who may visit the capital city infrequently or communicate with lawmakers within their respective districts.

The Florida Legislature coordinates all legislative and executive branch lobbying through the Legislative Information Division of its Joint Legislative Management Committee. This office produces a listing of “Registered Legislative Lobbyists.” Individuals seeking to register to lobby the legislative or executive branch or to obtain information on registered lobbyists should contact this office at (850) 922-4990. In addition, information on all legislative branch lobbyists can be obtained by visit their world Wide Web site at “http://www.leg.state.fl.us/”.

What is the Definition of “Lobbying”?

As defined by Florida law and rule, “lobbying” means influencing or attempting to influence action or non-action through oral or written communication or attempting to obtain the goodwill of a member of the Legislature, a state regulator or employee of state government. In general, it is not considered lobbying to: (1) respond to an inquiry from a member or employee of the Legislature or state governmental official or employee; (2) to appear before the Legislature or other state regulatory body in response to a subpoena; (3) providing advice or services arising out of a contractual obligation with state government; or (4) representing a client in a disciplinary action before the state government. As with any law or rule, it is best to seek the advice of legal counsel in specifically interpreting the applicability of these requirements in a given situation.

Executive Branch Lobbying

For the Executive Branch, Section 112.3215, Florida Statutes contains the statutory language governing interaction between the Executive Branch and the general public. These laws are further interpreted by the Rules of the Florida Commission on Ethics in Chapter 34-12 (Executive Branch Lobbyist Registration), Florida Administrative Code. Should a violation occur, reports would be filed directly with the Florida Commission on Ethics.

First, you must decide if what you plan to do before a member or staff of the Executive Branch constitutes “lobbying” as defined by the laws and rules. You meet the definition of a “lobbyist” if you: (1) are employed and receive payment or have a contract for economic consideration for the purpose of lobbying; or (2) are principally employed for governmental affairs by another person or governmental entity to lobby an agency on their behalf.

There are a number of exceptions to the above rule. You are not a lobbyist if you are: (1) an employee that is not principally employed for governmental affairs; (2) an attorney or other person who represents a client in a judicial proceeding; (3) an attorney who represents a client in a formal administrative hearing proceeding; (4) a state agency officer or employee who is lobbying on behalf of the agency which he/she serves in the normal course of his/her duties; (5) A person who is a confidential informant; or (6) a person who lobbies to procure a contract for goods/services costing less than $5,000.
Second, if you meet the definition of “lobbyist” reviewed above, you must formally register as a lobbyist with the Lobbyist Registration Office (111 West Madison Street, Room G-68, Tallahassee, Florida 32399-1425, 850/922-4990). Registration runs from January 1 through December 31 of each year. To register, you will need: (1) to complete form CE 20; (2) provide a SEPARATE statement signed by each “principal” (the person, organization or other entity which has employed or retained a lobbyist) you wish to represent; and (3) pay $35 per principal represented. Also, remember that you must notify the Lobbyist Registration Office within 15 days of any change in your registration information. The lobbyist must notice the office in writing to remove that principal from their list of clients. Also, a client being represented by a lobbyist may also notify the office in writing to remove a lobbyist from their list of official lobbyists.

Once you are registered, you must comply with all lobbyist reporting requirements or face stiff penalties for non-compliance. Both lobbyists and principals are required to file reports on a quarterly basis. If a principal employs more than one lobbyist, then the principal must choose a “designated lobbyist” to coordinate and file the report for all lobbyists expenditures and those expenditures made directly by the principal. The designated lobbyist must be communicated to the Lobbyist Registration Office in writing. In addition, the Lobbyist Expenditure Report (CE Form 22) must be completed and sent to the Lobbyist Registration Office on specified dates for the periods ending March 31, June 30, September 30 and December 31. The reports are due on the 45th day after the end of each quarter noted above. Reports must be filed regardless of whether any funds were expended.

Fines will be assessed for those who do not submit timely reports. A fine of $50 per day per report can be assessed. Also, should you wish to dispute any fines or other penalties assessed, you may file an appeal with the Florida Commission on Ethics within 20 days after receipt of the notice of penalty.

Legislative Branch Lobbying

In dealing with the Legislative Branch, Section 11.045, Florida Statutes contains the statutory language governing interaction between the Legislative Branch and the general public. These laws are further interpreted by Joint Rule One of the Florida House and Senate. While the General Counsel of the Office of Legislative Services and the Speaker of the House and President of the Senate may impose penalties for violations of these rules, the ultimate authority on violations of these laws and rules is the House and the Senate.

In a similar fashion to the Executive Branch requirements, the law and rules governing who is concerned to be a “lobbyist” (see above). However, the exceptions to the definition are somewhat different for the Legislative Branch. You are not considered a lobbyist if you are: (1) a member of the Legislature; (2) an employee of the Legislature; (3) a judge acting in their official capacity; (4) a state officer holding elective office and acting in their official capacity; (5) a person appearing as a witness; and (6) a person employed by the executive, judicial, or quasi-judicial department of the state or community college of the state who makes a PERSONAL appearance before the Legislature (otherwise, employees of a state agency MUST register in the same way as other lobbyists).

Should you decide that you do meet the requirements for legislative lobbyist registration, you must submit registration forms to the Lobbyist Registration Office in same way that Executive Branch lobbyists must register. The only difference is that the fee for registration is $60 ($30 each for the House and Senate) for the first entity that the lobbyist registers to represent in a given year. For each additional principal, the fee is an additional $20 per principal ($10 each for the House and Senate).

Reporting requirements and penalties for late filing are similar to the laws and rules for Executive Branch lobbyists, except that legislative lobbyist expenditure reports are due only twice a year. These periods are: (1) January 1 through the adjournment of the regular legislative session, including any extensions of a regular session; and (2) the remainder of the calendar year. Each report is due forty-five days after the end of the reporting period.

A closing tip on the filing of all forms with the Lobbyist Registration Office. While you may photocopy the forms themselves, original signatures must be on ALL forms submitted.
Florida’s Code of Ethics for Public Officers and Employees and Florida’s Gift Law

In 1968, the Florida Constitution was revised to require that all state employees and non-judicial officials abide by a code of ethics to protect the public interests. In 1976, the “Sunshine Amendment” was adopted by Florida voters, which among other things, established the Florida Commission on Ethics to investigate complaints regarding the conduct of public officials other than judges. The conduct of judges is regulated by the Judicial Qualifications Commission. The Florida Code of Ethics for Public Officers and Employees was subsequently adopted by the Florida Legislature and incorporated into Chapter 112 of the Florida Statutes. The ethics laws can be classified into six general areas dealing with: (1) prohibited actions or conduct; (2) prohibited employment and business relationships; (3) restrictions on appointing, employing, and contracting with relatives; (4) post office-holding and employment (revolving door) restrictions; (5) voting conflicts of interest; and (6) disclosures:

- Those laws related to prohibited actions or conduct are: (1) solicitation of any gift or acceptance of a gift worth over $100 (see section on Florida’s Gift Law below for more information); (2) unauthorized compensation; (3) misuse of public position; (4) disclosure or use of certain information not available to the general public; and (5) solicitation or acceptance of honoraria.

- Prohibited employment and business relationships include: (1) doing business with an entity in which the officer or employee has a financial interest greater than five percent; (2) having conflicting employment or contractual relationships; (3) legislators lobbying state agencies for compensation; (4) employees being members of a governing body which serves as his/her employer; (5) professional organization leaders not being members of the related professional board concurrently; (6) employees involved with purchase decisions must not be employed or related to those effected by such decisions; and (7) rules on local attorney conflicts.

- Restrictions on appointing, employing, and contracting with relatives are that a public official may not help or exert influence for a relative seeking a position within the entity in which the official has authority or control, subject to certain exemptions.

- So-called “revolving door” restrictions are: (1) members of the Legislature and other elected or appointed state officials are prohibited from lobbying that entity for two years after leaving that post; (2) employees of state government are prohibited from lobbying that entity for two years after leaving that post and from entering into certain contracts; and (3) local government employees are prohibited from lobbying that entity for two years after leaving that post.

- In general, voting conflicts of interest relate to the concept that no state, county, municipal, or local public official can vote or participate in any matter which could personally benefit that public official or related entity without first disclosing that conflict of interest. In many cases, that public official will not be able to vote or participate in the matter, even if a disclosure is made.

- Disclosures are required of various public officials. The thinking is that public disclosure in some form by public officials reminds them that they are to put their public interests above those of themselves. Disclosure also allows the public to see the financial interests of those who spend public money.

Florida specific requirements regarding the acceptance of gifts by public officials can be found in Section 112.3148, Florida Statutes. This law is referenced as controlling by most public entities, including the Florida House and Senate. Specific questions should be directed to the Florida Commission on Ethics. In general, these requirements are:

- Public officials and employees are prohibited from soliciting any gift from any committee of continuous existence (political action committee), political committee, lobbyist or the firm or other related entity of a lobbyist, where the gift is for personal benefit of the official or employee or a relative of the official or employee.
• Public officials and employees are prohibited from accepting gifts worth over $100 from any committee of continuous existence (political action committee), political committee, lobbyist or the firm or other related entity of a lobbyist, unless it is on behalf of the governmental entity or a charitable organization. All gifts over $100 that are accepted according to this exemption must be reported.

• Public officials and employees may accept gifts worth less than $100. If the gift is worth less than $100, but more than $25, it must be reported by the donor of the gift and the recipient of the gift. If the gift is worth less than $25, it need not be reported.

• If a public official or employee accepts a gift worth less than $100, both the donor of the gift and the recipient of the gift must complete a gift disclosure form. Forms for Executive Branch officials and employees are filed with the Division of Elections of the Florida Secretary of State. Forms for Legislative Branch officials and employees are files with the Joint Legislative Management Committee of the Florida Legislature. The forms are due on the last day of the calendar quarter for the previous calendar quarter in which the gift was made.

Remember that there are very specific requirements for disclosure of gifts. They vary according to the value of the gift given, the entity to which the gift is given and the entity who gives the gift. Also, the deadlines and procedures vary based on these variables as well. Make sure that you consult with the appropriate reporting agency (the Division of Elections or the Joint Legislative Management Committee) or the Florida Commission on Ethics if you are ever in doubt as to the applicability of these laws and rules.

First Time at “The Capitol”

While most people would consider a trip to the Capitol to be an enjoyable experience (and most of the time it is), it can be an overwhelming experience if you are there as an advocate. Like any governmental body, the engine that is Florida government has many moving parts. The trick is to understand how they work individually, and how they work together.

