

LOBBYING FOR FUN AND PROFIT

By Bob Schmidt and Bob Fairbanks, *Capitol Morning Report*

How do you teach someone to be an effective lobbyist?

Well, how do you teach him or her to have a pleasing personality? Or to speak well in public? Or to have wealthy clients?

OK, you get the idea. You can't teach that sort of thing.

But there is something that you can teach and it's something that every lobbyist needs to know. It's called the "legislative process" and it means knowing how to read a bill, how to use legislative rules (written and unwritten), how to get information from legislative publications, how to get a good author to carry your bill and so on and so forth.

Which brings us to **Ray LeBov**, a man who's been working in and around the Capitol for about 37 years as a legislative staffer and lobbyist, and who decided about six years ago that there might be a market for his knowledge. "I thought I knew what worked and what didn't work for lobbyists," he said, "and I thought I could pass along what I had learned."

So he started [Capitol Seminars](#), a business that offers training sessions not only for lobbyists but for officials of trade associations, community activists and anyone else who might want to know more about the legislative process.

LeBov calls his basic offering Lobbying 101. It's an introductory course that covers the specifics mentioned above and many more. Next is Lobbying 201, an advanced course that covers the lobbying of state agencies and the administration, and also deals with special issues like the state budget and the media.

Each session lasts four to four-and-a-half hours, and the fee for each is \$250.

LeBov said that more than 850 people have taken Lobbying 101 so far. At the moment, he has two growth categories: People who work for lobbyists (the boss sends them to **LeBov** to give them a better understanding of what the boss does) and the employers of lobbyists (who take the course to form realistic expectations of what a lobbyist can do).

LeBov started at the Capitol shortly after graduating from law school at USC with a desire for public policy work. His first job was with the Legislature's Joint Committee on the Structure of the Judiciary, where he remained for about a year before beginning a series of other staff jobs that ended with his becoming counsel to the Assembly Judiciary Committee. He'd been there 12 years in 1990 when voters approved Prop 140, a ballot initiative that not only established legislative term limits (six years in the Assembly and eight in the Senate) but also required an immediate cut in the Legislature's operating budget (38 percent of \$190 million) that would cost about 640 legislative employees their jobs.

“I could have stayed,” **LeBov** said, “but I thought the severance package and accumulated vacation time would give me several months to figure out what I wanted to do, so I left.”

But his extended vacation didn’t extend far. He was hired almost at once as director of public affairs (chief lobbyist) for the state’s Judicial Council, the agency headed by the Chief Justice that manages California’s courts. **LeBov** was there 13 years, retired in 2004 to start his own lobbying firm and created Capitol Seminars three years later.

Teaching the legislative process is a growth business. [Capitol Seminars] has been getting inquiries about doing “customized courses” for specific groups that want in depth training in specific areas, [as well as developing] new courses covering certain parts of the process, such as FPPC compliance.

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