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## **Lobbying the Maryland Legislature: Overall spending increases, top players remain the same**

Annapolis – The top industries seeking to influence decision-makers in Annapolis haven’t changed much in the last three years. But the amount they are spending continues to rise, according to research by Common Cause Maryland.

“The top industries lobbying the state legislature remained mostly the same in 2015 – healthcare spent the most, followed by energy, development, and business,” observed Jennifer Bevan-Dangel, executive director of Common Cause Maryland. “But overall, spending on lobbyists increased by almost \$2 million.”

The increasing amount of money spent on lobbying brings into question the impact of constituents in the Maryland legislature. Most citizens are not equipped to raise their voice louder than the professional lobbyists, giving the interest groups – and influential lobbyists – significant influence.

The State Ethics Commission releases its summary report on lobbying expenditures twice a year, following each reporting period. These analyses allow the public to gain insight on what industries are spending the most for their cause.

The eleven industries that spent over \$500,000 included:

- Health Care - \$4,577,747.00
- Utility and Energy Companies - \$1,959,322.88
- Development Companies and Organizations - \$1,554,958.20
- Business Groups (chambers, retail, and other industries) - \$1,112,659.86
- Gambling Companies - \$930,419.90
- Telecom Industry - \$816,139.03
- Other\* - \$615,366.79
- Universities - \$558,505.76
- Education Organizations - \$514,499.50
- Automobile Industry - \$511,037.56

Some interesting facts include:

- Total spending last year was \$16,845,379.59. This year’s total spending increased to \$18,019,763.26 ; an almost \$2 million increase
- Uber Technologies emerged as a player in the lobbying scene, spending \$127,138.71. A bill supporting Uber’s business practices was passed last session, it will be interesting to note if they continue to spend as much now that they have accomplished their goals.

\*Organizations and companies with unclear or varied goals and interests

- This time last year, 2 employers spent over \$300,000, while this year that number increased to 6. 16 spent over \$200,000 and 58 spent over \$100,000.
- The highest spending employer was Maryland State Education Association at \$446,241.82.
- 10 new Health Care employers have emerged since 2013
- Gun regulation has disappeared as a lobby issue
- 10 industries decreased overall spending since 2013 (gambling, education, religious, retail, insurance, union, tobacco, waste, manufacturing and, defense), meaning that the other industries increased enough to compensate for their decline.

The ethics report lists the employers that reported at least \$50,000 in lobbying expenses, as well as the lobbyists with \$50,000 or more in lobbying income, from November 1, 2014 through April 30, 2015. Common Cause Maryland analyzed the list, categorizing 177 employers into 27 broad industry categories.

The lobbying report totals can be found on the Ethics Commission website at:

<http://ethics.maryland.gov/lobbyists/lobbying-report-totals/>

Common Cause Maryland's analysis is available online at [md.commoncause.org](http://md.commoncause.org)

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*Founded in 1974, Common Cause Maryland is a nonpartisan, grassroots organization dedicated to restoring the core values of American democracy, reinventing an open, honest and accountable government that works in the public interest, and empowering ordinary people to make their voices heard.*

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