The “Capitol” really refers to the Capitol Complex itself in Tallahassee. However, the environs around the Capitol Complex house a wide variety of executive, legislative and judicial offices. The appendix contains a map showing the major office buildings and their location in and around the Capitol Complex. However, also realize that there are other governmental offices located in Tallahassee, but away from the Capitol Complex. As state government has grown, the need for additional space has forced governmental entities outside of the Capitol Complex, while some agencies are physically located around Florida or have regional offices. Make sure you make contact with the offices you plan to visit ahead of time to find out their exact location.

The Capitol Complex is divided into four major areas: (1) the “old” Capitol building; (2) the “new” Capitol building; (3) the House Office Building or “HOB”; and (4) the Senate Office Building or “SOB”. The old Capitol building was built in 1845 as the seat of Florida government. In 1902, major additions we added to accommodate growth. The old Capitol building served as the original home of all Florida governmental branches, with the executive and judicial branches on the first floor and the Florida Legislature on the second floor. Currently, the old Capitol building serves primarily as a museum, but does still have some legislative offices in the basement level.

In 1978, the legislative and executive branches moved from the “old” Capitol building to the “new” Capitol building. The judicial branch had already moved from the old Capitol building in 1912, then to its current building directly behind the new Capitol building (the Florida Supreme Court) in 1949. This building, unlike its predecessor with two stories and a basement, is 22 stories tall. In addition to housing many state agency offices and the main offices for the Governor and each Florida Cabinet member, the new Capitol building contains many legislative offices, the House of Representatives and Senate
chambers and the Cabinet Meeting Room.

Adjacent to the new Capitol building are the Senate and House Office Buildings. These buildings contain most of the offices for each state senator and representative, although the leaders of both chambers are located in the new Capitol building. The House Office Building is located due North and the Senate Office Building is located due South of the new Capitol building. Both buildings have four stories (Entrance Level, Second Floor, Third Floor and Fourth Floor) and a basement (Lower Level) and can be accessed from the main entrance in the Capitol Courtyard (the plaza between the old and new Capitols) or from one of many “skyways” (see “Insider Secrets” for more information on the location of these skyways).

When you come to the Capitol Complex, it is best to plan both your itinerary and your travel route in advance. Once you decide where you are planning to visit, make sure you find out the exact location of the offices. Also, it is a good idea to take a minute upon arrival at the Capitol Complex to walk around and familiarize yourself with the general layout of the complex. This will help to orient you as you move from location to location. Finally, two meeting good points to meet back with your group if you split up and need to regroup is the “Florida seal” on the Plaza Level (first floor) of the new Capitol or the vast open space on the fourth floor of the new Capitol (between the entrance to the House and Senate chambers).

If all else fails and you are lost, your best bet is to find your way back to the Capitol Courtyard to reorient yourself. If you can’t figure out how to get there, your other “ace in the hole” is to duck into an office and ask for directions. All Capitol staff members (unless they are brand new) know the lay of the land and are used to helping people find their way all of the time.

Three Branches to Influence

The size of state government is enormous, as you can see from the sheer space it takes to house the Florida Legislature and its related offices. When it comes to influencing lawmakers and rule-making authorities, your priorities should be presented to the appropriate officials in the legislative, executive or judicial branches. Thus, anyone seeking to influence state government must know the basic structure of the three branches before delving into the process.

The Legislative Branch

Most state laws are passed by its state legislature by a majority vote. The legislature is also primarily responsible for the review and approval of the annual state budget submitted by the Governor, as well as approval of many executive branch appointments to various agencies, boards and commissions. The Legislative Branch offers many opportunities to influence issues and laws. Citizens usually direct their attention at the Legislature during the regular session and other officially convened sessions.

However, any year-round legislative process requires lobbyists and their constituencies to continuously work to position themselves for influencing government.

There are a few states that are in legislative session year-round, while some legislatures are scheduled by state constitution to sit in session for a specified number of calendar days. According to Article III, Section 3 of the Constitution of the State of Florida, the Florida Legislature meets in “regular session” from the first Tuesday after the first Monday in March not to exceed sixty consecutive days. Adjournment is usually set for the sixtieth day, although they can adjourn early (“sine-die”) if their business is completed prior to the sixtieth day. The legislature may extend its session, but such extension must be approved by a three-fifths vote of both chambers.

The Legislative Branch is composed of two chambers: the Senate and the House of Representatives. While the Florida Constitution sets the qualifications and elections of its members, each chamber has the power to choose its own officers and establish its own rules of procedure. After general state-wide elections, the Florida Legislature is required by the Florida Constitution to convene on the fourteenth day following the general election for the purpose of organizing each chamber and electing officers. Ironically,
though the top leaders may be formally elected at the organizational sessions, some individuals can be designated several years in advance by their respective political parties, giving political power to some leaders long before they receive it officially during the organizational session.

Legislation presented in either chamber must be “sponsored” by a House of Senate member. While a bill may be introduced in the House and not in the Senate and vice versa, both branches of the Legislature must approve the bill in identical form for it to pass. Therefore, not having an identical version of a given bill sponsored in both the House and the Senate makes it much more difficult to secure its passage. In addition, the only bill that the Florida Legislature is required to pass before it adjourns is the annual state budget. Therefore, with more than 3,000 bills proposed in any given legislative session, it is a fact that many bills are never even considered.

When work cannot be accomplished during a regular session, a “special session” may be convened by the Governor of Florida. Special sessions are being called more frequently to handle critical concerns. While a multitude of bills and subjects are usually proposed for consideration during these sessions, the bills proposed during a special session must be within the “purview of the proclamation” issued by the Governor or approved by two-thirds vote of both chambers. This requires lobbyists to be ever vigilant.

The Florida Senate— The Florida Senate is comprised of no less than thirty and no more than 40 members (it is currently at 40 members), one being taken from each specified Senate district as determined by the Florida portion of the Census of the United States and the apportionment proceedings of the Florida Legislature. Members of the Florida Senate are addressed as “Senator (last name)” in correspondence and conversation, except for the President of the Senate who is addressed as “President (last name)” or “Mister/Madam President.” The district of each senator covers a much larger geographic area than those of House members and represents about 300,000 citizens.

The Florida House of Representatives— The Florida House of Representatives is comprised of no less than 80 and no more than 120 members (it is currently at 120 members), one being taken from each specified House district as determined by the Florida portion of the Census of the United States and the apportionment proceedings of the Florida Legislature. Members are addressed as “Representative (last name)” in correspondence and conversation, except for the Speaker of the House who is addressed as “Speaker (last name)” or “Mister/Madam Speaker”. Each House member represents about 80,000 citizens within their district.

While House and Senate members comprise the elected seats in the Florida Legislature, assistants, analysts, committee staff and secretaries are chosen by legislators to make up the legislative staff. These individuals, in most cases, have a superb working knowledge of both the legislative process and specific legislative proposals. They also have the “ear” of the legislator or legislators for whom they work. It is critical to learn who to contact, and when, in order to have an impact on the legislative process.

Legislative Committees—House and Senate committees are where the bulk of the work on proposed legislation is accomplished. The committees serve as a forum for fact finding, debate and decision-making. There are different types of committees, including standing, subcommittees, select and conference. (Refer to definitions provided in the chapter, "Language of the Legislature.")

Committee members are generally appointed by the leaders in the House and Senate. The committee members and their staffs are responsible for general fields of law and legislative activity (i.e. health care, insurance and banking, for instance). All proposed legislation is referred to one or more committees in their respective chambers. Because time is a foe against the passage of any legislation, a bill referred to three or more committees often is destined to die before the session ends. In some cases, you can determine the feelings of the legislative leadership in both chambers by the assignment of a given bill to its “committees of reference”.

It is advisable to become acquainted with the committees and their activities in the House and Senate.
Because committees meet during the months prior to the session, much of the debate on the specific sections of each bill is completed in committees long before the regular session convenes. Many times, if changes are not made to a bill in committee, it becomes difficult to make changes at all on the floor of the House or Senate. Therefore, a lobbyist must know which officials make up the committee and the staffs assigned to assist the committee. Advance notice is given for most committee work and lobbyists and other individuals use the meetings as a forum to present facts supporting or opposing the proposal legislation before the committee. Lobbyists and other individuals accomplish most of their work in gaining acceptance of or opposition to a given proposal in the committee meetings. Committees have the ability to report bills "favorably," "favorably with amendment(s)," or "favorably as a committee substitute" or "unfavorably." When a committee votes to oppose the bill it is usually dead for the rest of that legislative session.

The Executive Branch

The Executive Branch is another arena in which to influence government. The Executive Branch in Florida consists of the Governor, Lieutenant Governor and members of the Cabinet. The Cabinet consists of the Attorney General, Secretary of State, Commissioner of Education, Commissioner of Agriculture, Treasurer (who is also the Insurance Commissioner and Fire Marshal) and the Comptroller. All of these positions are elected positions. Each cabinet member may share some executive powers with the Governor.

The Executive Branch is also divided into no more than twenty-five agencies or departments with the authority to execute and enforce the laws on behalf and with the supervision of the Governor or his/her designee.

Additionally, the Governor has the ability to veto, to sign into law, or to allow to pass without his/her signature all bills passed by the Florida Legislature. Since it is the last step before bills become law, it is important to know the Governor's position on all issues. You should confer with key persons in the administration because the Governor may seek input before signing, vetoing, or allowing a bill to become law.

The Cabinet is another avenue for input. Each Cabinet official has a number of staff members who coordinate their activities and agendas on a wide variety of issues. It is important to not only work with the cabinet member but also with his staff who may receive input from persons with an interest in certain issues appearing on the Cabinet's agenda.

The Cabinet members usually head departments for which they take responsibility, e.g., Agriculture & Consumer Services, Banking & Finance, Education, Legal Affairs, Insurance and State. The other departments, agencies and commissions may report to either the Governor or the Governor and Cabinet, and might include, for example, Departments of Business and Professional Regulation, Citrus, Community Affairs, Corrections, Elder Affairs, Environmental Protection, Families and Children, Health, Health Care Administration, Highway Safety & Motor Vehicles, Labor & Employment Security, Law Enforcement, Lottery, Revenue, Transportation and Veterans Affairs. In recent years, Florida has seen a number of agency mergers and the creation of several new agencies. There have also been several instances where services provided by governmental agencies have been transferred to private corporations.

The Governor is also responsible for appointing numerous boards, committees and commissions throughout the departments. It is important to know of upcoming appointments and how to influence the process. This can be done through communications with the Governor's office, through your own elected state officials, or through the applicable board, committee or commission chairs or their staffs.

