

GLOBAL NETWORK FOR JUSTICE

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The Woodstock Principles for the Ethical Conduct of Lobbying

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These principles are intended to provide practical guidance to persons who engage in the process of lobbying. They reflect the essential considerations that a participant in this process should address and evaluate in order to perform the functions of a lobbyist with professional competence, personal integrity, and civic responsibility. The principles also address the decisions to be made by persons who retain lobbyists as well as by the persons whom the lobbyists seeks to influence, so that lobbyists have a clear understanding of what is properly expected of them in their work as political agents.

The principles are divided into seven sections dealing with the following aspects of lobbying:

1. Lobbying and the common good
2. Lobbyist - client relationships
3. Lobbyist - policymaker relationships
4. Lobbyists and shapers of public opinion
5. Conflicts of interest
6. Lobbying strategies and tactics
7. The integrity of the lobbying profession

1. The pursuit of lobbying must take into account the common good, not merely a particular client's interests narrowly considered. A genuine commitment to the common good - the comprehensive and enduring well-being of the political community as a whole - by clients, lobbyists, and policymakers, is essential if the integrity of American democracy is to be preserved and enhanced. To secure this end, the concerns of all citizens who may

be affected by specific legislative and policy decisions should be effectively represented in the decision-making process. In addition, our manner of financing political campaigns should not compromise elected officials or undermine public trust in their independence and impartiality.

2. The lobbyist-client relationship must be based on candor and mutual respect. The lobbyist should only undertake or pursue an assignment for a client whose senior management is genuinely committed to acceptable ethical conduct. The lobbyist has a responsibility to advise the client about the potentially harmful effects of the lobbying objectives, strategies, and tactics being considered. This principle applies not only to the client's explicit interests and public reputation, but also to the probable effect of the lobbying goals and strategies on the common good and on the legitimate concerns of other groups, especially the poor and under-represented.

3. A policymaker is entitled to expect candid disclosure from the lobbyist, including accurate and reliable information about the identity of the client and the nature and implications of the issues. Ethically responsible lobbying should serve a valuable educational function, because honest, well-informed lobbyists provide policymakers and their staffs with relevant information and incisive arguments and analysis bearing on matters of public debate.

4. In dealing with other shapers of public opinion, the lobbyist may not conceal or misrepresent the identity of the client or other pertinent facts. American public opinion is heavily influenced by the communications media. The democratic process requires that the policymaker, the communications media, and the American public be accurately informed about who is promoting a particular policy and who is funding and supporting the efforts made on its behalf.

5. *The lobbyist must avoid conflicts of interest.* In addition to civic obligations to country, the lobbyist has professional obligations to clients and personal obligations to his or her conscience. Fulfilling these diverse obligations may lead to conflicts of interest and responsibility.

6. *Certain tactics are inappropriate in pursuing a lobbying engagement.* The responsible exercise of the lobbyist's First Amendment rights constrains the selection of lobbying strategies and tactics.

7. *The lobbyist has an obligation to promote the integrity of the lobbying profession and public understanding of the lobbying process.* The lobbyist has an important and legitimate role to play in the American political process. At this time, public ignorance about and distrust of the lobbying profession are widespread. Many Americans are openly critical of lobbyists' political influence. Many other critics misunderstand the nature of the lobbying process and its appropriate role in shaping public policy. It is in the common interest of the lobbying profession and the American people that the public become better educated about the systemic effects of lobbying on the health of American democracy. The responsibility for this educational mission clearly rests in part with lobbyists themselves.

Taken from Chapter 7, *THE ETHICS OF LOBBYING: Organized Interests, Political Power, and the Common Good*, Georgetown University Press, September 2000.

The Woodstock Theological Center is a non-profit research institute at Georgetown University in Washington, D.C., established by the Society of Jesus (Jesuits) to address the topics of social and political importance from a theological and ethical perspective. Interdisciplinary and ecumenical in design, the Center engages in research, conducts conferences and seminars and publishes books and articles. The Woodstock Principles for the ethical conduct of lobbying offers practical guidance to persons who engage in the process of lobbying the federal government and its agencies.

You can purchase a copy for \$12 on line at
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2003 Foreign Assistance

A congressional vote on an omnibus 2003 appropriations bill, which will include foreign assistance spending, is expected on January 28. Under an agreement between congressional leaders and the federal Office of Management and Budget (OMB), cuts of \$300 million from the House committee level and \$100 million from the Senate committee level will be made to the foreign operations budget before the vote.

While it appears unlikely that any of the cuts will come from poverty-focused assistance, Bread for the World is following this issue closely. Until the vote takes place, we need to continue the hard work our members have done to ensure that the final budget retains the \$500 million increase in development assistance and the increase in humanitarian assistance that have already been passed at the committee level.

The Bush administration's budget proposal for foreign assistance in 2004, which will be presented to Congress in early February, is expected to request the same amounts for development, child survival and humanitarian assistance as the 2003 budget request, without even an allowance for inflation. Given the increase of \$500 million over the administration's 2003 budget request that Congress is likely to approve, this would mean a decrease in funding for poverty-focused development assistance in 2004.

Let Congress know that you support generous increases in development and humanitarian assistance to help reduce hunger worldwide.

Points to make:

- 1) Congress must approve the 2003 foreign assistance appropriation as soon as possible.**
- 2) The appropriation should retain the \$500 million increase in poverty-focused development assistance and the increase in humanitarian assistance previously approved by the Senate and House appropriations committees.**
- 3) The U.S. cannot experience security while nearly 800 million people in developing countries are hungry.**

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**check our web site at
www.bread.org**
