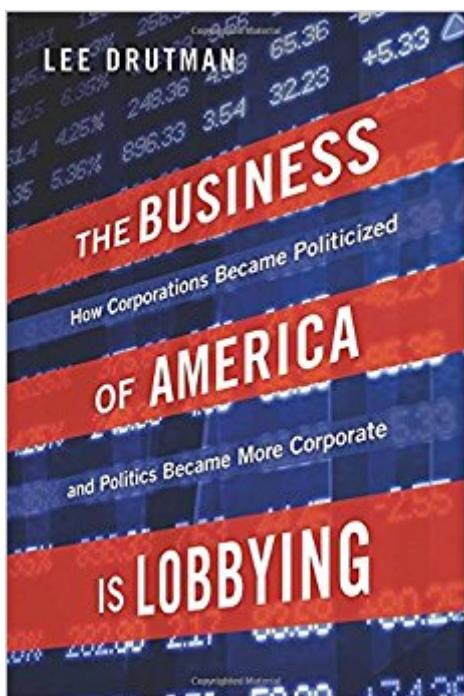


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# The Business Of America Is Lobbying: How Corporations Became Politicized And Politics Became More Corporate (Studies In Postwar American Political Development)



## Synopsis

Corporate lobbyists are everywhere in Washington. Of the 100 organizations that spend the most on lobbying, 95 represent business. The largest companies now have upwards of 100 lobbyists representing them. How did American businesses become so invested in politics? And what does all their money buy? Drawing on extensive data and original interviews with corporate lobbyists, *The Business of America is Lobbying* provides a fascinating and detailed picture of what corporations do in Washington, why they do it, and why it matters. Since the 1970s, a wave of new government regulations and declining economic conditions has mobilized business leaders, and companies have developed new political capacities. Managers soon began to see public policy as an opportunity, not just a threat. . Ever since, corporate lobbying has become more pervasive, more proactive, and more particularistic. Lee Drutman argues that lobbyists drove this development by helping managers see the importance of politics and how proactive and aggressive engagement could help companies' bottom lines. Politics is messy, unpredictable, and more competitive than ever, but the growth of lobbying has driven several important changes that have increased the power of business in American politics. And now, the costs of effective lobbying have risen to a level that only larger businesses can typically afford. Lively and engaging, rigorous and nuanced, this will change how we think about lobbying-and how we might reform it.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"With careful research and an unflinching eye for telling detail, Lee Drutman shows beyond any doubt how big money is strangling our democracy, and why the rest of us must take action before its last gasp. A vitally important book everyone who cares about America must read." -- Robert B. Reich, Chancellor's Professor of Public Policy, University of California, Berkeley, and former U.S. Secretary of Labor "Why do corporations lobby? How much do they spend to sway the federal government? Lee Drutman amassed the data to answer these hard questions and many others, including the hardest of all: what has lobbying done to American democracy?" --David Frum, senior editor, *The Atlantic* "The ever-rising amount that corporate America spends to shape government policy is hard to ignore-except, it seems, in American political science. Now, finally, we have a meticulous, innovative, yet remarkably readable analysis of the post-1970s lobbying boom: why it happened, how it feeds on itself, and how it is reshaping American politics. This book is likely to start a boom of its own, forcing political science to grapple with its fresh findings and powerful new arguments." -- Jacob S. Hacker, Stanley B. Resor Professor of Political Science, Yale University, and co-author of *Winner-Take-All Politics* "Drutman's description of corporate lobbying, standing alone, is worth the price of admission. But he pairs this empirical work with sound judgment, sensible policy proposals, and a clear-eyed view of the world. It's an irresistible combination." -- Heather K. Gerken, J. Skelly Wright Professor of Law, Yale Law School "In the most impressive compilation of new data and analysis on corporate relations with the US government ever completed, Lee Drutman's painstaking and comprehensive study shows clearly how important individual corporations are in the federal lobbying game. At the same time, he shows just how dependent corporate leaders are on their government relations staff for knowledge about the value of the work of that very staff; how corporate lobbying is often as ineffective as it is self-perpetuating; and how it raises the cost of democracy for everyone. This will be seen for years as the best book on corporate lobbying in America and should be read by everyone with concern about how our government really works." --Frank R. Baumgartner, Richard J. Richardson Distinguished Professor of Political Science, UNC-Chapel Hill, and co-author of *Lobbying and Policy Change* "Drutman's book is a must-read for all who are concerned about the influence-peddling game. It alerts us to this growing threat to democracy itself, and it intrigues us to search for solutions." --Craig Holman, Public Citizen News "...let me stress how edifying and entertaining I found *The Business of America Is Lobbying*. Anyone interested in gaining a better understanding of business, politics, and the growing intersection between the two should read Lee Drutman's book." --Matthew Mitchell, George Mason University "Drutman presents one of the more thoughtful analyses of lobbying in America

