

BREAKING RECORDS

**Wealthy \$pecial Interests
\$pend Most Ever**



Nebraska Lobbying Report 2019

Acknowledgments

This report is funded by Nebraskans who want to reduce money's influence in our government, assert the people's right to know with strong disclosure and transparency laws, and who believe the people voters entrust with our power should reflect the highest ethical standards. As members and supporters of Common Cause Nebraska, these people live in your communities and work together across party lines to educate and inform others how we can strengthen the people's voice in our democracy.

Additional support is provided by the Common Cause Education Fund, the research and public education affiliate of Common Cause and its 1.2 million supporters. Founded by John Gardner in 1970 to bring everyday Americans together to exert their power through what he called a citizens lobby. Working together, we create open, honest, and accountable government that serves the public interest; promote equal rights, opportunity, and representation for all; and empower all people to make their voices heard in the political process.

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2019 NEBRASKA LOBBY REPORT

A little perspective may be helpful when considering the growing influence of the lobby. In 2000, Nebraska began reporting statistics online. In that year, the lobby collectively reported gross earnings at \$2,653,548. By 2005, earnings had grown to \$10,730,586. This dramatic increase seemed to level off, and by 2010 the report showed \$11,888,888. After that year, a steady growth in earnings led to \$15,334,105 in 2015 and amounted to \$17,807,017 in 2018. The growth has stayed well ahead of inflation and has left government salaries in the dust.

It is true that the growth in earnings is partially explained by growth in the number of individual lobbyists and lobbying firms. This growth, however, would not have taken place if the demand was not there. It has become generally accepted that if you want something done at the capitol, you should hire a lobbyist.

With the Unicameral dealing with as many as 1,000 bills in a two-year session, individuals and organizations often engage paid professionals who are at the capitol daily to gain an advantage in advancing their agendas. But that advantage takes money, and those who have the money expect to have better access and influence — and there's "the rub."

Over the years Nebraskans have become accepting of lobbyists wining, dining and entertaining their way to access. It has even become an accepted practice for lobbyists to become key players in campaign fundraising.

All of this creates an insider game that puts the average citizen at a disadvantage. The importance of a small donor giving \$20 donation has given way to those able to make a \$5,000 contribution.

Jack Gould
Issues Chair, Common Cause Nebraska

Nebraska Lobby Gross Earnings

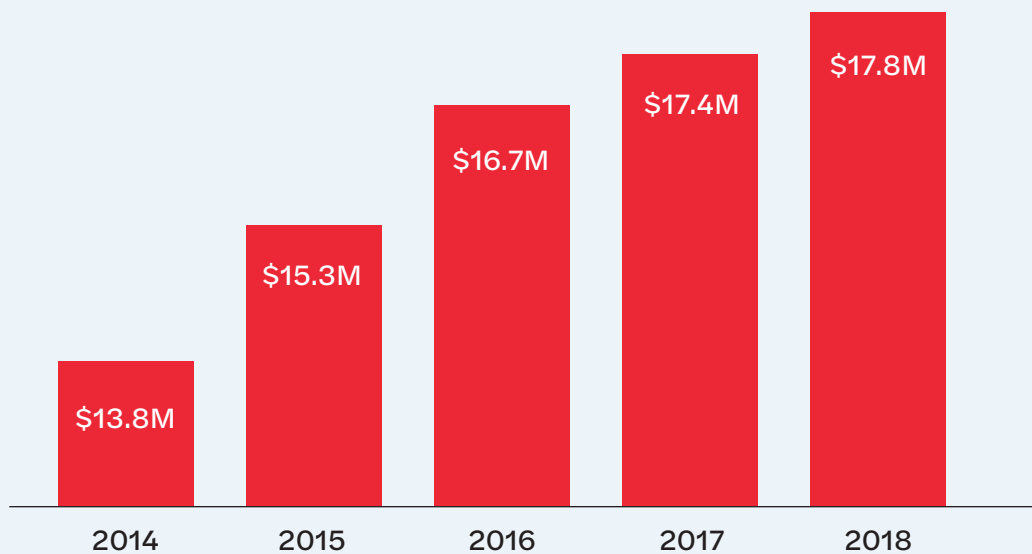


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LOBBY EXPENSES

There has always been a difference between what the lobbyists report as compensation and reimbursement and what the principals — the entities that employ lobbyists — report paying their lobbyists, with no real explanation why. The 2019 record \$17,807,017 in compensation is based on the lobbyists' self-reports. In contrast, the principals report paying \$16,410,302 in lobbyist compensation and reimbursement.

What we do know is that the principals often spend money on entertainment and gifts beyond what they pay their lobbyists. As a result, the principals' reports show a broader picture of the total lobbying expense.