3 Beginning with the 2002 elections, the Secretary of State and the Commission of Education will no longer serve on the Florida Cabinet. Further, the duties of the Treasurer and the Comptroller will be consolidated into the new position of "Chief Financial Officer."
The Judicial Branch

The Judicial Branch interprets the laws and applies the Constitution. The judiciary also presides over trials, though certain limited administrative disputes may be decided by executive agencies when authorized by law.

The courts are empowered to declare an act of the Legislature void for violating the Constitution, interpret the law, prevent the illegal action of governmental agencies or define the authority of other branches of government. Though it is not likely that officials within the Judicial Branch can be directly influenced, the courts serve as an effective arena for interpreting the intention of legislation and clarifying other laws.

The highest court in Florida is the Supreme Court, comprised of justices who are appointed by the Governor for staggered terms. Other courts may include the District Courts of Appeal, Circuit Courts and County Courts. These appointments are then confirmed by the citizens of Florida as required by their appointments.

Effective Communications

Without the ability to effectively communicate your legislative and regulatory issues to both your members and the lawmakers who create the laws and rules, the best-laid plans of an organization will be unsuccessful. As the saying goes, “it’s not what you know to be fact, it is what you can prove.” All parties to your legislative and regulatory efforts must be armed with the latest information about your issues and your position on those issues.

Organizational Activities

Organizational communication is essential in the lobbying of group legislative and regulatory goals. Remember that despite all of the pomp and circumstance surrounding the legislative and regulatory process, the bottom line responsibility for all legislators who get elected is to serve the constituents within their legislative districts who elected them. No matter how persuasive the lobbyist, each legislator will ultimately be accountable to the citizens in their district for each and every vote they cast. For this reason alone, it is easy to see the importance for any organization in effectively marshaling its volunteers in support of its legislative and regulatory efforts.

General Membership Updates

It is critical to keep the general constituency of your group informed on all legislative activities. Many members join solely for the benefit of governmental representation. Further, keeping the general membership up-to-date will help when you decide to ask individual members to take action on these same issues. As a rule of thumb, it’s good to update the members every week during times when the Legislature is in session. If your membership is larger and precludes performing this function this often, try updating members every two weeks. As an alternative to updating every member, you might also want to try sending updates to your “extended leadership,” including your officers, committee chairs, board of directors/governors and local chapter officers. Since communications have grown less costly with the use of technology for fax broadcasts, e-mail and Internet websites, ask that these volunteers keep their local contacts informed. Another way to involve your general membership is to create a network of those more active members who are also interested in legislative activities. These members can also be communicated with on a more frequent basis. This group can also be asked to communicate with the members in their area (see “Communication Trees”).

Coordinating Board Involvement
One of the most influential small groups of people besides your lobbying team is your board of directors or executive officers. While each person affiliated with your organization is a constituent, the board or executive officers present the “constituent” look and feel of your entire organization. In addition, lawmakers view board or executive committee members as members, whereas they view staff or outside consultants as paid professionals.

Keeping your board posted on your legislative and rule-making activities is an absolute must. They must know what is happening as quickly as information is available. This group is also a great source for getting an influential person in your organization to come to Tallahassee quickly.

Grassroots Contacts

Individuals who are most familiar to a given legislator or state regulator are a critical element of any governmental affairs program. For large organizations and companies, each district across Florida, whether House or Senate, will most likely have a person from your organization who has been active in the campaign of that legislator. Many of your volunteers also deal with various state regulators on a daily or weekly basis (i.e. the dentist who has a patient elected to the Florida Senate or a trade association with a lawmaker who is a member of that group). Moreover, there is likely to be an individual within your group who is a close personal friend of each legislator and state regulator.

Collecting the names of these members and using these members individually or as a group when needed is a tremendously effective tool. These names can be gathered by sending a letter to each legislator asking them for the names of three of your members they know in their district. In most cases, legislators are happy to tell you who they know in your organization. You can also solicit this information from your volunteers directly through a newsletter or other special mailing.

Once a grassroots contact list is created, putting this information into a database that can be sorted by each district or by a particular committee is a very powerful tool. Being able to communicate via personal constituent contact with all of the legislators on a given committee before a key vote or with a state regulator before a hearing on an issue is a potent way to make a direct impact on the decision-making process.

Grassroots contacts should be kept informed in almost the same way as the leadership. The more communication you can maintain with this group, the more informed that can be when speaking with their respective contacts.

Communication “Trees”

Another superb use of volunteers is through creating telephone, facsimile and letter-writing “trees.” In creating a communication tree, ask a group of individuals within your organization with whom you communicate directly to communicate with a specific group in their area. This cuts down on the number of people who receive direct contact by any one person, but greatly increases the number of people who receive contact.

As an example, an organization might need to place as many calls as possible to a particular legislator within a matter of hours. Several individuals in that legislator’s district had previously agreed to coordinate calls for the organization to that legislator. Within minutes, these volunteers were contacted by the organization and began calling the local volunteers on their communications tree. Soon hundreds of individuals were contacted about taking immediate action. This same scenario can be achieved using the telephone, facsimile or e-mail tree.

When setting up these systems within your organization, seek the assistance of your lobbying team. Be sure to network with other organizations that have designed these types of systems within their own groups. Also, pay special attention to similar groups to yours in other states. With similar types of issues, they have probably created general systems that can be adapted to the unique needs of your organization.
**Individual Activities**

*Individual communication* is critical to successfully influencing government. You cannot effectively exert influence without the ability of individual members to express your positions to the persons in power. There are many forms of effective communications, including written communications in the form of letters, position papers, newspaper editorials, and verbal communications such as personal visits, telephone calls and testimony.

**Personal Visits**

When making personal contacts, several points are important. Recognize that government officials and their staffs are “regular” people. You should not be intimidated, nor should you be too aggressive. Treat them with the dignity they deserve, and expect the same from them.

A special note about legislators and their staffs. Most, if not all, state legislators have an office in the Capitol Complex and an office in their home district. These offices are run by legislative assistants, with each member usually having one or two legislative assistants. When contemplating personal visits, remember that the presence of the legislator and his/her staff shifts, depending on whether or not the Legislature is in session. When in session, the staff usually work out of the Tallahassee office. When not in session, the staff work out of the district office.

Also remember that a state legislator's schedule is very hectic. Service in the Florida Legislature is a part-time job. Since the session officially lasts only sixty days, most lawmakers also manage a full-time career year-round. Due to this splitting of time between legislative and career responsibilities, the times of the year when the Legislature is not in session usually requires the legislator to spend time in his/her district office, work a full-time job and travel to Tallahassee as committee and other work demands. During the session, the legislator will obviously travel to Tallahassee much more, often residing in Tallahassee part of the time, but will keep many of the same responsibilities he/she had when the Legislature was not in session. Thus, a specific key to effective communication with legislators and their staffs is to maintain continual contact over the course of a given year. Only in this way can you really count on finding a particular legislator when the need arises.

When seeking an appointment with an official, remember the importance of the staff -- they are often just as helpful as the lawmaker (or more so). The staff has constant access to the lawmakers, advises them on positions, may be responsible for drafting laws and influences who gets appointments. Also, remember to write down the name of the staff member who assisted you for future reference and ask for their business card.

Don't be disappointed if a meeting is scheduled for only a few minutes—this should be enough time to start a relationship, make your points and leave behind a position paper. It can be hard for many groups to get in to see a given legislator or state regulator at all! Say "yes" when a lawmaker asks you to walk down the hall or talk in the elevator; that might be all the time and access you get! Also, remember the importance of staff in the process. If you are not able to meet with the legislator or state regulator, meet with their staff and ask that they forward your comments.

Before you go to the appointment, learn the background of the lawmakers, including their district's characteristics and professional and personal interests. The more you can identify with the official, the better relationship you will build. Several directories are available that describe lawmakers’ interests and also provide their photos. Some of these publications are listed in the appendix. Also, make sure to dress appropriately. Business attire is expected, unless your organization plans to wear special attire to create an effect (i.e. wearing a uniform, etc.). However, make sure that your group looks professional no matter what attire you select. The individuals within your organization might also want to wear namebadges to help identify themselves and the organization.

Lobbyists or other individuals presenting the views of their organizations should be prepared and
concise! A general statement like, "This law will hurt small business," will not find sympathetic ears. Rather a precise statement is more effective, such as: "HB ## on workers' compensation reform will raise my rates by 10 to 20 percent causing me to lay off two employees next year."

Some people are uncomfortable using the formal titles of appointed and elected officials. However, titles are appropriate and should be used at the start of the meeting; thereafter, you might want to ask the official how he or she prefers to be addressed in public and private. Also, it is good to appoint a leader to introduce the group to the legislator or state regulator and to start the conversation. Also, be sure you thank the officials for taking the time to meet with you.

Take time to learn the "language." One can either ramble on for twenty minutes before an official understands what issue you are addressing—or you can get to the point by knowing how to identify the issue properly, point out what section of the proposal you favor or oppose, and by being very specific about the actions you are requesting. For example, are you requesting that the bill be "withdrawn," are you seeking or offering an "amendment," or are you asking that the proposal include "additional appropriations?" In every case, your knowledge of the "language of lawmaking"\(^4\) will advance your cause far more than vague terms and statements.

Create relationships with other groups to increase your effectiveness. If you know other businesses or associations with similar stands on a given proposal, seek their approval to use their name when you are talking to lawmakers. A single entity is less likely to have influence than an organized effort by a multitude of businesses, associations or individuals. P.S. Make sure that your position is the same as that of the organization you represent. Tremendous damage results when a volunteer lobbyist makes a statement that conflicts with the organization's position.

Try to put yourself in the place of government officials. Consider these perspectives before you start trying to influence them. The officials are usually concerned with:

...doing a good job for the state and for the voters who elected them.

...getting re-elected, knowing consensus and constituencies are vital to re-election (or keeping the job as an appointed or career service professional).

...wanting to help you.

...not being an expert in every issue and thus counting on you for accurate information.

...accomplishing as much as possible in limited time frames.

...making a difference and making the right decisions.

...conflicting pressures which require a great deal of information gathering and thought before decisions are made.

...the special interests of the area represented.

...having to consider hundreds of bills and issues while not being proficient in any of them.

At all meetings, be punctual, concise, bring talking points or a position paper to leave behind. Don't threaten, don't exaggerate and don't burn bridges. When the meeting is over conclude it politely (no matter what the outcome), on time and with another "thank you." Don't get mad at government officials...you may need their help on other issues.

