



STATE OF VERMONT
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH CARE

MEMORANDUM

To: House and Senate Committees on Government Operations
From: House Committee on Health Care
Date: March 1, 2013
Subject: Suggestion to require lobbyists to report mass media activities regarding legislative action

Our committee experienced a statewide mass media campaign to influence a vote that was before us. A majority of our committee believes policymakers and the public have a right to know about such expenditures in a timely fashion.

It is our understanding that pursuant to 2 V.S.A. §§ 264(a) and 264b(b), lobbyists, lobbyist employers, and lobbying firms are only required to file three lobbyist disclosure reports per year:

- on or before April 25, for the period of January 1 through March 31;
- on or before July 25, for the period of April 1 through June 30; and
- on or before January 25, for the period of July 1 through December 31.

In this particular instance, we would need to wait until April 2013 to learn directly from the lobbying group the details regarding their advertisement expenditures. And even then, only the totals of lobbying expenditures for advertising are posted on the Secretary of State's Office website. Individual reports from lobbyists, employers, and firms — which detail expenditures — are only kept on file at the Office itself.

We are suggesting to you, as the committees of jurisdiction for lobbyist issues, that lobbyists, employers, and firms be required to file with the Secretary of State — with copies to the Speaker of the House and the President *Pro Tempore* of the Senate — a report of their mass media activities that support or oppose legislative action made during the legislative session. We feel this report should be made within 24 hours of the activity and could be based upon whether the expenditure for the activity reaches a certain monetary threshold, to be determined by your committees.

We would be happy to discuss this issue further with your committees. Please do not hesitate to contact us for additional information. Thank you.