Take, for instance, the entertainment figure. Of the \$364,085 reported as being spent, \$92,000 was spent on legislators, \$4,819 was spent on elected executive branch officials and a whopping \$267,266 was spent on "others." The others could be non-elected chief executive officers and directors of the many departments of government or legislative staff. It is impossible to track this money, who it is spent on or what it pays for. Remember, it does not include tickets or gifts.

Principals Lobbying Expenses 2014-2018

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Lobbyist Compensation	\$13,130,160	\$14,506,302	\$15,743,320	\$16,188,266	\$16,056,059
Lobbyist Reimbursement	252,163	442,365	282,023	334,074	354,243
Entertainment	263,260	370,702	446,750	467,030	364,085
Miscellaneous	211,499	218,853	137,824	214,512	153,310
Office Supplies	160,495	33,180	47,338	74,844	54,077
Gifts & Tickets	23,992	25,784	25,558	26,332	24,535
Travel	19,014	41,759	46,012	41,503	28,873
Lodging	11,973	6,345	25,856	7,515	8,477
Total Expense	14,072,556	15,645,290	16,754,681	17,354,076	17,043,659

* 2018 statistics recorded on April 12, 2019, from principals' reports.

Nebraska's Active Lobbyists

The clerk of the legislature tracks the number of registered lobbyists and principals annually. The term "principal" identifies all entities that provide lobbyists. **The number of compensated lobbyists and principals reached an all-time high in 2019.**

Number of Registered Lobbyists and Principals, 2015-2019

Firms	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Compensated Lobbyists	351	364	377	378	391
Volunteer Lobbyists	42	33	41	36	36
Principals	545	543	550	553	573
Volunteer Organizations	36	33	36	28	24

* Statistics recorded on April 10, 2019, from the Clerk's Office

Who Spends the Most on Lobbying?

Lobbyists don't come cheap! For many special interests, hiring a lobbyist is much like hiring a top executive, or maybe two. Below we have identified 10 of the top spenders, or principals, from 2014 to 2018. Altria Client Services, the parent company for Philip Morris and other tobacco companies, spent the most in 2018, but the Nebraska Chamber of Commerce maintained the highest five-year total.

Top Spenders on Lobbyists, 2014-2018

Principal	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	5-Year Total
NE Chamber of Commerce	120,036	162,162	218,338	242,198	144,757	\$887,491
League of NE Municipalities	\$179,551	\$194,024	\$173,563	\$184,832	\$128,556	860,526
Altria Client Services	158,402	134,626	207,059	160,040	181,818	841,945
University of Nebraska	160,135	165,671	150,142	141,902	131,299	749,149
NE Bankers Association	141,668	205,470	106,459	147,330	117,491	718,418
NE Council of School Administrators	104,713	127,889	108,381	130,891	166,053	637,927
Renewable Fuels NE	190,191	188,461	48,597	50,885	53,162	531,296
City of Lincoln	91,252	100,819	110,558	107,804	104,101	514,534
NE Association of County Officials	109,416	110,292	91,658	79,679	114,927	505,972
NE State Education Association	68,645	102,361	93,879	112,656	97,062	474,603

* Statistics recorded on March 26, 2019, from principals' reports

Who Makes the Most?

The numbers speak for themselves. Keep in mind, our 49 senators are paid \$12,000 each year, while lobbyists rake in millions of dollars.

Top Compensated Lobbyist Firms, 2014-2018

Firm	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	5-Year Total
Mueller Robak	\$1,425,318	\$1,438,822	\$1,517,837	\$1,466,039	\$1,453,718	\$7,301,734
Radcliffe & Assoc.	1,116,530	1,213,919	1,257,776	1,164,984	1,187,424	5,940,633
O'Hara Lindsay	909,514	979,728	1,053,596	917,730	860,592	4,721,160
Peetz & Co.	514,500	643,100	695,948	688,067	799,324	3,340,939
American Communications Group	618,221	607,115	596,430	628,423	648,699	3,098,888
Kissel, Kohout, ES Assoc.	534,076	630,208	483,668	645,138	574,884	2,867,974
Nowka & Edwards	557,101	573,324	626,309	644,703	552,035	2,953,472
Bromm & Assoc.	207,791	211,571	232,656	636,057	677,448	1,965,523
Husch Blackwell	330,102	414,689	551,452	537,127	97,846	1,931,216
Jensen Rogert	340,489	366,997	338,009	365,524	334,769	1,745,788

* Statistics recorded March 26, 2019, from lobbyists' reports

PUBLIC EDUCATION LOBBYING

K-12 Schools

Many public entities spend tax dollars to get more tax dollars through legislative appropriations. Nebraska's public schools are among those entities. The school-funding formula has remained a mystery to taxpayers and administrators alike. It is nearly impossible to predict how much state aid any district will get on any given year. There are just too many variables in the formula. The only sure thing about the formula is the likelihood that it will be changed. Nebraska schools suffer because the formula has never been fully funded.