Incidentally, don't wear out your welcome. A good lobbyist, whether paid or volunteer, should be able to get his or her point across without being bothersome to officials. The lobbyist who "camps out" on the

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\(^4\) In Florida, "The Language of Lawmaking in Florida" is a book available from the Clerk of the House of Representatives.
lawmaker's doorstep shows a lack of understanding of the system and disrespect to the official and staff. This applies to asking to use their phones, reading their newspapers and making their office your office, too!

**Written Communications**

The most common form of communication with government officials is through writing in the form of letters, memos, position papers, newsletters, news clippings, and facsimiles, for example. The result is an avalanche of staff work -- consider the impact on an official before you generate a grassroots letter-writing campaign or petition drive.

If you are writing, follow these helpful tips:

Address lawmakers properly, for example:

The Honorable Senator "John Smith"  
Florida Senate  
The Capitol  
Tallahassee, FL 32399-1100

Dear Senator "Smith":

* Write legibly or type  
* Be brief, two or three paragraphs if possible  
* Identify the bill number or issue  
* Be courteous and reasonable  
* Be sure it is received **before** the vote

* If writing to a committee, send a personal letter to each committee member, and a copy to your own legislator  
* If you know the legislator or regulator personally, do everything in your power to make the letter stand out (i.e. make it personal by using a handwritten note on the letter) or by highlighting the most important sentences

**Do**

* Write on your professional or business stationary  
* Use your own words  
* Use examples  
* Include articles or a position paper  
* Use correct grammar  
* Send copies to the appropriate people

**Don't**

* Be rude  
* Demand anything  
* Threaten or be unreasonable  
* Include more than one issue in the letter  
* Exaggerate or be deceptive

* Use long paragraphs and sentences  
* Send form letters  
* Hint at thoughts of dishonesty or sleaze  
* Assume the official is an expert  
* Demand an instant answer

**Timing is Everything**
When it comes to influencing government, being an hour late to a personal visit or sending a letter that arrives two days after an important vote can mean the difference between success or failure. Human nature and the busy schedules of organization volunteers often distract people from their mission—influencing government. If this is allowed to happen, failure is certain.

The government process is fluid. Proposals move from committee to committee, meeting to meeting and desk to desk. It is absolutely essential to monitor the process by accessing timely information and fully understanding the process. That is why so many associations and corporations have offices in the State Capitol and/or retain a professional lobbyist.

For example, at times in the legislative process, proposals may require seventy-two hours notice before certain actions can occur, at other times the notice may be only two hours (or less). Also, there are set deadlines throughout the year as to when bills can be filed and when no further actions can be taken up in committee. For anyone to be successful in this process, it is imperative that they learn to work within the time constraints.

When discussing an issue with a government official, find out about the process that the issue must follow and the anticipated dates of meetings. Ask to be included on the "interested persons" mailing list. Also, obtain the name of a contact person for additional information, if the official should be unavailable.

When providing written responses to government issues, make certain the communications are received on time. A letter received after the vote is an embarrassment for you, not to mention a waste of your time and resources. Use technology to communicate; overnight delivery services, facsimiles and e-mail are an important component in timing. The use of technology might get your information read before the post office drags in another big bag of mail requiring answers.

**Keeping Informed**

Keeping attuned to government is a time-consuming and expensive task. It requires strategies and expertise to influence the right people at the right time. In general, there are two outlets for gathering information and staying abreast of the process: public information from government sources and the news media and private sources including associations, lobbyists, law firms and information reporting services. Good advice for a lobbyist of any kind is to make time to read, read and read.

Timely information is imperative. For example, while one proposed law can be started in an agency and move through the legislature over a ten month period, other bills can pass within weeks, days or even hours. Furthermore, the time periods for giving public notice of meetings may be anywhere from 30 days to two hours (or sometimes less). Computers may be located throughout the Capitol to allow visitors access to the status of proposals and meetings. On-line computer services and reports by mail may be acquired by the public. Ask officials to add your name to their "interested parties" mailing lists.

If you plan to track the regulatory process, the state may offer a number of public documents or on-line computers for this purpose. The Clerk's Office in the House of Representatives or the Secretary of the Senate may be very helpful for information on legislative issues. Also, during regular and special sessions, an information desk on the fourth floor of the Capitol is full of valuable information with helpful people to answer questions. You can also consult with the Division of Legislative Information at 850/488-4371.

*Private* tracking services are also available for a fee. Information is provided through computer services, daily delivery and printed documents. One benefit of these services is the ability to organize the data according to your needs. Several information sources and services are identified in the appendix.
Secrets of “After Hours” Lobbying

Just because the legislature is not in session, or a regulatory agency is not holding a meeting, does not mean that opportunities to influence the legislative or regulatory process do not exist. It is common knowledge that it is those times when a legislator or state regulator is not in the middle of the hustle of the session or other meetings that it becomes easier to communicate your message more effectively. In fact, rumor has it that some of the most important decisions are made “after hours” when the doors of the Capitol are locked and the parking garage secured.

There are a number of events and activities that happen in and around the Capitol Complex after hours. Some of these are public events and others are privately sponsored by individual organizations or coalitions.

Legislative Days

Many organizations hold “legislative days” at the Capitol. These activities are usually all day affairs. Most of these events are organized to begin with a legislative briefing of their members on their specific issues. In many cases, legislators are invited to attend and present their viewpoints. In some cases, elaborate luncheons in the Capitol Courtyard or on the 22nd floor of the new Capitol are held. These are usually by invitation only (for organization members, legislators and their staffs and state regulators).

Sometimes, rallies are held in conjunction with a legislative day. Individuals affiliated with a given organization and other concerned citizens are encouraged to attend and show their support for a particular cause. Legislators, state regulators and other dignitaries are often asked to attend and to address the audience.

There are three main keys to holding a successful legislative day. One is to make sure that you have enough people from your organization in attendance to visit with as many legislators and regulators as possible. Not having enough of your constituents present will hamper your ability to get around to every legislative office. Second, it is important that you have as much “quality time” with legislators, regulators and their staffs as possible. You should shoot for at least five minutes with each of your targeted legislators, regulators and their staffs. Third, you should make sure you create “visibility” for your organization. Groups create visibility by holding special events, luncheons, create informational kits to leave with lawmakers, wearing similar lapel pins and other similar activities. Also, the sheer presence of a large number of your volunteers “walking the halls” of the Capitol or state agency office will create instant visibility if they can tell what organization you represent.

Fund Raising Events

Remember that it takes money to get elected. Therefore, all political candidates have fund raising events, as do both the Republican and Democratic parties on the state and local level. Also, many legislators from out of town and both parties hold fund raising events in Tallahassee.

Anyone who supports a given candidate or who wants more information on a candidate is usually welcomed to attend these events. Make sure you check to see beforehand if a particular event is by invitation only. Also, it is usually appropriate to bring a contribution check to the candidate with you to the event. However, if you really are not sure you want to support a given candidate, by all means use this as an opportunity to meet him or her and get additional information. They will appreciate your willingness to approach them about their candidacy.

Legislative Receptions
During the period that leads up to the start of the Legislature in the Spring of each year through the end of the session, a large number of legislative receptions are held. Most organizations that hold legislative receptions do so during their legislative days at the Capitol.

The Tallahassee Area Chamber of Commerce provides a wonderful service by compiling these legislative activities into a handy reference book. Named the “Legislative Social Calendar,” these manuals are usually available from the Chamber sometime in February. Call 850/224-8116 to order a copy.

**Restaurants and Bars**

There are many favorite, and fun, destinations for lawmakers, lobbyists, state regulators and their staff and visitors alike to frequent while in Tallahassee. Several of these are within walking distance to the Capitol (see Insider Tips #1). Drop in for a beverage and expect to see plenty of politicians and lobbyists. Here are some of the better known sites of hospitality and food:

**Sloppy Joe’s of Tallahassee** (301 South Bronough Street) - Located within Kleman Plaza (you may have already parked there), this is one of the newest after hours establishments. Patterned after the original Sloppy Joe’s in Key West, this is a very popular spot for both lunch and dinner.

**Andrews Capital Grill and Bar** (228 South Adams Street) - This sports bar and restaurant is so close to the Capitol that lawmakers could literally run back and forth to the Capitol for quorum calls and votes. Newly renovated, it’s a favorite stop of everybody who works in or near the Capitol Complex.

**Clyde and Costello’s** (210 South Adams Street) - This bar has probably hosted the most lawmakers and lobbyists than any bar in Florida. The easy recipe for fun is: (1) pull out your credit card; (2) start a tab; (3) introduce yourself to everyone you see (most everyone will be of importance); (4) offer to buy them a drink; (5) enjoy! Be prepared to spend your “happy hours” here.

**Governors Club** (202 1/2 South Adams Street) - While you must be a member or a guest of a member to enter this establishment, most associations, societies, corporations and lobbyists are members. With three floors of elegant dining and meeting rooms and its location within a block of the Capitol Complex, it is the PREMIERE location for all political and legislative activities.

**Governors Inn** (209 South Adams Street) - You’ll find the VIPs of lobbying and politics residing here. If you don’t have a room there, at least look in and see who’s rubbing shoulders at the bar or in the conference room. If you know someone who is staying there, make sure you ask to meet them for breakfast...the coffee and pastries are excellent!

**Jacobs on the Plaza** (101 South Adams Street) - If you remember Fat Tuesday’s at the corner of Park and Adams Streets, now you’ll find an upscale hotel dining room and bar nestled inside of the DoubleTree Hotel. Many groups host receptions for lawmakers inside the ballrooms of this hotel. Sitting in the lobby of the hotel, you’re sure to see elected officials and lobbyists milling about. The DoubleTree is also known for its great chocolate chip cookies (they’re on sale at the front desk and worth every penny!).

Besides these spots close to the Capitol Complex, there are also a number of establishments that are frequented by lawmakers, regulators and lobbyists that are within a short drive of the Capitol:

**Bradfordville Hunt Club** (Bannerman Road) - This is farther away for the Capitol Complex than most, but is worth the drive. This log cabin style house is wonderful for creating a unique meeting or reception experience. Most legislators, regulators and lobbyists have been here for an event at least once. Ample parking and a country feel make this location an interesting venue.

**Clarin Capitol Hotel** (316 West Tennessee Street) - This hotel was completely renovated recently and offers great accommodations and meeting space. Its circular-shaped main tower is a Tallahassee landmark. This location is convenient to the Capitol Complex and is centrally located near both
universities and the downtown area. The hotel also has a cozy restaurant just off the main lobby.

