

## ON THE HILL

# Can the Utah LAC Be Effective Without Political Donations?

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**Once read that there are two things in life that you never want to see made. The first is sausage. The second is legislation.** Having now been involved in the legislative process for three years, this saying is more true than anyone can believe.

Politics is defined by one source as the art or science concerned with guiding or influencing governmental policy. Depending upon how cynical you are, politics might be more aptly defined as the exercise of influencing politicians with money so that the person doing the influencing can make more money.

Having been involved in the political process for three years now, I must acknowledge that it appears much more complicated than simply making donations and getting favorable legislation passed. There are many legislators willing to do the right or sensible thing. Unfortunately, legislators have an amazingly difficult job.

Even at our state level, imagine the

difficulty in trying to read, understand, and analyze over 600 different pieces of legislation in a roughly two month period of time. It is impossible for a legislator to

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consider and vote on most of the legislation in each session without someone to explain it. That someone is either a fellow legislator or a third party, such as a lobbyist.

There is no denying that our system of government could not function without informed people talking to legislators,

explaining legislation, and explaining why it should be passed or not. To fill this need, we will always need lobbyists, whether they be paid and full-time or simply a concerned citizen.

Some of these lobbyists and their clients undoubtedly earn favor and access to legislators through political donations. To think otherwise is naive. However, I believe others earn the trust and access to legislators by demonstrating competence on a topic, by providing much needed explanations and objective analysis, and by advocating in a way that educates rather than obfuscates.

The Utah LAC will likely never be able to buy access and favor. We can, however, challenge any lobbying organization head on with our expertise, credibility, and willingness to educate. There will be limits to our effectiveness, as we have already experienced. But over time, we can be politically effective.



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