The lobby is one tool school districts can use to monitor the changes and protect their interests. Those school districts that have the funds to invest in lobbying seem to exert greater influence, while those districts lacking in wealth find themselves on the outside looking in. The lobby does not work for all the children, only those children in the districts that can pay.

A total of 16 school districts and one learning community have the resources to hire lobbyists. From 2014 to 2018, Omaha Public Schools spent the most, followed by Millard in second place and Bellevue in third. 2014 saw the most spent on lobbying in a single year.

The numbers are not staggering, but those districts that have their own lobbyists must believe they have an advantage, or they wouldn't spend the money. What about the 269 school districts that can't afford a lobbyist? Are they at a serious disadvantage in the competition for state funds?

Public School Districts With Lobbyists, 2014-2018

School District	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	5-Year Total
Adams Central	\$8,070	\$5,200	\$5,200	\$5,200	\$5,200	\$28,870
Bellevue	60,200	58,400	54,200	54,200	54,200	281,200
Bennington	7,700	18,200	9,200	4,700	5,200	45,000
DC West	25,200	10,200	20,232	12,500	25,000	93,132
Elkhorn	25,200	25,200	25,200	21,200	28,200	125,000
Fremont	20,000	0	0	0	0	20,000
Grand Island NW	8,070	5,200	5,200	5,400	5,000	28,870
Grand Island	30,000	30,000	30,750	31,519	32,307	154,576
Lakeview	8,174	5,000	5,200	5,200	0	23,574
Lincoln	42,706	40,000	41,655	38,281	33,756	196,398
Millard	59,823	62,280	62,206	67,368	67,032	318,709
Omaha	78,886	67,125	78,338	72,394	72,717	369,460
Papillion	36,200	36,200	36,200	35,700	36,150	180,450
Ralston	32,476	30,093	41,328	38,474	39,509	181,880
Springfield Platteview	20,100	10,000	20,232	27,700	27,500	105,532
Westside	29,832	19,666	0	20,002	14,158	83,658
Learning Community	26,527	26,994	26,964	26,933	27,783	135,201
Total	519,164	449,758	462,105	466,671	473,712	2,371,510

* Statistics for 2018 recorded March 26, 2019, from principals' reports

University Lobbying

The University of Nebraska is also competing for tax dollars. In 2018, the university had former Senator Heath Mello as its lobbyist and the lobbying firm of Peetz and Company to back up Mello. That same year, the university lobbying team spent \$39,984 on entertaining state officials and provided \$1,335 in gifts. The university also distributed \$14,248 worth of tickets to events. The university paid Mello \$66,462 in his role as a lobbyist. Peetz and Company was paid \$30,200.

The grand total came to \$152,229 — more than twice what the top public school paid in 2018 — according to the university's principal report. How could a Class C school district compete with that kind of lobbying power?

TRACKING THE MONEY

How difficult is it to follow the entertainment dollars? It is almost as if the lobby wrote the rules to confuse the public. For example, lobbyists are restricted to giving gifts of \$50 per month, per senator. Senators must report only gifts valued over \$100. Gifts of food and beverages are excluded from reporting, except as they show up in the total entertainment figures for both the lobbyist and the principal.

In other words, it is nearly impossible to find out how much any lobbyist spent entertaining an individual senator or executive officer. From another perspective, senators have no idea how much is being spent on their colleagues.

Common Cause Nebraska believes there should be a ban on gifts and entertainment spending. Lobbyists should be on an equal level with the public, and the public should not be expected to pay tribute to their elected officials. The current system, however, seems to be working well at the legislature for those who can afford a lobbyist.

The University Again

The University of Nebraska is required by statute to disclose to whom tickets to university events are given. This disclosure is important because two season tickets for football are valued at \$798, and state officials must report gifts over \$100. **Thus, football tickets are the single gift that can be cross-checked.** Gifts from other principals are not required to be itemized. The university is required to report because it is a public entity. In the past the reporting of season tickets has often been neglected.

To increase public confidence in the reporting system, Common Cause Nebraska does a cross-check each year. Thanks to the diligence of the Accountability and Disclosure Commission, ticket disclosure has improved dramatically. **2019 is the first year the university's report matched senators' disclosure statements.**

The table below was compiled from the 2018 University of Nebraska's principal's report and senators' statements of financial interest. The charts show who accepted free tickets, the value placed on those tickets and whether the value was reported to the Accountability and Disclosure Commission.

It is difficult to separate education tax dollars from University of Nebraska Foundation dollars when evaluating lobby expenses. It is clear, however, that the foundation pays for the tickets given to state elected officials. The university reports that on its principal's report.

In the past, the university's foundation provided expensive gifts, including cars and country club memberships, to university administrators and coaches. The recipients were public employees who were required to report these gifts, and that was not happening. Since the foundation is a private entity, Common Cause viewed this as a form of lobbying. Our exposure of this practice eventually led to its termination.

With a new administration forming at the university, it is important that the university maintains transparency. Students, parents and taxpayers have a right to know how foundation funds are used.