Nicholson’s Farm House Restaurant (State Road 10, Havana) - This is the farthest place we know of from the Capitol Complex to eat, but legislators, regulators and lobbyists go there anyway…and often. Known for its sprawling property, southern plantation look and outstanding steaks and seafood, this is the perfect place for a group dinner or reception. They usually have live music and hay rides on Friday and Saturday nights. Also, no matter how much you eat (and you will eat a lot), save room for Mama’s Strawberry Shortcake (one word: WOW!).

Radisson Hotel Tallahassee (415 North Monroe Street) - Besides the Governors Inn and the DoubleTree Hotel, this is where many legislators, legislative staff, organizations and lobbyists stay or have their clients stay when they are in town. Known for its fine restaurant and great service, the Radisson sells out quickly during legislative session. They also have a wonderful selection of meeting rooms (the Mahogany Boardroom and the Library are fabulous!) and can host a wide variety of group events.

The Silver Slipper (531 Scotty Lane) - In existence for over 60 years, Chris and Bill Kalfas really have figured out how to throw a party. They also serve some mean charcoal broiled steaks, prime rib and seafood. They can accommodate groups of up to 400 people. They have so many legislative and political receptions there that they have installed a “banquet in progress” sign on their marquee to explain to passers-by why there are so many cars in their parking lot and around the restaurant and bar. It is also a wonderful place to have dinner, with a large number of private dining rooms. If you haven’t had dinner in one of the private dining rooms, you must do it.

“Insider” Tips to Make You More Influential

1. **Hold Your Legislative Events Within Walking Distance Of The Capitol** - If you hold a legislative meeting for your organization that you expect lawmakers to attend, make sure it is within walking distance of the Capitol and that it is either during the lunch hours or at the end of the day. The easier it is for a lawmaker or their staff to get to your event, the greater your chance that they will attend. You can even hold your meeting in the old Capitol or the new Capitol. Call 850/487-1902 for more information on availability.

2. **Use The Skybridges to Save Time** - To assist your travels in between the House and Senate Office Buildings and the new Capitol, “skybridges” were built. However, it is important to know which floors have skybridges. You can travel from the new Capitol to the House Office Building using skybridges on floors two and three. In traveling from the new Capitol to the Senate, however, you can travel over skybridges on floors two, three and four. Also, a new skybridge has been built between the third floor of the Senate Office Building and the Knott Building (where the Senate Committee Offices are located).

3. **Tips To Appear Before Committees** - When testifying before committees, you must fill out an appearance card and give it to the committee staff. Anytime you are invited to address a committee, thank the chair and members of the committee for allowing you to speak, state your name and the organization you represent and briefly present your position. In committee testimony, the more concise and brief you are, the better. Conclude with thanking the members again for allowing you to testify and offering to answer any questions they may have.

Be aware that in many cases the decision may go “your way” before they invite you to speak. If this happens and your name is called by the chair, the proper technique is to respond to the chair with your name and the name of the organization you are representing. Then you should state that you support (or oppose) passage of the legislation or amendment and that you would be “happy to answer any questions.” This gives the chair and other members of the committee the courtesy of saving time in a debate where the decision has been made in your favor.
4. **Watch Those Tricky Elevators** - When in the new Capitol itself, getting an elevator on a business day can be an adventure. Help yourself by carefully noticing which elevators service which floors. Because of the design of the new Capitol, some elevators only service: the lower level through the fourteenth floor (marked LL-14 on the wall by the elevator), the parking level through the fifth floor (marked P-5 on the wall by the elevator), or the fifteenth floor through the twenty-second floor (marked 15-22 on the wall by the elevator).

5. **Where To Go When You Need To Meet And Eat** - There are two places to take someone to get a cup of coffee and talk in the Capitol. One is the cafeteria on the lower level (LL). The other is the coffee shop on the tenth floor. The cafeteria has a better selection of food and has more available space for guests. However, the coffee shop is open most of the time when the cafeteria is shut down. It is also much quicker and typically is not a frequented by the less initiated visitors to the Capitol.

6. **How to Get Away From It All While Keeping In Touch** - During legislative sessions, the fifth floor of the Capitol is a nice place to go to get away from it all and relax, but allow you to continue to monitor what’s going on with the House or Senate. If you like, you can sit for awhile in the House or Senate gallery (public access from the fifth floor only). You can also stand on the rail overlooking the fourth floor rotunda (the area between the entrance to the House and Senate chambers). Most of the paid lobbyists congregate on this fourth floor area. Also, if you are looking for someone, this vantage point is excellent.

7. **How To Get The Status Of Pending Legislation** - There are several key offices in the Florida Legislature to help you keep track of what’s going on from minute to minute during session. One is the Clerk of the House (850/488-1157). Another is the Secretary of the Senate (850/487-5270). You should also check with Legislative Information (850/488-4371) for the latest status of a bill in the process.

8. **How To Get Copies of Legislation** - When you need a copy of a bill or amendment, in the House go to Room 325 Capitol and in the Senate go to Room 303 Capitol. They will be happy to assist you. They also have other listings, including information on committee meetings.

9. **In An Emergency, Send A Message Into The Chamber For Your Legislator** - If you have a relationship with a legislator where they will recognize your name (or the name of your organization), members of the House and Senate staff positioned at the entrance to each chamber can “run” handwritten messages into legislators if they are on the floor of the chamber. This technique is especially effective if you need to get information into a given legislator that relates to current floor discussion or legislation which is pending to be discussed on the floor. You can even ask them in your message to come out to the entrance of the chamber and talk with you. If its important, they will usually break away. Remember to wait for them to come out, knowing that they may get tied up.

10. **Use the Stairs to Save Time** - Especially if you are traveling between floors in the House and Senate Office Buildings or between the Plaza Level (PL or “first”) through fifth floors, use the stairs. In the House and Senate Office Buildings, the stairways are located on the corners of each floor. In the new Capitol, there are two main stairways toward the Courtyard side of the Capitol.

11. **Leave A Trail of Information Packets and Business Cards Where Ever You Go** - Long after you make your brilliant and succinct presentation to a lawmaker or state regulator, any materials you leave will keep on giving. Information packets should include issue statements with your position on the issue and any supporting information that helps your arguments. Also, a business card will help the legislator to contact you with questions. If you can (try hard), give the legislator and their staff separate packets. If the legislator misplaces his/hers, they will have a back-up copy.

12. **Use Hand Deliveries When Necessary** - Because legislators and regulators are inundated with
paper, sometimes it is best to provide information at the last possible moment to help them to remember your issue better. On the day before a big committee or floor vote, hand-delivering a personalized letter and issue position statement to each lawmaker or regulator will keep your side of any issue fresh in their mind. They might also take your information with them for use during the meeting. While going to each office is the most effective way, sometimes it is faster to just slip the information under their door after hours. It will be waiting for them when they arrive the next morning. If you ask permission from a staff member, you can usually use the mail slots for the House and Senate located in the Lower Level of the new Capitol. However, the delivery times will vary using this method.

13. **How And Where To Phone Home** - You will quickly notice that the Capitol and most state office buildings have very few public phones. It is a good idea to carry a cellular telephone with you at all times. If you do, remember that it is really bad form (in fact its against the rules) to leave your cellular telephone on in committee meeting rooms. In the general areas of the Capitol and in most state office buildings, you can leave your cellular telephone on. Remember that everyone else has their phone on, too. Therefore, if you can, change the tone on your phone to something more unusual to make it more recognizable. Also, you will notice that the range on your phone will be pretty bad in many places in the Capitol and other state office buildings. If you can, go as close to a window as possible to get better reception. As far as public telephones in the Capitol, there is a bank of them on the fifth floor. The remaining telephones are scattered throughout the Capitol and other state office buildings.

14. **Use The Internet To Get Information** - The Florida Legislature and most other state agencies have created Internet sites. The Florida Legislature’s World Wide Web site is called “On-Line Sunshine” and can be accessed at “http:///www.leg.state.fl.us/”. Many of the other web site addresses can be found in this book. The remainder can be obtained by calling the state operator (850/488-1234) or Legislative Information (850/488-4371).

15. **Finding A Place To Park** - Parking places are scarce around the Capitol Complex and most state agency buildings. It is pot luck to find a space on the streets in and around the Capitol. If you are not so adventurous, there is parking underneath Tallahassee City Hall (on the North side of the Capitol), across Monroe Street (on the East side of the old Capitol), or underneath Kleman Plaza (to the West side of Tallahassee City Hall). Make sure you bring some quarters if you park on the street or underneath Tallahassee City Hall. Kleman Plaza parking is paid to a parking attendant as you leave. Finally, a simple word of warning about parking in restricted spaces in and around the Capitol and state office buildings. Don’t do it for any reason, unless you like meeting new people at an impound yard on the outskirts of Tallahassee and paying a hefty sum to get your keys back.

16. **Regardless Of Your Message, Timing Is Critical** - No matter how good your arguments are and no matter how professional your materials look, your message must reach its intended recipient with precision timing. For example, if a vote in committee will take place in the morning on a certain day, you should have the packet to the legislator the afternoon before (or personally deliver it that morning). Getting your fabulous packet after the vote is of no use to anyone!

17. **To Create A Successful Appointment, Target Your Message** - Most paid and volunteer lobbyists will make a good presentation. What makes an excellent presentation? First, say thank you as often as possible. Second, know something about the person you are talking to...knowing their issues will help you to connect with them. Third, make sure you have at least one person with you who either lives or does business in their district (or area of influence) or who knows them REAL well (both is even better!). Finally, keep your message concise and leave follow up materials for them to refer to later (and make sure they are consistent with what you have said in person!).

18. **For Even Greater Success In Influencing Lawmakers, Create A “Year-Round” Relationship** - Most people and organizations visit lawmakers or state regulators when they need something. It is rare that someone visits or corresponds with an official to offer to help THEM or just to keep in touch.
Do everything you can to be rare in this regard. By helping them do their job, you increase the chance that they may want to help you do yours.

19. **Make Sure You Are Seen And Heard** - The most successful paid and volunteer lobbyists do two things: (1) they always seem to be at “everything” that is important (i.e. committee meetings, state agency meetings, board meetings, key fund raising events, etc.) and (2) they always seem to make themselves “visible”, in that they work the room, talking to all of the key people and making comments (that have merit) in front of the group. Following this model will help anyone to be more influential.

20. **Information Is Power So Keep Informed** - While it is obviously important to be well versed on your issues, it is even more fundamental to keep abreast on what is going on around you and your organization. Be knowledgeable on all of the pending legislation and regulatory actions that could have an effect of you or your organization. Also, do all that you can to find out the plans of other organizations, especially those that are concerned with your issues or that have similar issues or constituencies to your group.