that has been made so far." --Jeff Madrick, The New York Review of Books "Drutman offers a package of reforms. The proposals call for greater representation of noncorporate interests and increasing government's policymaking capacity. The latter raises the question of why Congress has not yet empowered itself. One possible answer that lessens businesses' fault for the current state of affairs is that just as firms are skilled at constrained optimization in their market and nonmarket environments, politicians are skilled at structuring the rules that govern these environments to their own benefit." --Political Science Quarterly

Lee Drutman is a senior fellow in the program on political reform at New America. An expert on lobbying, influence, and money in politics, he has been quoted and/or cited in The New York Times, The Washington Post, The Economist, Slate, Mother Jones, Vox, Politico, and many other publications, and on Morning Edition, All Things Considered, Planet Money, This American Life, Marketplace, Washington Journal, and The Colbert Report, among other programs. Drutman also teaches in the Center for Advanced Governmental Studies at The John Hopkins University. Prior to coming to New America, Drutman was a senior fellow at the Sunlight Foundation. He has also worked in the U.S. Senate and at the Brookings Institution. He holds a Ph.D. in political science from the University of California, Berkeley and a B.A. from Brown University.

Excellent and timely.

The Business of America is Lobbying: How Corporations Became Politicized and Politics Became More Corporate by Lee Drutman  
"The Business of America is Lobbying" is a book about what lobbying involves and how it operates. Research fellow, professor with a Ph.D. in political science, Lee Drutman takes a professional approach and argues quite convincingly that corporate lobbying has reached its current persuasive position largely because lobbying has its own internal momentum. Lobbying begets lobbying. This straightforward 288-page book includes the following ten chapters: 1. The Pervasive Position of Business, 2. Why the Growth of Corporate Lobbying Matters, 3. The Growth of Corporate Lobbying, 4. How and Why Corporations Lobby, 5. How Corporations Cooperate and Compete, 6. How Corporations Make Sense of Politics, 7. How Lobbyists Perpetuate Lobbying, 8. Testing Alternative Explanations for Growth, 9. The Stickiness of Lobbying, and 10. The Business of America is Lobbying.  
Positives:  
1. A well-researched and well-referenced book.  
2. An important topic that surprisingly doesn't get as much attention as it deserves, the influence of lobbying in American

politics.3. A very good format. Each chapter clearly states what is expected and ends with a conclusion.4. Takes a professional, analytical approach. Plenty of charts that complement the accessible narrative.5. Clearly states the main goals of the book. *This book, by contrast, is far more focused on the self-perpetuating nature of political engagement, and the ways in which, once it gets started, organizational lobbying deepens and expands over time.*6. Explains the why of lobbying. *If corporate managers think that lobbying will help their company's bottom line, then they will lobby. If not, then they won't lobby.*7. No shortage of numbers. *In 2012, politically active organizations reported \$3.31 billion in direct lobbying expenses, down slightly from \$3.55 billion in 2010 but up significantly from \$1.82 billion just 10 years earlier and, controlling for inflation, almost seven times the estimated \$200 million in lobbying expenses in 1983.*8. Explains the what of lobbying. *I define lobbying quite broadly to mean any activity oriented towards shaping public policy outcomes, and I make the reasonable assumption that all corporate political activity is oriented towards shaping public policy outcomes.*9. Explains how the growth of corporate lobbying influences policymaking. Makes the compelling case that growth of corporate lobbying has altered the policymaking environment in eight ways that are largely interconnected.10. Explains why legislation is much more complex. *On the Affordable Care Act, 1,483 unique organizations lobbied on the bill.*11. A look at the history of corporate lobbying. *The most direct strike at corporate political influence was the 1907 Tillman Act, which banned direct corporate contributions to candidates.*12. A look at the various tactics of lobbying.