Recipients of University of Nebraska Free Tickets

Recipient	Season Games	Spring Games	Extra Expenditures	Total Value
Roy Baker	2	2		\$818
Kate Bolz	2		2 skybox tickets, parking	\$957
Tom Brewer	2	2		\$818
Sue Crawford	2	2		\$818
Laura Ebke	2	2		\$818
Curt Friesen			2 skybox tickets, parking	\$159
Matt Hansen	2	2	2 skybox tickets, parking	\$977
Sara Howard	2	2		\$818
Rick Kolowsky			2 skybox tickets, parking	\$159
Tyson Larson	2	2		\$818
Brett Lindstrom	2	2	2 skybox tickets, parking	\$977
John Lowe	2			\$798
John McCollister			2 skybox tickets, parking	\$159
Mike McDonnell	2		2 skybox tickets, parking	\$957
Adam Morfeld	2		2 skybox tickets, parking	\$957
Jim Scheer	Paid for season tickets with campaign funds†			
Tony Vargas	2	2	2 skybox tickets, parking	\$977
Lynne Walz	2	2		\$818
Justin Wayne	2	2	2 skybox tickets, parking	\$977

Two season football tickets are valued at \$798, two skybox tickets are valued at \$114, and two spring game tickets are \$20. Additionally, parking passes are a \$45 value. No donation was required for the elected officials to receive the tickets listed above, and everyone listed accepted the tickets offered to them and reported them. The total value of the reported tickets is \$13,780. These figures are compiled from senator's statements of financial interest and the university's principal's report.

†By law, Scheer's tickets must be given to charity, but the charities are not required to report that the tickets were purchased with campaign funds. Often the donation appears to come from personal funds

* The figures are compiled from senator's statements of financial interest and the university's principal's report

(The attached appendix shows tickets of lesser value for University of Nebraska Omaha hockey, University of Nebraska–Lincoln [UNL] basketball and the UNL football spring game)

AND NOW FOR SOME REAL MONEY

In Nebraska, lobbyists get to play a major role in campaign fundraising.

Political Action Committees

Political action committees (PACs) are organizations established by corporations, labor unions and other special interests to raise money from individuals for political campaigns or political causes. For many elected officials and candidates for public office, PACs are the largest source of campaign funds. A survey of campaign contributions over \$250 will show how important PACs are to get elected.

In Nebraska, there are currently 111 active PACs. During the 2016 election cycle, PACs contributed \$2,581,145, according to the latest data available from the Accountability and Disclosure Commission. More than a third of the PACs had lobbyists as treasurers. The 2018 figures are not yet available.

Client Campaign Contributions

It is not uncommon for lobbyists to send a letter to an elected official informing them of a forthcoming campaign contribution from a client. These contributions may be in the thousands of dollars. The recipient normally recognizes the fact that the lobbyist is the conduit even though the client is the donor. Although the contribution is not from the lobbyist, the connection is clear and the opportunities for influence may follow.

Altria Client Services, the top principal spender in 2018 and parent company of Philip Morris, spent \$841,945 on lobbying from 2014 to 2018. Over a two-year period in 2016-17, Altria Client Services contributed \$55,000 in campaign contributions. The lobbyists under contract were Garth Alston, Bruning Law Group, Jensen Rogert Associates and Radcliffe and Associates. Most of the lobbying money goes to the lobbyist, while the campaign dollars have a direct effect on the elected officials.

Contributions from Altria Client Services, 2016-2017

Date	Contribution	Recipient
03/17/16	\$5,000	NE Republican Party
04/06/16	2,500	Pete Ricketts for Gov.
06/24/16	1,000	Pete Ricketts for Gov.
07/18/16	500	Pete Ricketts for Gov.
07/19/16	1,000	Jim Smith
07/20/16	1,000	Friends of Mike Hilgers – Leg.
07/28/16	1,000	Greg Neuhaus
08/04/16	500	Tommy Garrett, Com. to Elect
08/05/16	1,000	Lou Ann Linehan for Leg.
08/06/16	500	Anna Wishart for Leg.
08/08/16	500	Lammers for Leg.
08/10/16	500	Ian Swanson for Leg.
08/14/16	1,000	Karl Elmshaeuser for NE
08/14/16	500	Jim Scheer for Leg.
08/18/16	500	John Lowe for Leg.
08/19/16	500	John Murante for Leg.
08/26/16	500	Lydia Brasch for Leg.
08/29/16	500	Suzanne Geist for Leg.
09/02/16	500	Dan Watermeier for Leg.
09/07/16	500	Tom Briese for Leg.
09/08/16	500	Steve Halloran for Leg.
10/24/16	10,000	NE Republican Party
03/06/17	5,000	NE Republican Party
08/25/17	2,000	Stinner for Leg.
08/29/17	1,000	Joni Craighead for Leg.
09/01/17	1,000	Wayne for NE
09/07/17	1,000	Ebke for Leg.
09/07/17	1,000	Matt Williams for Leg.
09/25/17	1,000	Tom Brewer for Leg.
09/26/17	1,000	Friends of Lindstrom
10/03/17	1,000	Kolterman for Leg.
10/05/17	1,000	Friends of Mike Hilgers-Leg.
10/08/17	5,000	Pete Ricketts for Gov.
11/06/17	1,000	Doug Peterson for AG
TOTAL	51,000	