### The “Language of the Legislature”

The Florida Legislature and various state regulatory agencies use a set of terms as unique as the political process itself. In addition to knowing how the process works, it is important to know the terminology. Here are just a few definitions:

**Act**
An act is a bill which has been approved by both houses of the Legislature and may become law either with or without the Governor's signature.

**Amendment**
A change to proposed or current laws.

**Analysis**
A written analysis of a bill prepared by the assigned committee handling the legislation.

**Bill**
A proposed law. Often used synonymously with proposal, draft or legislation. Proposed bills are assigned a number (odd in the House, even in the Senate) and prefaced with HB or SB, respectively. Committees may propose bills prefaced by PCB (proposed committee bill). If a committee creates a “committee substitute” for a bill (completely new version of the bill offered by a given committee), the bill will be prefaced by a CS (committee substitute).

**Calendar**
A listing of scheduled committee meetings and other work of each chamber. Calendars are printed separately by the House and Senate.

**Citator**
The book published daily during the regular and special sessions of the Legislature to provide an index and status of every bill during the current session.

**Chair**
Proper term used to refer to the presiding officer of a committee, unless he or she indicates a preference for a title, such as chairman, chairwoman or chairperson.

**Committees**
Most of the work of the Legislature is assigned to a committee for the purpose of study, research and direction of proposed bills. The committees in Florida's Legislature usually take one of the following forms:

**Ad Hoc**
A committee appointed for a special purpose, automatically dissolving upon completion of the assigned task. (May be referred to as a Select or Interim Committee.)
Conference  A committee appointed for the purpose of reaching agreement when the House and Senate differ on a specific piece of legislation.

Standing  Those committees responsible for a general field of legislative activity and continuing from session to session.

Economic Impact  The financial impact that a individual proposal could have on the state’s budget. Every proposal that is deemed to have an economic impact is analyzed and a dollar amount of the impact is determined for review by legislators.

Journal  The official record of the previous day’s proceedings. Each chamber issues its own journal.

Lobbyist  One who seeks directly or indirectly to encourage the passage, defeat or modification of any legislation.

Message  A communication from the Governor to the legislature or a communication between the two chambers.

Quorum  For a committee or the full House or Senate to conduct official business, a “quorum” must be present. This is set by rule and means having a majority of the voting members present. For example, in the House with 120 members, the quorum is 61. In the Senate with 40 members, a quorum is 21.

Quorum Call  A floor vote whereby the presence of each member on the floor of the House or Senate is verified for the purpose of determining a quorum (that a majority of members are present).

Resolution  An official statement of opinion by the House or Senate on a particular issue.

Session  One of two meanings, either the daily meeting of the Senate or House, or reference to the regular, special, extended or organization sessions called together.

Sponsor  The introducer and sometimes author of legislation. Only members of the Legislature may introduce bills. Additional sponsors on a bill are referred to as “co-sponsors.”

Sunset  Refers to the periodic review of laws by the legislature. Sunset may result in elimination of the law, continuation as is, or amendments.

Sunshine  Usually referred to when discussing how governmental meetings are conducted. One might say that a certain meeting was held “in the sunshine.” This means that the meeting was open to the public and that proper notice of the meeting to the public was given.

Vote  An official recording of the positions of each member of a committee or of the full House or Senate on a particular issue.

The Constitutional Initiative Process

If you are not successful in influencing the Legislative, Executive or Judicial Branches, there is an alternative. The Florida Constitution gives power to citizens to propose amendments to the Constitution.

By collecting the signatures of a percentage of citizens who cast votes in the most recent presidential election, an amendment may be added to the next general election ballot. The number of necessary signatures may vary from state to state. In Florida, the procedures are contained with Article XI, Section 3 of the Florida Constitution, which states that signatures are required “by a number of electors in each of
one half of the congressional districts of the state, and of the state as a whole, equal to eight percent of
the votes cast in each of such districts respectively and in the state as a whole in the last preceding
election in which presidential electors were chosen."

The signatures are collected on a petition that describes the proposed amendment. In recent years,
the wording of some petitions have been judged as too broad, and thus have been struck from the ballot
before voters had a chance to consider the amendment. To solve this, Florida’s Attorney General has
authority to review the proposals to determine their worthiness for placement on a ballot prior to the
collection of the total number of required signatures.

* In general, the steps of the initiative process include the following:

* The sponsor of an initiative may need to, prior to obtaining any signature, register as a political
  committee with the state’s elections office.
* The format of the petition may need to be submitted for approval prior to the proposed amendment
  being circulated for signatures.
* The size of the petition may range from 3 by 5 inches to 8 1/2 by 11 inches and only one signature
  may be allowed per piece of paper.
* The petition will probably need to contain the full text of the proposed amendment.
* The congressional district of the signer may need to be shown on the petition.
* The signed petitions may be turned into the supervisor of elections who then processes them
  according to law.

As an example of the importance of the petition initiative, issues such as term limits for elected
officials and creation of a state lottery resulted. Though it is a time consuming and costly process to
gather the requisite number of signatures, it will be a process that brings attention to the issue through
petition gathering, volunteer efforts and media reporting.

**The Effect of Term Limits on Florida Politics**

Backed by the national fever for removing the “good old boy networks,” a petition was offered in
late 1991 by a citizens’ initiative to place term limits on various governmental officials. The required
number of signatures were collected and the petition was filed with the Florida Secretary of State on July
23, 1992. Cleared for the ballot by the Florida Supreme Court, the initiative was approved by the citizens

The amendment modified Article VI (Suffrage and Elections), Section 4 (Disqualifications) by adding
the following: (b) No person may appear on the ballot for re-election to any of the following offices: (1)
Florida representative, (2) Florida senator, (3) Florida Lieutenant governor, (4) any office of the Florida
cabinet, (5) U.S. Representative from Florida, or (6) U.S. Senator from Florida if, by the end of the
current term of office, the person will have served (or, but for resignation, would have served) in that office
for eight consecutive years.

Therefore, beginning with the 2000 election cycle, the Executive and Legislative Branches of Florida
Government will completely change once every eight years. Many politicos have pointed out that some
will circumvent the process by running for the next higher office (i.e. many House members may run for
Senate seats). However, this will still have a similar effect, since the process will be somewhat unfamiliar
even for members who move from one office to another.

**The “Pros” and “Cons” of Term Limits**

The backers of this state constitutional initiative argued that this amendment would remove the unfair
influence on the current political system enjoyed by “career politicians”. They also stated that this would then weaken the unfair advantage enjoyed by well-placed lobbyists to unduly influence through the establishment of long-term relationships. The major benefit of this change would be the creation of a more representative government. Because of this “mom and apple pie” argument, anti-term limit advocates were at a disadvantage from the outset of the debate. Though the anti-term limit forces had a number of powerful arguments, it is hard to argue with “creating a more representative government.”

Nevertheless, several negative unintended consequences could develop because of mandatory term limits. With limited experience in the Florida Legislature, new members will be unfamiliar with most issues, especially the more complex ones like the budget process. Without an understanding of the issues, a continuous influx of new legislators could create a weakened legislative leadership team. Absent strong leadership, the many important issues that may otherwise be considered and debated could be delayed in the process.

Another important unintended consequence of term limits could result in an increase of power of governmental staff. As it has stood for a long time without term limits, key legislative staff members can in many cases have as much or more experience and history as legislators on various issues. In most cases, a main staff person is assigned to work a given issue being considered by the Legislature. That staff person becomes the repository for all key information that is then used by legislators. Without experienced legislators to provide a “check and balance” on that information from legislative staff, it will begin to be more difficult for legislators to develop enough experience and historical data to challenge their facts and assumptions.

If this amendment applies to those members who were elected in 1992, then eleven members of the Senate and sixty members of the House will not be eligible for re-election to their current post in November 2000. Regardless of whether this is determined to apply to those candidates who were elected during the 1992 elections, only nine current Senators and only nineteen current House members will be eligible to be re-elected to their current post for the 2002-2004 term.

Effect of Term Limits on Organizations

Given the current roles of legislators, legislative staff, lobbyists and volunteer organizations, there will most certainly be changes in the way the current legislative process is conducted. These changes will effect all current participants in the way legislation is current made and the way those participants influence this process. Some of these effects may include:

• New legislators will be under more pressure to make an immediate impact, since they are certain to only have eight years to do so. This could also create less of a willingness on the part of various legislators to work together.

• With new legislators not having the ability to gain substantial levels of experience with the processes, procedures and history of the Florida Legislature, they could be more willing to take information for granted. However, since they will also realize that they really can’t verify the information as well, they will also probably place less stock in the information being received. This could eventually slow the legislative process.

• Since there will not be an opportunity for legislators to gain substantial legislative experience, this will undoubtedly mean more power will be transferred to staff members with substantial experience. Since organizations are already strong sources of information to legislators, the role of organizations and their members could increase to the extent that they can help legislators understand the process. Organizations will also need to develop even stronger relationships with legislative staff members for the same reason.

• It is commonly accepted among legislative strategists that issues will begin to become more influential than relationships, since it will be more difficult to form lasting relationships. With a premium being
placed on information and the success of most organizations in providing credible information, organizational legislative programs can be even more successful.

- While influencing government through relationship-building may become more difficult for organizations due to term limits, creating strong relationships with legislators and staff will always be important. With an unmatched ability to make “back home” local district contacts, educate local candidates and even support the recruitment of potential legislative candidates, organizational grassroots programs are uniquely positioned to make substantial “influence” gains.

Even if the name of the game changes from “power through relationships” to “power through knowledge” of the issues, the historical knowledge of lobbyists could still help them to become more influential. They will know how things work, what has been done (or not been done) in the past and how to make things work. However, the general distrust of lobbyists could neutralize this advantage.

“Influencing” Elections

One of the best ways to influence government is to become an elected official. More and more organizations are identifying and supporting their own members for political office. However, since that is not a goal for a majority of people, the election process itself holds opportunities for creating leverage and opportunities for future influence.

It is important to know that the election process is a strenuous and lengthy task for candidates. Getting elected, and keeping the seat, is a year-round job which may cost from $100,000 to $1 million. Because it is on-going, you should be alert to the needs of the candidates and respond as they seek assistance. In addition, those that hold high posts in various state departments and regulatory agencies are usually political appointees subject to appointment and continued favor with the Governor and many Cabinet officials. By choosing to support certain candidates, various political appointees may be affected.