*Changing the status quo requires more work than preserving the status quo.*13. Some revelations exposed. *Companies simply devote much more of their resources to lobbying than they do to campaign finance.*14. Explores the role of trade

associations versus lobbying by companies. “If most lobbying is done through associations, it suggests more cohesiveness in the lobbying community. If most lobbying is done through companies, it suggests more divisiveness in the lobbying community, with more companies focused on their own concerns.”<sup>15</sup> There is business philosophy spruced throughout the book. “The more managers (and people in general) understand cause-effect relationships, the more they tend to perceive their environment as controllable.”<sup>16</sup> Explores the perspective of corporate managers.

“With more information and experience, managers can better develop more realistic policy goals.”<sup>17</sup> Corporate managers are not particularly savvy about politics.<sup>18</sup> Explores three alternative hypotheses on how lobbyists perpetuate lobbying. (1) lobbying grew because government got bigger; (2) lobbying grew because government devoted more attention to issues companies care about; (3) lobbying grew because companies got bigger.<sup>19</sup> Provides empirical support for his theory that lobbying is sticky. Find out.<sup>20</sup> A look at the future of lobbying and what we can do to curtail its influence, albeit limited. Proposes three types of solutions. Notes included.

**Negatives:** 1. More brains than heart. The book makes use of cold hard facts to the detriment of passion. Emotions play a pivotal role in our decision-making process and this book unfortunately strips the heart of such an important component. In short, I wanted a dose of passion into the mix. 2. As with most books of this ilk, the disease is better explored than the cure. The focus is clearly on what constitutes lobbying instead of what we can do as citizens to curtail its negative effects. 3. It’s a well written, professional book but it’s at times a dry read. Some folks will shy away from the statistical analysis. In defense of the author, I considered the charts helpful but it’s not for everyone and may have been better placed in an appendix. 4. The author seems restrained. It’s as if the author did not want to offend anyone. Some of it’s understandable but it comes at a price. 5. A missed opportunity to explore the damage caused by corporate lobbying to average citizens. In summary, this is a solid, workman-like analytical look at corporate lobbying for the general public. The author succeeds at proving his case that lobbying begets lobbying. The book however is a bit dry and leaves some topics on the table that would have taken it to a higher level. I was expecting more and was little disappointed that the author didn’t pursue the damage done by corporate lobbying. Overall, a good book, I recommend it.

**Further recommendations:**

“Lobbying America” by Benjamin C. Waterhouse,  
“Corruption in America” by Zephyr Teachout,

ÃƒÂ¢Ã  ¬Ã  Å“Winner-Take-All PoliticsÃƒÂ¢Ã  ¬Ã  Å• by Jacob S. Hacker, ÃƒÂ¢Ã  ¬Ã  Å“The Price of InequalityÃƒÂ¢Ã  ¬Ã  Å• and ÃƒÂ¢Ã  ¬Ã  Å“Globalization and its DiscontentsÃƒÂ¢Ã  ¬Ã  Å• by Joseph E. Stiglitz, ÃƒÂ¢Ã  ¬Ã  Å“Affluence and InfluenceÃƒÂ¢Ã  ¬Ã  Å• by Martin Gilens, ÃƒÂ¢Ã  ¬Ã  Å“Republic, LostÃƒÂ¢Ã  ¬Ã  Å• by Lawrence Lessig, ÃƒÂ¢Ã  ¬Ã  Å“The New EliteÃƒÂ¢Ã  ¬Ã  Å• by Dr. Jim Taylor, ÃƒÂ¢Ã  ¬Ã  Å“Why Nations FailÃƒÂ¢Ã  ¬Ã  Å• by Daron Acemoglu, ÃƒÂ¢Ã  ¬Ã  Å“ECONnedÃƒÂ¢Ã  ¬Ã  Å• by Yves Smith, ÃƒÂ¢Ã  ¬Ã  Å“The Great DivergenceÃƒÂ¢Ã  ¬Ã  Å• by Timothy Noah, and ÃƒÂ¢Ã  ¬Ã  Å“BailoutÃƒÂ¢Ã  ¬Ã  Å• by Neil Barofsky.