** Compiled March 8, 2018, from Accountability and Disclosure Commission records*

In 2018, Altria Client Services contributed \$38,000 to political campaigns. The bulk of the money went to the Nebraska Republican Party (\$16,000) and the Committee to Elect Pete Ricketts for Governor (\$10,000).

Altria Client Services LLC & Its Affiliates

YEAR 2018	Amount
ANNA WISHART FOR LEGISLATURE	\$500
BEN HANSEN FOR LEGISLATURE	1,000
EBKE FOR LEGISLATURE	1,000
FRIENDS OF LINDSTROM	1,000
FRIENDS OF MIKE HILGERS-LEGISLATURE	1,000
JOHN LOWE FOR LEGISLATURE	500
LINEHAN FOR LEGISLATURE	1,500
MATT DEAVER FOR LEGISLATURE	1,000
NEBRASKANS FOR MURANTE	500
NE REPUBLICAN PARTY	16,000
PETE RICKETTS FOR GOVERNOR	10,000
ROBERT CLEMENTS FOR LEGISLATURE	1,000
SCHEER FOR STATE LEGISLATURE (2016)	1,000
SUZANNE C. GEIST FOR LEGISLATURE	500
THIBODEAU FOR LEGISLATURE	1,000
WAYNE FOR NEBRASKA	500
TOTAL	38,000

** Compiled April 2019 from Accountability and Disclosure Commission records*

Peetz and Company is an example of a lobbying firm that makes direct campaign contributions. In fact, it reports more campaign contributions than any other firm. In 2016, Peetz contributed a total of \$18,675.

Peetz and Company Campaign Contributions, 2016

Campaign	Contribution Amount (\$)
Al Davis for Legislature	\$500
Burke Harr for Legislature	500
Citizens to Elect Jim Smith	500
Committee to Elect Tommy Garrett	500
Doug Peterson for AG	1,000
Festersen for City Council	500
Friends for Sue Crawford	500
Friends of Lindstrom	500
Friends of Mike Hilgers - Legislature	500
Greg Neuhaus for Legislature	500
John Lowe for Legislature	500
Kolowski for Legislature	1,000
Kolterman for Legislature	500
Lincoln Independent Business PA C	1,500
Linehan for Legislature	500
Matt Williams for Legislature, Inc.	500
McCollister for Legislature	1,500
Murante for Legislature	1,000
NE Chamber of Commerce PAC	300
NE Democratic Party	625
NE Republican Party	1,250
Pansing Brooks for Legislature	500
Paul Kenney for Regent	500
Pete Ricketts for Governor	1,000
Seiler for Unicameral	500
Stinner for Legislature	500
Suzanne C. Geist for Legislature	500
Watermeier for Legislature	500
Wayne for Nebraska	500
TOTAL	\$19,175

* Compiled March 8, 2018, from Accountability and Disclosure Commission records

In 2018, Peetz and Company was a bit less generous, giving \$11,000.

Peetz and Company Campaign Contributions, 2018

Campaign	Contribution Amount (\$)
ANNA WISHART FOR LEGISLATURE	\$500
BRANDT FOR LEGISLATURE	500
CITIZENS TO ELECT JOHN ARCH	500
DAVE MURMAN FOR LEGISLATURE	500
EBKE FOR LEGISLATURE	500
FRIENDS OF DAN WATERMEIER	500
FRIENDS OF LINDSTROM	1,000
FRIENDS OF MIKE HILGERS-LEGISLATURE	500
FRIENDS OF MIKE MCDONNELL	500
HUGHES FOR LEGISLATURE	500
MACHAELA CAVANAUGH FOR LEGISLATURE	500
MATT DEAVER FOR LEGISLATURE	500
NEBRASKANS FOR MURANTE	1,000
NE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE & INDUSTRY PAC	1,000
PETE RICKETTS FOR GOVERNOR	1,000
SUZANNE C. GEIST FOR LEGISLATURE	500
THIBODEAU FOR LEGISLATURE	500
WENDY DEBOER FOR LEGISLATURE	500
TOTAL	\$11,000

** Copied from Accountability and Disclosure Commission records on April 2, 2019*

In-Session Fundraisers

Lobbyist-sponsored in-session fundraisers work well for both the lobbyist and the senators. The senators are in town, the lobbyists are in the rotunda and the bills are on the floor. It is estimated that thousands of campaign dollars can be raised at breakfast just an hour before senators vote.