In selecting candidates to support, it is wise to consider the differences between an incumbent and a first-time candidate. When it comes to power, the incumbent is almost always the stronger. Additionally, the more seniority that members have, the more experience and success they have in representing their districts. Long before the election, the lobbyist or organization should get to know the lawmakers who will be seeking re-election. Also, an organization or lobbyist aligning with a first-time candidate could be walking dangerously in the political arena. As the election season begins and prior to contributing, all candidates should be appraised. Through the contribution of time, energy, money and in-kind services a relationship forms with the candidates you will eventually want to influence.

It is important that an organization does not align with a single political party but rather operates with all parties. Remember that your organization is surely composed of both Republicans and Democrats, no matter how conservative or liberal your profession is perceived to be in general. Further, you have no choice but to try to work with both parties, since their are significant numbers from both parties in the Legislature. It would be nearly futile to lobby your issues if you have insulted an entire political party.

Candidates may be queried about their positions on the issues—if they support your issues then you have reason to support them. In most cases, position papers and supporting documents should be provided to the candidates so that they can be educated about your positions. You should also ask the

5 The contribution of money is usually accomplished through a political action committee. The importance and regulation of a PAC is covered in further detail herein.
candidates for literature on their campaigns. In many cases, each candidate will have specific written issue positions that you can read and distribute to your members.

A number of factors are worth listing as you consider which candidates to support:

* Incumbent or new candidate?
* Electable or re-electable?
* Power and effectiveness of the incumbent?
* Political party ties?
* Funds already collected by the candidate?
* Agreement or at least a willingness to consider your positions?

Many candidates may face elections in the first primary, second primary and general election. Lobbyists who are contributing time and money prior to the first primary are more likely to gain access than a group sending funds just a week before the general election. Pay attention to the deadlines for contributing—you can embarrass yourself and the candidates if they have to return the check because you missed the deadline! Also, it pays to do your homework on a candidate and then to give early money. If you are certain which candidate you plan to support, then there is no reason why you wouldn’t want to go ahead and make a contribution as early as possible.

During the campaign, be accessible to the candidate so that you can assist with financial contributions, writing position papers, placing signs, etc. The larger the volunteer force you provide to the candidate, the more you will be remembered for the contributions to their campaign. This also helps you to establish a larger number of contacts with a given candidate.

After the campaign, take time to congratulate the winners. Keep in touch with the newly elected and re-elected lawmakers by offering to give them information on your issues, providing in-kind services and by just being a supportive friend. It is also a good idea to congratulate the losers as well, especially if you contributed to their campaign. Many candidates who run for office for the first time and lose run again. Since most people do not take the time to congratulate those candidates who didn’t win for running a great campaign, your decision to do so will make a lasting impression.

**Political Action Committees**

Contributions to political candidates can often be funneled through political action committees, commonly known as PACs. There are two kinds of political action committees in Florida. First, there are Committees of Continuous Existence (CCEs). These types of PACs are organized only to contribute to statewide political candidates, other political committees or political parties. They cannot participate in statewide issue campaigns. The trade-off is that the required forms for beginning a CCE are more rigorous, including the creation of bylaws for your CCE. However, in exchange for the extra forms at the beginning, the reporting of contributions and expenditures is more streamlined.

The other form of PAC in Florida is the Political Committee (PC). It is also organized for the purpose of contributing money to candidates, political committees and/or political parties. However, PCs are also allowed to contribute money to support statewide ballot initiatives (essential if your organization is backing a constitutional initiative). While you do not have to submit near the level of forms or bylaws to form a PC, their trade-off is that the detail of reporting for PCs is much more strict.

The laws for a PAC are generally very strict. Any organization interested in raising and contributing
funds should be fully aware of the requirements for collecting funds and the resulting reports.

While the requirements of a PAC are stringent\(^6\), they hold many benefits. When it comes to influencing political candidates, the PAC with the most money usually has the greatest influence. A large war-chest of money most often represents funding from many sources. The contribution of hundreds of thousands of dollars from a special interest group carries a great deal of weight.

Some tips on PAC management include:

- Use fund raising techniques to generate PAC income; you can accept credit cards as a convenience in fund raising by phone or fax.
- Make your PAC contributors feel special; recognize them often and give them inside information through fax bulletins and calls.
- Identify PAC contributors at meetings with pins, stickers and special recognitions.
- Use a check-off system: when members pay their membership dues, give them an opportunity to contribute to the PAC at the same time.
- Deliver checks strategically—using members for delivery. Follow up with letters and adding more than one check when the PAC check is delivered (by asking other members to write individual checks to a given candidate to be presented to the candidate at the same time as the PAC check).
- Don't miss the deadlines for candidates' deposit of PAC contributions and don't embarrass them by writing checks in excess of the legal limits.
- Keep good records as required by law and don't file late PAC reports (there are severe penalties)!

For more information on PACs, call the Florida Department of State, Division of Elections at 850/488-7690 or visit their website at "http://elections.dos.state.fl.us/".

The “Ins” and “Outs” of the New Florida House and Senate Rules

The Florida Senate and House of Representatives enacts rules to govern the flow of business and the conduct of its members. Both the Senate and the House adopt separate sets of rules, although they cover many of the same subjects. Both chambers also adopt joint rules that govern the conduct of all legislative branch activities.

Florida Senate Rules

The new “Rules of the Florida Senate” were considered and adopted by the Florida Senate at its November 17, 1998 Organizational Session. In general, these rules are divided into fourteen parts as follows: (1) Officers, Senators, Employees and Ethics; (2) Committees, Officers, Members, Voting, Motions, Decorum, and Debate; (3) Bills, Resolutions, and Memorials; (4) Order of Business and Calendar; (5) Voting; (6) Motions and Precedence; (7) Amendments; (8) Decorum and Debate; (9) Lobbying; (10) Chamber of the Senate; (11) Construction and Waiver of Rules; (12) Executive Sessions, Appointments, Suspensions, and Removals; (13) Special Session; and (14) Seal and Insignia.

A complete copy of these rules can be obtained by calling the Secretary of the Florida Senate at

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\(^6\) For example, reports may need to be filed by 5:00 p.m. of the designated due date either in person at the Capitol or with a postmark affixed by the U.S. Postal Service. A “Certificate of Mailing,” or courier’s receipt bearing the proper date stamp may be adequate. Stiff fines may result for not providing a report by the official deadline!
The President and President Pro-Tempore of the Senate are elected for two year terms (Rule One, 1.1).

The Senate President appoints all standing committees and subcommittees, select committees, and Senate members of conference and joint select committees (Rule One, 1.5).

The Senate President may name any Senator to perform the duties of the chair when the Senate is in session (Rule One, 1.7).

The Secretary of the Senate is responsible for keeping a daily journal of Senate activities, supervising all bill, resolution and memorials proposed by the Senate, and preparation of the daily Senate calendar (Rule One, 1.10, 1.11).

The Secretary of the Senate also transmits bills and other information to the House on behalf of the Senate and receives information from the House that is transmitted to the Senate (Rule One, 1.17, 1.18).

A Senator who answers the roll call at the beginning of any session or who announces his/her presence after the roll call has been taken is thereafter considered present unless he/she notifies the President of their absence (Rule One, 1.23).

No employee of the Senate may influence legislative consideration (Rule One, 1.29).

A Senator may not solicit or accept campaign contributions during the sixty-day regular legislative session (Rule One, 1.361).

A Senator must not accept or do anything that could unduly compromise his/her ability to render impartial decisions, including misuse of his/her position of power, conflicts of interest in employment. He/she must disclose any relationships that would cause him/her to have any conflict of interest regarding any bill (Rule One, 1.36, 1.37, 1.38, 1.39).

All meeting between two or more Senators in which legislative business is discussed must be open to the public, except when only exchanging information with no discussion of a decision (Rule One, 1.43).

Listing of all standing Senate committees and subcommittees (Rule Two, 2.1).

Two legislative days notice is required for all committee meetings during the first fifty days of the session. Thereafter, only four hours notice is required. A committee must meet between 7:00 AM and 9:00 PM. No committee can meet after the fiftieth day except for the Committee on Rules and Calendar unless approved by the Committee on Rules and Calendar (Rule Two, 2.6, 2.9).

Except by unanimous consent, no bill can be considered by the Senate after the fiftieth day of the session unless it has been reported favorably from at least one committee (Rule Two, 2.14).

Conference committees must only give two hours notice of their meetings (Rule Two, 2.19).

While the presence of printed copies of bills cannot delay the consideration of a given proposal, copies of all proposals are to be made available by the Secretary of the Senate. Further, the General Appropriations Budget must be available at least two hours prior to a vote by the Committee on
Budget on this bill (Rule Three, 3.9).

- The Senate must meet between the hours of 7:00 AM and 9:00 PM (Rule Four, 4.1).
- A majority of the full Senate (40 members) constitutes a quorum (Rule Four, 4.2).
- All bills to be considered during a given session must be submitted prior to 12:00 Noon on the first day of that session (Rule Four, 4.6).
- Each bill or resolution must have three separate readings on three separate days previous to a vote of the Senate unless this rule is waived by a two-thirds vote (Rule Four, 4.12).
- A Special Order Calendar is created during each day of the session to “determine the priority for the consideration of bills.” This calendar is set by the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Rules and Calendar Committee, the Majority Leader, the Minority Leader and two other Senators designated by the Chair of the Rules and Calendar Committee (Rule Four, 4.17).
- The President shall declare all voice votes, but if at least five Senators raise their hands, the President must take an electronic recorded vote (Rule Five, 5.1).
- Amendments to bills on the Special Order Calendar must be filed with the Secretary of the Senate by 5:00 PM on the day prior to the day the bill is set for consideration (Rule Seven, 7.1).
- Lobbyists must not improperly influence an official act of a legislator, shall have integrity in his/her relationships with legislators and shall not knowingly or willfully make false statements (Rule Nine, 9.2).

The Florida Senate made a number of changes to its rules for the 1999 and 2000 Sessions. Most of these changes were procedural in nature, with the exception of the changes to the rules relating to the acceptance of gifts. Under the rules adopted by the Florida Senate in 1996, the Senate had placed severe restrictions on the acceptance of gifts. Specifically, restrictions were placed on the ability to accept food and beverages. These rules went over and above Florida law on the acceptance of gifts. According to the new Senate rules, the specific requirements in the Senate rules to food and beverage were removed and conformed to current Florida law. These laws are contained in Section 112.3148, Florida Statutes.

