

ROLL CALL



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Strauss: Lobbying Is Needed

By Robert S. Strauss
SPECIAL TO ROLL CALL

I am not a lobbyist. But I have been in and around government and politics since before I came to Washington, D.C., in the early 1970s to lead the Democratic Party. I've known a lobbyist or two in that time



and hired many of them at Akin Gump. Lobbying is at times maligned, perhaps rightfully so. But it is also a fixture in our democratic

system of government, and essential to it.

Has lobbying changed over the last 50 years? Yes. In form and function, policy advocacy in Washington has evolved tremendously. That's happened partly to keep pace with the increasing size and complexity of the federal government; partly as a result of the internationalization of the U.S. economy and our government's active role in

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CAPITOL CHECK-UP



Tom Williams/Roll Call

Workers scale the Capitol Dome on Thursday as part of an annual cleaning and inspection of the building's joints.

Bush Turns to House for Help

By Chris Cillizza
ROLL CALL STAFF

The nomination of California Rep. Christopher Cox (R) to be the chairman of the Securities and Exchange Commission last week brought the number of House Republicans tapped to serve in the Bush administration in the past nine months to three, a dramatic reversal from the president's first term.

If confirmed by the Senate — as seems likely — Cox will join former Ohio Rep. Rob Portman and former Florida Rep. Porter Goss in the administration. Goss is the Central Intelligence Agency director; Portman was confirmed as the United States trade representative in April.

Through the first three and a half years of Bush's term, he named just one sitting House Member, then Ohio Democratic Rep. Tony Hall, to the executive branch. Hall serves as the U.S. ambassador to the United Nations' food and agriculture programs.

Cox was nominated for a federal judgeship by Bush in 2001 but saw his chances of confirmation dashed when Democrats took control of the Senate in May of that year.

White House spokeswoman Erin See CONFIRMATION, page 24

Hopefuls Eye Cox Gavel

By Ben Pershing
ROLL CALL STAFF

While a handful of contests are already under way for committee chairmanships in the 110th Congress, the nomination of Rep. Christopher Cox (R-Calif.) to head the Securities and Exchange Commission has sparked an unanticipated race for the Homeland Security Committee gavel.

Cox was Homeland's first chairman, taking the gavel when the panel was created in the previous Congress and shepherding it through the sometimes turbulent process of becoming a permanent committee with real clout.

The House Republican Steering Committee has not yet scheduled a meeting to consider Cox's replacement and is unlikely to do so until the time frame for Cox's confirmation by the Senate and resignation

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A Frequent Critic Gets Hastert's Aid

By Ben Pershing
ROLL CALL STAFF

GREENWICH, Conn. — Just before noon on a gloomy, gray day last week, Speaker Dennis Hastert (R-Ill.) joined the most outspoken leadership critic in the GOP Conference at a yacht club here and respectfully agreed to disagree.

The occasion was a \$1,000-a-plate luncheon for 4th district Rep. Christopher Shays, a vocal, occasionally quirky moderate who perennially appears on Democratic target lists. Hastert accepted Shays' invitation to join him and about 90 affluent donors at the Belle Haven Club despite the fact that Shays regularly makes the Speaker's life difficult.

"It is not easy to be Speaker of the House, and there will be some of you



File Photo

Speaker Dennis Hastert

who say, 'And you don't make his job any easier,'" Shays said in his introduction of Hastert, drawing knowing laughter from the audi-

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Roll Call Staff Calling All Would-Be Presidents!

The Greater Des Moines Partnership (formerly the Des Moines Chamber of Commerce) will be on Capitol Hill on Wednesday, Thursday and Friday, reports Roll Call's Chris Cillizza.

As usual, the group has put together a star-studded speaking lineup — due in no small part to Iowa's first-in-the-nation presidential

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Nelson, Pryor Work to Hone the Art of the Deal

By Paul Kane
ROLL CALL STAFF

Addressed personally to each of the 14 Senators, the note in the pocket-sized U.S. Constitution reads: "A Senator for whom I have great respect, Sincerely, Robert C. Byrd, 5/25/05."

Byrd gave copies of the Constitution to every Senator who signed on to the bipartisan deal hatched May 23 to avert the "nuclear" showdown on judicial nominations, a

heartfelt token of appreciation from an octogenarian Senator who never goes anywhere without his own pocket Constitution.

But for Sens. Ben Nelson (D-Neb.) and Mark Pryor (D-Ark.), their pocket copy is the ultimate sign of their new status as the chamber's lead Democratic dealmakers. Relative newcomers to the chamber — elected in 2000 and 2002, respectively — Nelson and Pryor ce-

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Court keeps age suit against ex-Sen. Campbell alive, p. 3.