The invitation that goes to senators offers a free meal. The invitation that goes to lobbyists suggests \$100 at the door. Lobbyists may bring checks from their clients as well. These are closed events. The public and the press are not invited. Since much of the money comes in contributions under \$250, which is the current required disclosure limit, the money can be reported as cash, making it nearly impossible to trace.

Twenty-nine states prohibit in-session fundraisers, but Nebraska isn't one of them. Common Cause Nebraska has supported legislation to prohibit these events, but the Government Committee has never advanced a single bill calling for restrictions.

One might think that term limits would reduce the demand for lobbying. That is not always the case. Some term-limited politicians like a healthy war chest for future endeavors.

Lobbyist-sponsored fundraisers take place throughout the year, but money changing hands during the session, often hours before a vote, lends itself to corruption or the perception of corruption.

In-session Fundraisers Scheduled for 2019

January	February	March	April	May
1st Senator Brewer	6th Senator La Grone	13th Senator DeBoer	2nd Senator M. Hansen	2nd Senator Arch
30th Senator Brandt	22nd Senator Quick	21st Senator Lathrop	3rd Senator Wishart	
	28th Senator McDonnell	27th Senator Murman	5th Senator Blood	
		28th Senator Walz	16th Senator Cavanaugh	
			24th Senator Morfeld	
			26th Senator McDonnell	

** Compiled from the Clerk's Office records, April 3, 2019*

THE REVOLVING DOOR

The “revolving door” continues to turn as Nebraska’s elected officials leave their offices to join the lobbying ranks. When we elect individuals, we expect them to serve the interest of their constituents and the state. As a result, they gain special knowledge and relationships. This background is a public trust. It should not be bought and sold.

Special interests outside of government are more than willing to buy that knowledge and use those relationships for financial gain.

Common Cause believes there should be a two-year “cooling off period” before public officials become paid lobbyists.

Former State Elected Officials Registered as Lobbyists, 2018

Lobbyist	Registered	1st Year (\$)	2nd Year (\$)	2017 (\$)	2018 (\$)
Chris Abboud (1983-1998)	2000†	7,500‡	49,470‡	59,888‡	67,014‡
Greg Adams (2007-2015)	2016	6,666 (4th Q only)	40,000 (Contract)	40,555	41,459
Allen Beermann (1971-1995)	2000†	2,000	4,000	4,000	4,000
Curt Bromm (1993-2004)	2005	116,000	146,500	116,068	146,034
Jon Bruning AG (2003-2015)	2015	132,000‡	288,000‡	406,968‡	162,507
Colby Coash (2009-2017)	2018	5,520			5,520
Danielle Conrad (2007-2015)	2015	12,991	6,658	11,792	11,774
Annette Dubas (2007-2015)	2015	3,500	8,000	8,000	8,000
Nicole Fox (2015-2016)	2017	5,833/mo.	5,320	37,173	5,320
Tim Gay (2006-2010)	2011	54,961	61,793	100,000	128,000
Burke Harr (2011-2018)	2019	Houghton Bradford			
Karen Kilgarin (1981-1984)	2000†	9,101	18,524	13,077	13,281
Scott Lautenbauh (2007-2014)	2015	68,000	21,750	119,000	82,800
John Lindsay (1989-1997)	2000†	62,126	126,049	100,260	100,334
Jan McKenzie (1993-1997)	2000†	3,000	19,000	48,691	42,526
Heath Mello (2009-2017)	2017	66,000	67,355	66,000	67,355
Mick Mines (2003-2007)	2008	56,000	76,000	162,894	160,901
James Pappas (1983-1987)	2000†	6,000	28,000	3,950	3,950
Kent Rogert (2007-2011)	2011	76,300	46,300	72,000	72,000
Kenneth Schilz (2008-2016)	2017	Bruning‡	162,507‡	406,968‡	162,507‡

* Chart compiled from Blue Book information April 3, 2019

† Online registration
‡ Totals by lobbying firm

ALEC: A LOBBYING ORGANIZATION WITH SECRETS

The **American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC)** is a nonprofit organization of conservative state legislators and private sector representatives who draft and share “model” state-level legislation for distribution among state governments in the United States.

ALEC’s approach to lobbying involves holding conferences in attractive locations and “bringing together” legislators, lobbyists and corporate representatives. The gatherings include breakout sessions where legislators can be educated and provided with actual bills ready to be introduced at their state legislatures. ALEC bills are typically introduced as homegrown and do not identify who drafted the bills. ALEC “model legislation” often aims at privatizing education and healthcare, rolling back environmental regulations and limiting consumer protection.

Each state has a legislator identified as the ALEC chair, and that person’s job is to recruit members and encourage other legislators to attend conferences. Memberships are kept secret and ALEC conferences are closed to the public and the press. Legislators are expected to pay minimal dues, while ALEC conferences are held in the finest hotels in fun-filled locations to attract participants. In the past, ALEC provided “scholarships” to cover travel, hotel accommodations and registration. Currently, these expenses are reported as gifts or reimbursements. Many legislators use campaign funds for trips and then get reimbursed by ALEC.