Sad commentary on U.S. democracy

Mr Drutman provides the reader with an interesting one sided perspective on Lobbyist. Unfortunately, he fails to tell the whole story. The concern Americans have is the system of influence that Corporations and their Lobbyist have on our Government to shape policy which directly benefit themselves. A common thread throughout the book is that Lobbyist educate Corporations on how politics work. This noble one way role is stressed throughout the book. This may be an important role, however, I doubt that this is their primary role. The book presents detailed data on the Corporate dollars spent directly on Lobbyist and Trade organizations. Yes this is important, but, he fails to discuss the additional dollars going either directly or indirectly to Politicians via campaign contributions, PACs and super PACs, Political Parties, or other means. His data fails to tell the whole story, especially in light of ÃƒÂ¢Ã  ¬Ã  Å“Citizens UnitedÃƒÂ¢Ã  ¬Ã  Å•. The book does present examples of outrageous legislation. Rather than convey irritation, the book tries to spin it and use it as examples of why Corporations should be employing more Lobbyist. This is later backed up with mathematics calculating how much money Corporations should be spending. In the final chapter, Mr. Drutman rejects Campaign finance reform as a solution. Rather, he believes that our Government should 1. subsidize more Lobbyist so as to balance those from the large corporations (I guess the only way to stop a bad man with a Lobbyist, is with a good man with a Lobbyist), and 2. subsidize more Lawyers in Washington to enable more research. The bottom line is that Corporations wouldnÃƒÂ¢Ã  ¬Ã  Å¢t be spending this kind of money unless there is a Return On Investment (ROI). The book shows that this ÃƒÂ¢Ã  ¬Ã  Å“InvestmentÃƒÂ¢Ã  ¬Ã  Å• has significantly increased over the years, and, that in the recent years, while investment by small and medium sized companies have been flat, investment by large companies in the pharmaceutical,

telecomm, financial services, technology, and defense sectors have increased. One wonders what their ROI has been. I would venture to guess that it is far more than just being educated.

This is a very good book and a very sophisticated book, in fact so sophisticated that many people will not read it or will not understand it. It is highly quantitative in its analysis and that will make many people put the book down. Drutman is extremely smart and knows a lot. I worked in DC and knew lobbyists. In some ways the story is simple. People spend money and get results, sometimes it is very crude and direct. But Drutman gives us a more nuanced and comprehensive analysis if we can understand it. I did quantitative analysis for many years but I may have to read this book twice to fully understand it. Other good books on democracy and politics can be found here: [mwir-democracyandpolitics.blogspot.com](http://mwir-democracyandpolitics.blogspot.com) Midwest Independent Research

Excellent book if you want to learn a nuanced and accurate view on lobbying in America today. The book is a little dry and main points are repeated sometimes, but there are very few sources that are as in depth and well researched as this one. Not especially entertaining (although shocking at times), but extremely informative. If you want to understand lobbying in the US in Washington this is the book for you. No regrets on the purchase.

Informative and on-point regarding a very important subject. Well-sourced, grounded, doesn't speculate much or get carried away with narratives. The downside is that it reads like the PhD dissertation it originally was. Drutman conducted dozens of lobbyist interviews, surely a few colorful anecdotes came up. Including more of them might have enlivened the prose.

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