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AROUND THE HILL

Rep. Foley talks about his famous godfather, Jimmy Piersall, p. 29.

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Growth in Lobbying Has Been 'Positive'

STRAUSS, from page 1
global political and economic affairs; partly through advancements in technology; and partly due to the increasing sophistication and participation of our citizens in politics and policy issues.

The result has been the growth and influence of in-house corporate lobbyists, trade associations, law firm policy groups, polling organizations and public relations companies, to name a few. The last half century has seen American participatory democracy redefined. Community organizations, issue advocates, non-governmental organizations, think tanks and individual citizens at the "grassroots" are influencing government decisions like at no prior time in our history, and in a manner every bit as sophisticated as the so-called hired guns in Washington.

Federal policy advocacy also has become increasingly complex. Lobbyists in the 21st century often function like operatives in a political campaign, simultaneously coordinating substantive policy messages, coalitions and stakeholder groups, media relations, grass roots and survey research in furtherance of policy initiatives narrow and broad alike. Follow any noteworthy legislation before Congress and you will find all manner of lobbying campaigns under way.

Of course, technology has changed the manner of lobbying as much as any other factor. E-mail can provide instantaneous access to policymakers and facilitate the rapid dissemination of information and exchange of ideas. "Blogging" is now a cottage industry and a fixture in how our politicians receive information and share positions. And the Internet is the new



Arthur Grace/Zuma Press

Akin Gump's Robert Strauss

town hall, providing access to government action as well as a means of participating in policymaking as never before. The 2004 election certainly demonstrated the importance of the Internet as a conduit for political participation, particularly for fundraising.

For the most part, the growth of lobbying has been a healthy process with positive results. Our officials are receiving more input from citizens from all walks of life affected by governmental policies. I agree with Thomas Jefferson's argument that "democracy is cumbersome, slow and inefficient, but in due time the voice of the people will be heard and their latent wisdom will prevail."

But lobbying cannot be divorced from either the political process or the functioning of government. If I were to define two curses in our political system today, they would be its overdependence on money and the partisanship which now infects Washington. And lobbying plays a role in both of these phenomena.

Today, money plays too prominent a role in shaping the policy process. There is no doubt that Members of Congress spend too much time raising money. As a result, lobbyists are often turned into fundraisers. This is a cycle that can breed impropriety and scandal.

That said, while the McCain-Feingold campaign finance reform law has not stopped the flow of money into campaign accounts on Capitol Hill — nor was it intended to — it is an important reform. Likewise, I would count the transparency and disclosure in our cam-

paign finance system among the most positive developments in political participation in the past 50 years.

Partisanship is another phenomenon, both integral to our nation's history and at times off-putting in its manifestations. The pursuit of political gain in the name of party loyalty too often displaces the pragmatic compromise that can make our system work so well.

In the modern lobbying context, I have seen elected officials use partisanship in an attempt to influence the manner in which companies and associations hire advocates. This is cynical and wrong, and beyond the scope of the responsibilities of elected officials. It also prompts appropriate criticism of a lobbying community that would bend to such pressure. I do not think it naïve or old fashioned to suggest that merit, intellect and ability, rather than one's party affiliation or history of financial contributions, should remain paramount in such decisions. To act otherwise undermines the potential for more enlightened participation in federal policymaking from the private sector.

I am a Democrat who has served in both the Jimmy Carter and George H.W. Bush administrations. I also founded the law firm Akin Gump Strauss Hauer & Feld, where attorneys of diverse backgrounds and political affiliations work side-by-side to serve client interests with distinction. In fact, Akin Gump's two lobbying groups, located in our Washington, D.C., and Austin, Texas, offices, are made up of both Republicans and Democrats. I mention this only to emphasize that the healthy professional exchange of partisan ideas can coexist with bipartisan advocacy.

In my many years in private practice, representing and serving on the boards of major corporations and as a public official, I have seen the entrepreneurial genius, commercial creativity and public benefit provided by companies of all varieties participating in the political process. Their contributions extend to the formulation of our nation's laws and policies, to which companies often dedicate substantial time, expertise, and resources that might not otherwise be available to our nation's policymakers.

Those of us who both participate in and understand well how our political process and government work owe it to those beyond the Beltway whom we may assist to act responsibly, ethically and with a good deal of common sense. The health of our democracy depends on it.

Robert S. Strauss is a senior executive partner at Akin Gump Strauss Hauer & Feld LLP.

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READY FOR HER CLOSE-UP



Tom Williams/Roll Call

A friend fixes the hair of Mildred Fay Jefferson (center) as she gets a hug from Geline Williams, chairwoman of the board of the National Right to Life Committee, during an awards luncheon held Thursday by Black Americans for Life. Jefferson, president of the Right to Life Crusade, was one of three movement leaders honored at the luncheon.