Senator Jim Smith was the state chair in 2017. He refused to release his list of Nebraska legislative members but reported that nearly half of Nebraska senators had joined.

An organization known as Documented Investigations acquired an attendance list from the July 2017 ALEC conference in Denver, Colorado. The following Nebraska senators were in attendance and identified as members:

- Senator Curt Friesen ---- District 34
- Senator Brett Lindstrom ---- District 18
- Senator Lou Ann Linehan ---- District 39
- Senator John Lowe ---- District 37
- Senator Merv Riepe ---- District 12
- Senator Jim Smith ---- District 14, state chair and national board member
- Senator John Stinner ---- District 48

In 2018, it was reported by Documented Investigations that Senator Lou Ann Linehan had taken over as Nebraska’s ALEC state chair. She reported gifts from ALEC on her statement of financial interest in excess of \$1,500 for two conferences she attended. (Senators record a “C” if the gift is greater than \$500 but less than \$1,000. The letter “D” is recorded if the gift exceeds \$1,000. How much over \$1,000 does not have to be disclosed. Senator Linehan reported a “C” and a “D.” There are no other thresholds for gift reporting over \$1,000.)

Senator Lydia Brasch accepted an ALEC “scholarship” in excess of \$1,000, according to her 2018 statement of financial interest. Senator Joni Albrecht’s campaign funds were reimbursed in 2018 by ALEC for a conference expense of \$2,195, her campaign finance report showed. Senator John Lowe spent \$675 in campaign funds to attend an ALEC conference on May 8, 2018, and no reimbursement was recorded, according to his campaign finance reports.

Should there be a secret organization operating within our Unicameral? Common Cause Nebraska continues to push ALEC for greater transparency, both in their memberships and their corporate-based legislation.

CONCLUSION

Nebraska has some of the most lenient lobbying and fundraising rules in the country. Our reporting requirements are paltry, requiring only that spending on gifts of food and drink to senators be submitted as one lump sum. We even allow lobbyists to hold cash-based in-session fundraisers on the same days that senators vote on bills.

For eight years, Common Cause Nebraska has compiled lobbyists' expenses to document the growing wealth of the lobby and advance reforms to curb the influence of special interest money in politics. We continue to advocate for a two-year break before legislators can become lobbyists, an end to the practice of in-session fundraisers and greater transparency from both lobbyists and principals on how lobbyists influence policymakers.

We encourage you to use the data in this report to join us in holding elected officials accountable.

Gavin Geis
Executive Director
Common Cause Nebraska

APPENDIX:

University Tickets Under the Reporting Threshold of \$100

University of Nebraska Omaha (UNO) Hockey Night – Hockey Tickets Total (\$375)

Senator Sue Crawford	UNO Hockey Ticket (2)	\$50
Senator Burke Harr	UNO Hockey Ticket (4)	\$100
Senator Robert Hilkemann	UNO Hockey Ticket (2)	\$50
Senator Rick Kolowski	UNO Hockey Ticket (2)	\$50
Senator Lou Ann Linehan	UNO Hockey Ticket (2)	\$50
Senator Jim Smith	UNO Hockey Ticket (2)	\$50
Senator Sara Howard	UNO Hockey (1)	\$25

University of Nebraska–Lincoln Basketball Tickets Total (\$84)

Senator Matt Williams	Two (2) Basketball Tickets	\$42
Governor Pete Ricketts	Two (2) Basketball Tickets	\$42

