

**“A Day in the Life” Of a Lobbyist and NARFE-PAC:
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When Helen first asked me to speak about a day in the life of a lobbyist, my question was “What day and what lobbyist?” There is no typical day. According to the latest figures, there are 34,785-registered lobbyists in Washington. That figure has doubled in the last 5 years. Five of the 34,785 lobbyists are on the NARFE Legislative staff. People also ask, “Do you ever think about hiring a registered professional lobbyist?” You are a registered, professional lobbyist, if you are registered and act professionally. You don’t have to have a degree in lobbying; you don’t have to pass the lobby bar, and there are no state certificates that you have to get. You simply have to register. To be effective, you have to be professional, you have to be credible and you have to be knowledgeable.

It used to be that people saw a lobbyist as someone who walked up and down the halls of Congress all day long, knocking on doors or walking in doors, talking with members of Congress, except when they took time out for two martinis. And, in the past several years, due to the publicity generated by Jack Abramoff and others, there’s also the picture in everyone’s mind that while you’re walking up and down those halls, you’ve got big stacks of money with you and you hand them out when you see Congressman so and so, or Congresswoman such and such walking toward you. None of that is true. Can you imagine 34,785 people walking up and down the halls of Congress? And, after those two martini lunches, can you imagine them staggering up and down the halls?

Let me tell you what we really do. I get into the office about 7:00 am every morning, as does the National President and the other National Officers. I read the Washington Post before leaving home every morning, at least perusing the front section, the Federal columns. When I get to the office at 7, The Wall Street Journal, another paper called “The Hill,” one called “Roll Call” and one called “Politico” are on my desk. Those are read every morning and placed on the table for everyone else in the department to scan through, particularly the circled items. Not all of these papers have anything specifically to do with federal workers or federal retirees, but they do allow us to know what’s going on in general. Remember, yesterday I said you have to be aware of **Policy, Process, and Politics** if you’re going to lobby. You have to recognize the big picture as well as your own issues. And, the only way to keep up with the big issues, which are changing daily, is by scanning through these newspapers.

We then open the e-mail, along with several online news services on issues like world and national affairs and health care, sent as e-mails to all of us on the legislative staff in the morning, as well as Congressional Quarterly daily on-line service of each day’s hearings, as well as recaps of House and Senate floor action and votes from the day before. Education and keeping on top of what is going on daily, is part of everyone’s job in our office. These online services, papers and so forth that are “Hill” generated, go to lobbyists all over Washington, who are doing the same thing. There are 5-6 of us (legislative representatives), in our office and somebody is going to several meetings almost every day. There are meetings throughout the week. On Monday mornings, I meet with the National Officers to brief them on any new legislative happenings and what we see coming in the week ahead. The next morning there is the Senior Staff Meeting of the National Office where we review what the legislative staff is doing, followed by a legislative staff meeting to make assignments for the week, and for debriefing, so we all are at least in the loop on every issue. Specific issues are assigned to specific people, but we operate under the theory that everybody needs to be familiar with all the issues.

So are we ever on the Hill? Absolutely! Every day that Congress is in session, one, if not more, are up there for one or more meetings. We pre-schedule meetings, for the most part, and most of the meetings that we have are with staff most of those with committee staff. That's where we start because that's where the action happens. At these committee staff meetings we find out which members of Congress need specific targeting and then we start working with their staff. Members of Congress have staff assigned to specific areas, be it health, civil service, social security, and so forth, and those are generally the people we are meeting with. You meet with the members of Congress only when you are ready to move something.

We also make a point to see members of Congress who may not be on one of these committees that deal with our issues. If we hear from some of you California or any other state that you think one of your members doesn't understand an issue, or if you think that you are not getting any response or cooperation from the member of Congress, we can do some follow up at the National level. What we're trying to do in all of these is get our issue before them and persuade them that it's worthy. That's just an ongoing process when Congress is in session. You, too, are citizen lobbyists in the district and I think the same principles that we try to adhere to are the ones that you should keep foremost in your minds, and that is when you're talking to these members, to be effective you've got to be **credible**. You've got to know the facts about the issue. If they can't depend on the facts you are giving them, they are not going to want to talk to you. They will come to believe that you're not a credible witness, you're not a credible educator, you don't know what you're talking about, and you're not going to make me look foolish by telling me thing that aren't true. So don't go before a Legislator and try to hype an issue or make it seem worse than it is. Just give the facts-- which you can get from us if you don't know them--and certainly use your own personal situations to get the need for our legislation across.

