

# **Lobbying Advertisement Transparency**

**Testimony for the Senate Committee  
on Government Operations**

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# What issues does H.686 solve?

## Reporting, identification gap

- Lobbying advertising expenses made “...~~at any time prior to final adjournment of a biennial or adjourned legislative session.~~”

**Tue, June 18, 2025 – Tue, Jan 7, 2026**

- 204 days with no reporting, no required identification
- 28% of the total days in that 2-year period

# What issues does H.686 solve?

## Potentially non-covered activities

(9) “Lobby” or “lobbying” means:

(A) to communicate ~~orally or in writing~~ with any legislator or administrative official for the purpose of influencing legislative or administrative action;

...

(D) activities sponsored by an employer or lobbyist on behalf of or for the benefit of the members of an interest group, if a principal purpose of the activity is to enable such members to communicate ~~orally~~ with one or more legislators or administrative officials for the purpose of influencing legislative or administrative action or to obtain their goodwill.

2 V.S.A. § 261 (9)

# What issues does H.686 solve?

## Potentially non-covered activities

(c) Definitions. As used in this section:

(1) “Advertisement” means a notice or communication that:

(A) appears in any of the following public media: including radio, television, newspapers or and other periodicals, or internet websites; or

(B) is widely disseminated to the public, including mass mailings, robotic phone calls, and paid internet communications.

2 V.S.A. § 264c (c)(1)

# Additional Issue: Inadequate information for real transparency

“(2) The report shall be made for each advertisement or advertising campaign described in subdivision (1) of this subsection and shall identify the lobbyist, lobbying firm, or lobbyist employer that made the expenditure; the amount and date of the expenditure and to whom it was paid; and a brief description of the advertisement or advertising campaign.”

## “A brief description” from actual filings:

“Ads in support of Renewable Energy Standard”

“Ad campaign opposing Act 18”

“Online advertising”

“Advertising with VT Digger”

“Email blast”

2 V.S.A. § 264c (b)(2)

# Inadequate information for real transparency (a potential solution)

“...and a brief description of the advertisement or advertising campaign, including the bill(s) or issue(s) it is focused on and whether the advertisement or advertising campaign expresses support, opposition, or neutrality on the bill(s) or issue(s).”

**No change needed to current filing infrastructure:**

“Ads in support of Renewable Energy Standard”

“Ad campaign opposing Act 18”

“Online advertising”

“Advertising with VT Digger”

“Email blast”

2 V.S.A. § 264c (b)(2)

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