Staff Tickets

\$1,740

Lauren McCarthy	Two (2) Spring Game Tickets	\$20
Amara Meyer	Two (2) Spring Game Tickets	\$20
Beverly Neel	Two (2) Spring Game Tickets	\$20
Jacob Campbell	Two (2) Spring Game Tickets	\$20
Courtney McClellan	Two (2) Spring Game Tickets	\$20
Rick Leonard	Two (2) Spring Game Tickets	\$20
Tony Baker	Two (2) Spring Game Tickets	\$20
Julie Condon	Two (2) Spring Game Tickets	\$20
Michael Calvert	Two (2) Spring Game Tickets	\$20
Wanda	Two (2) Spring Game Tickets	\$20
Phil	Two (2) Spring Game Tickets	\$20
Mike L.	Two (2) Spring Game Tickets	\$20
Scott	Two (2) Spring Game Tickets	\$20
Jeanne	Two (2) Spring Game Tickets	\$20
Doug Nichols	Two (2) Spring Game Tickets	\$20
Christina Mayer	Two (2) Spring Game Tickets	\$20
Shayna Bartow	Two (2) Spring Game Tickets	\$20
Tim Hruza	Two (2) Spring Game Tickets	\$20
Dick Clark	Two (2) Spring Game Tickets	\$20
Trevor Reilly	Two (2) Spring Game Tickets	\$20
Brandon Benson	Two (2) Spring Game Tickets	\$20
Laurie Vollertson	Two (2) Spring Game Tickets	\$20
Trinity Chappellear	Two (2) Spring Game Tickets	\$20
Mary Jacobsen	Two (2) Spring Game Tickets	\$20
Tim Erickson	Two (2) Spring Game Tickets	\$20
LaMont Rainey	Two (2) Spring Game Tickets	\$20
Kristina McGovern	Two (2) Spring Game Tickets	\$20
Charles Garman	Two (2) Spring Game Tickets	\$20
Sarah Wagelie	Two (2) Spring Game Tickets	\$20
Courtney Lyons	Two (2) Spring Game Tickets	\$20
Tom Green	Two (2) Spring Game Tickets	\$20
Mary Torell	Two (2) Spring Game Tickets	\$20
Beth Dineen	Two (2) Spring Game Tickets	\$20
Maddie Breeling	Two (2) Spring Game Tickets	\$20
Mackenzie Martin Fisk	Two (2) Spring Game Tickets	\$20
Jessica Shelburn	Two (2) Spring Game Tickets	\$20

Josh Eickmeier	Two (2) Spring Game Tickets	\$20
Alycia Tiemann Brady	Two (2) Spring Game Tickets	\$20
Aaron Bos	Two (2) Spring Game Tickets	\$20
Tim Duey	Two (2) Spring Game Tickets	\$20
Randi Schott	Two (2) Spring Game Tickets	\$20
Jan Foster	Two (2) Spring Game Tickets	\$20
William Marienau	Two (2) Spring Game Tickets	\$20
Jack Spray	Two (2) Spring Game Tickets	\$20
Linda Schmidt	Two (2) Spring Game Tickets	\$20
Cheryl Kizzier	Two (2) Spring Game Tickets	\$20
Charles Isom	Two (2) Spring Game Tickets	\$20
Sherry Shaffer	Two (2) Spring Game Tickets	\$20
Chris Tribsch	Two (2) Spring Game Tickets	\$20
Billy Stock	Two (2) Spring Game Tickets	\$20
Catlin Bates	Two (2) Spring Game Tickets	\$20
Megan Rothluebber	Two (2) Spring Game Tickets	\$20
Brandi Thorn	Two (2) Spring Game Tickets	\$20
Marcia McClurg	Two (2) Spring Game Tickets	\$20
Craig Breunig	Two (2) Spring Game Tickets	\$20
Katie Chatters	Two (2) Spring Game Tickets	\$20
Luke Robson	Two (2) Spring Game Tickets	\$20
Lauren Betka	Two (2) Spring Game Tickets	\$20
Taylor Gage	Two (2) Spring Game Tickets	\$20
Eric Malver	Two (2) Spring Game Tickets	\$20
Ryan Kopsa	Two (2) Spring Game Tickets	\$20
Samantha Billings	Two (2) Spring Game Tickets	\$20
Tyler Mahood	Two (2) Spring Game Tickets	\$20
Maggie Brumond	Two (2) Spring Game Tickets	\$20
Kristen Stiffler	Two (2) Spring Game Tickets	\$20
Laurie Weber	Two (2) Spring Game Tickets	\$20
Spencer Heas	Two (2) Spring Game Tickets	\$20
Patty Wade	Two (2) Spring Game Tickets	\$20
Krissa Delka	Two (2) Spring Game Tickets	\$20
Kory Bergquist	Two (2) Spring Game Tickets	\$20
Mary Jan Egr Edson	Two (2) Spring Game Tickets	\$20
Lisa Johns	Two (2) Spring Game Tickets	\$20
Hadassah Moore	Two (2) Spring Game Tickets	\$20
Rodney Krogh	Two (2) Spring Game Tickets	\$20
Erik Servellon	Two (2) Spring Game Tickets	\$20
Meg Mandy	Two (2) Spring Game Tickets	\$20
Tom Arnsperger	Two (2) Spring Game Tickets	\$20
Brandon Bayer	Two (2) Spring Game Tickets	\$20
Kim Kavis	Two (2) Spring Game Tickets	\$20
Laura Olson	Two (2) Spring Game Tickets	\$20
Janice Satra	Two (2) Spring Game Tickets	\$20
Chuck Hubka	Two (2) Spring Game Tickets	\$20
Precious McKesson	Two (2) Spring Game Tickets	\$20
Jake Seeman	Two (2) Spring Game Tickets	\$20
Trevor Fitzgerald	Two (2) Spring Game Tickets	\$20
Dexter Schrodt	Two (2) Spring Game Tickets	\$20
Natalie Schunk	Two (2) Spring Game Tickets	\$20

** These lists are copied directly from the university's 2019 principal's report*

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Education Fund

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Nebraska
Holding Power Accountable