**Florida House Rules**

The “Rules and Standing Orders of the House” were also considered and adopted at the November 17, 1998 Organizational Session of the Florida House of Representatives. In general, these rules are divided into twelve sections as follows: (1) Legislative Organization; (2) Duties and Rights of the Speaker; (3) Members; (4) Duties of the Clerk, Sergeant of Arms, Chaplain, and Employees; (5) Bills, Resolutions, and Memorials; (6) Councils and Committees - Organization, Meetings, and Oversight; (7) Floor Procedure; (8) Order of Business and Calendars; (9) Parliamentary Procedure; (10) General Provisions; (11) Rules; and (12) Due Process Procedures - Complaints.

To obtain a complete copy of these rules, either call the Clerk of the Florida House of Representatives at 850/488-7475 and request a copy or go in person to Room 325, The Capitol (House Documents Room). Some of the more interesting provisions of these rules are as follows:

- There are forty standing committees of the House. Each of these committees are placed within ten House councils (Rule I, 4).
- The Speaker of the House may appoint any House member to preside over the House for no more than one legislative day (Rule II, 12).
• All House employees serve at the pleasure of the Speaker of the House (Rule II, 14).

• The Speaker of the House shall appoint all chairs, vice-chairs and members of committees (Rule II, 17a).

• A House member cannot vote on a measure that might bring that member private gain or the private gain of any principal of that member (Rule III, 20).

• Similar to the Senate, any member who answer the initial roll call of a session or indicates his/her presence after the initial roll call is presumed to be present thereafter (Rule III, 23a).

• House members must refrain from unethical conduct, including the acceptance of campaign contributions during the sixty day regular session (Rule III, 26b).

• No House member can meet in private with any other House member when discussing action on legislative proposals without such meeting being open to the public (Rule III, 36).

• The Clerk of the House shall be the custodian of all proposals, keep record of all proceedings via a House Journal, keep record of all amendments, provide oversight for all legislative activities and transmittals to the Senate, prepare printed materials and daily calendars (Rule IV, 37a).

• All proposed bills must be filed with the Clerk of the House prior to the start of the legislative session and must first be drafted or reviewed by the House Bill Drafting Service (Rule V, 52a).

• A House member may not be a first-named sponsor of more than six bills for consideration during a regular session (Rule V, 54a).

• A House council shall consist of a Chair (appointed by the Speaker), the Chairs of the standing committees within that council and such other members as designated by the Speaker (Rule VI, 55a).

• Each council shall be responsible for ranking in order of importance to that council all legislation which has been approved for consideration by the full House. This ranking will help to determine the placement of each bill onto the House Special Order Calendar (Rule VI, 59a).

• A council may refer a bill to another standing committee for further consideration or combine two or more bills into a single committee substitute bill. All bills must be approved to be heard by its standing committees of reference (Rule VI, 59d, 59g).

• During the first forty-five days of a regular session, six hours advance notice of a council meeting must be given. After the forty-fifth day and into any extended or special sessions, only two hours advance notice of a council meeting must be given (Rule VI, 59i).

• For committee meetings within the first forty-five days of a regular session, two business days notice must be given. After the forty-fifth day, twenty-four hours notice must be given (Rule VI, 66a).

• All meetings of all committees and councils are open to the public (Rule VI, 73a).

• A majority of the membership of the committee or council shall constitute a quorum (Rule VI, 77).

• A majority of the House membership is required to conduct official House business (Rule VII, 97).

• The Speaker shall declare all votes taken, but if any member rises to doubt such a declaration and if five total members shall request it, the Speaker must wither take a oral or electronic roll call vote (Rule VII, 104).
• The House shall meet at 9:30 AM every day during session, unless a different time is set at the end of the session on the previous day (Rule VIII, 109).

• All bills shall be read three separate times on three separate days unless two-thirds of the House overrides this rule (Rule VIII, 118).

• The Committee on Rules and Calendar, in setting the Special Order Calendar for the consideration of bills before the full House, shall draw from the ranking reports of the councils (Rule VIII, 127a1).

• No bill may be placed on any calendar for consideration by the full House until it is reported favorably by all committees of reference (Rule VIII, 129).

• After the fifty-fifth day of session, no bills on second reading or less may be taken up by the House for consideration. After the fifty-eighth day, only Senate messages, conference reports and concurrent resolutions may be considered by the House (Rule VIII, 131, 132).

• The Rules of the House are adopted by a majority vote. Once adopted, any rule may be suspended by a two-thirds vote of the House (Rule XI, 157, 158).

• Lobbyists must not improperly influence any official act of a legislator, nor those of a House employee (Rule XII, 165a1).

• For individual bills, the first-named member is the prime sponsor and the only member able to move to withdraw a bill. However, once a committee substitute is offered and adopted by a committee for a given bill, the prime sponsor loses the right to move for withdrawal (Standing Order 1a,b).

Joint Rules of the Florida House and Senate

The House and Senate also adopt joint rules that apply in general to both chambers. There are currently seven joint rules as follows: (1) Lobbyist Registration and Reporting; (2) General Appropriations Bill; (3) Legislative Support Services; (4) Joint Legislative Auditing Committee; (5) Auditor General; (6) Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability; and (7) Continuing Existence of Joint Rules. These joint rules are governed by Article III, Section 7 (Legislature - Passage of Bills) and handled as a joint resolution of both chambers. These rules are maintained by the Florida Senate and must be passed by a majority vote of both houses. To obtain a copy of these joint rules, call the Secretary of the Senate at 850/487-5915 or stop by Room 303, The Capitol (Senate Documents Room).

Involving the Media

Government officials may be influenced by what they read and hear in the media. Consequently, it is a good idea to involve the news media in a campaign to sway lawmakers or state regulators. The media are interested in your side of an issue and your organization’s goals, especially if they are newsworthy. Develop relationships with the news reporters who cover the issues in your area. The Florida Press Association through the Florida Press Center (336 East College Avenue) provides news mail boxes, a press conference room and press advisory bulletin board.

News reporting organizations are busy, so you are competing for time and space. Chances are, if you are not able to provide a concise message for their consideration or a well-written news release, your interests will not be reported. Here are a few particulars for involving the media in your efforts:

• Learn to write a persuasive press release, including the who, what, when, where, why and how to answer all the questions about your issues.
• Provide key names for additional information, especially when the issue is complex or regional.

• Maintain a list of all the news media that would have an interest in your issues. Don't forget to include monthly publications, radio talk shows and association newsletters. Most newspapers, television and radio stations are represented or have offices in the capital city.

• Press conferences about issue positions can be very effective so long as the lobbyists and organizations are prepared, scheduling conflicts are avoided, advance notice is provided, graphics such as charts or models are used and the information provided is indeed newsworthy.

Finally, if government officials are reading the news, then you had better do the same. Consider subscribing to several regional newspapers or using a clipping service to stay abreast of all the perspectives on issues of interest to you. An editorial or article may be valuable (or damaging) information when votes are considered on an issue.

Appendix

Associated Industries of Florida (Legislative Directory, Issue Papers, etc.)
516 North Adams
Tallahassee, FL 32301
850/224-7173

Capitol Information Network (Legislative & Campaign Reporting Services)
2433 Mill Creek Court
Tallahassee, FL 32308
850/297-1221

Clarion Capitol Hotel
316 West Tennessee Street
Tallahassee, FL 32301
850/222-9555

Delta Air Lines
800/221-1212 (National Reservations)

Doubletree Hotel Tallahassee
101 South Adams Street
Tallahassee, FL 32301
850/224-5000

Florida Administrative Weekly (Laws & Meetings Publications)
Department of State, Bureau of Administrative Code
Room 2002, The Capitol
Tallahassee, FL 32399
850/488-8427

Florida Business Network-AIF (Legislative Reporting Services, Legislative Directory, etc.)
P.O. Box 784
Tallahassee, FL 32301
850/224-7173

Florida Chamber of Commerce (Legislative Directory, Issue Papers, etc.)
136 South Bronough Street
Florida Commission on Ethics (Executive Branch Lobbyist Violations, Ethics of Public Officials)
2822 Remmington Green Circle
Tallahassee, Florida 32308
850/488-7864

Florida Division of Elections (PAC Formations, Filings, etc.)
Department of State
Room 1801, The Capitol
Tallahassee, FL 32399
850/488-7690
Internet: http://elections.dos.state.fl.us/

Appendix (Continued)

Florida Legislative Reporters (Legislative Reporting Services, etc.)
216 South Monroe Street
Tallahassee, FL 32301
850/222-5248

Florida Society of Association Executives (Society for Association Management Professionals)
231 Lafayette Circle
Tallahassee, FL 32303
850/222-7994

Florida TaxWatch (Governmental Accountability Organization)
106 North Bronough Street
Tallahassee, FL 32301
850/222-5052

Governors Inn
209 South Adams Street
Tallahassee, FL 32301
850/681-6855

Harris Management Group/The Association Office (Association Management)
335 Beard Street
Tallahassee, FL 32303
850/222-6000
E-mail: “bob@hmgnet.com”
Internet: “http://www.hmgnet.com”

Inside Florida State Government (State Government Directory)
Price Publications
2077 Angus Street
Tallahassee, FL 32311
850/877-3586

Joint Legislative Management Committee (Information & Lobbying Registration)
Legislative Information Division
111 West Madison Street
Tallahassee, FL 32399-1425
Appendix (Continued)

**Non-Profit Resource Center** (Leadership Training, Strategic Planning, Systems Management and Governmental Publications)
335 Beard Street
Tallahassee, FL 32303
888/442-8966
E-mail: “larry@nonprofitcenter.org”
Internet: “http://www.nonprofitcenter.org”

**Office of the Clerk** (House Information Resource)
Florida House of Representatives
Room 423, The Capitol
Tallahassee, FL 32399-1300
Clerk’s Office 850/488-1157
House Documents Room 850/488-7475
House Bill Drafting 850/488-5644

**PR Florida** (Public Relations Consulting, Audio and Video Production)
335 Beard Street
Tallahassee, Florida 32303
850/222-6000

**Radisson Hotel Tallahassee**
415 North Monroe Street
Tallahassee, FL 32301
850/224-6000

**Ramada Inn Tallahassee**
2980 North Monroe Street
Tallahassee, FL 32303
850/386-1027

**Secretary of the Senate** (Senate Information Resource)
Florida Senate
Room 405, The Capitol
Tallahassee, FL 32399-1100
Secretary’s Office 850/487-5270
Senate Documents Room 850/487-5915
Senate Bill Drafting 850/487-5312
Tallahassee Society of Association Executives (Society of Association Management Professionals)
231 Lafayette Circle
Tallahassee, FL 32303
850/561-6124

USAirways
850/681-0246 (Tallahassee Office)
800/428-4322 (National Reservations)