You have to be **ethical**, never promise a contribution of any kind for a vote, and never threaten. You have to be persistent, and that doesn't mean making a pest of yourself. It simply means continuing to press your issue and recognizing that "no" is only for now. There is no last vote. There's always going to be a next vote. You have to be **persistent** in working for the next vote until you have it where you want it. You have to be **flexible**, you have to be able to change appointments, change meetings, change time, because, that's happening to the members of Congress and their staff, as things come up unexpectedly just like with everybody else, so you have to be flexible. It's a hurry up and wait situation and you have to recognize that reality.

Members of Congress and their staff, have to deal with the realities of this entire nation at any one time. Earlier, I mentioned that there were 34,785 lobbyists in this country-- men and women who represent every different kind of issue and advocacy group. You will then realize we're not the only ones talking to these members of Congress. At times, there is somebody else on the side opposite us, and somebody else on our side, so members of Congress have a lot to sift through. There are the realities, of the budget, the politics, and policy that they have to deal with, and we have to be pragmatic, and understand that.

I'm going to talk a little about PAC. I just mentioned here that **we should never talk about PAC when you're talking about votes. I want to stress that. Don't even say PAC in a member's office.** A member cannot talk about PAC in their office and we can't either. You cannot present PAC checks to member of Congress in their office, or in any government building. When members of Congress call about PAC contributions—and, we probably get 7-8 calls a day from members themselves about PAC contributions--they are at their committee headquarters, not in their congressional office when making those calls. It's from the Republican

committee building or the Democratic committee building, and if they're not, we won't even discuss the PAC. Don't go into an office and talk about "we'll see that you get PAC money, or we'll see that you don't get PAC money." It's not to be discussed at the same time with legislation. You can say we're glad to support you, tell us what we might do to support you. They understand this too. Our process is outlined for PAC. There are very few members of congress who have been there any time at all who don't know that NARFE is a group with the PAC. I know they know, because they call us. But a good thing about these calls is that it gives us one more opportunity to discuss issues with them because often they'll say, "What are your big issues right now?" They want to know so they are in a better position to get money.

You have to be very careful about how you're using the PAC in this process. That's why we handle PAC contributions in the National office where we know Federal Election Committee (FEC) rules. We have to get a request for PAC contributions in writing in our office. We then, within 24-48 hours, contact the PAC coordinator in the state saying Congressman or Congresswoman so and so has requested a contribution. We ask the respective PAC Coordinator for any feedback they are getting from Chapters and individual members. We take that into account with what we know about these members, both their voting records, their co sponsorship and their general interaction with the membership of NARFE in their district and then all those factors are discussed in a legislative staff meeting on PAC. Then a list is prepared and we take it to the PAC committee which is President Baptiste, and the other three National Officers and we review them once again before they decide yes or no, or a little more or a little less. \$5,000 dollars per election per member is the maximum allowed under law.

It's the rare member of the House of Representative who gets \$5,000.00. You heard Tom Davis, Henry Waxman, Charlie Rangel, those are the rare. It is not unusual for us to give \$5,000.00 to a Senator's campaign that we're supporting because there of course their races are not every 2 years, but every 6 years. So we tend to give more in Senate races than in House races. We don't give or not give in every Congressional District in the country. We don't go to members; we never give to both candidates in one single race. I know that some NARFE members still have questions about NARFE-PAC and how it operates, so we have put together a new pamphlet of questions and answers on NARFE-PAC. I know your NARFE-PAC coordinator has them, but any chapter that wants a supply for your own members, to help them understand PAC, or even as a topic for a chapter meeting, should contact the legislative office we'll be glad to send them to you.

Thank you very much.