

EXECUTIVE NEWS

The Official Publication of the Ohio Society of Association Executives
Volume 6 | Issue 1 | January 2010

Will Supreme Court Ruling Impact Your PAC?





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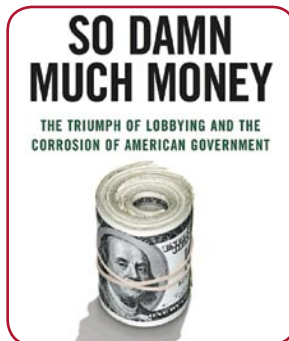
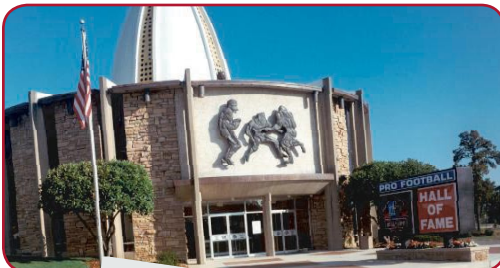
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Calendar of Events

February 26, 2010
OSAE Roundtable
Ohio Library Council
Review of the new 990 and
How to Comply with the New
Rules

March 5, 2010
March OSAE Luncheon
Monthly Luncheon and
optional seminar
Westin

April 9, 2010
OSAE Monthly Luncheon
Wedgewood Golf & Country
Club

May 14, 2010
OSAE Monthly Luncheon
Hilton Polaris

June 11, 2010
OSAE Monthly Luncheon
Holiday Inn Capitol Square



Sharolene Wackman, CAE, Interim Executive Editor

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"Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances."

I often tell people, the thing I like most about is that my career choice was addressed by the framers in the very First Amendment to the Bill of Rights of the U.S. Constitution.

For an association publisher it has everything; freedom of the press, freedom of association and the right to advocate the government.

I have found that most folks find this far less interesting than I do, but I don't mind.

This edition of *Executive News* is fun for us because we dig a little deeper into the First Amendment. On our editorial calendar we call it our advocacy issue, but we could just as well call it our First Amendment issue.

In our cover story we look at the recent Supreme Court decision, *Citizens United versus The Federal Elections*

Commission, which has huge First Amendment implications for 501(c)(6)s, trade associations and professional societies and those of us who speak in a less lawyerly language.

Dr. Jimelle Rumberg provides advice for moving your legislative agenda in her Executive Boot Camp column.

In Dollars & Sense, Patti DiPietro discusses tips for managing the financial end of your PAC, and we have a piece in Tech Talk looking at social media as new tools in your advocacy efforts.

Thank you for taking the time to read *Executive News* and feel free to contact me at dmcquigg@encompasspubs.com with any story ideas or questions. 

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Advocacy's Arsenal: Coming of Age to Move Legislative Agendas

by Dr. Jimelle Rumberg, Ph.D., CAE

As state association executives, it is imperative to keep our legislative goals in the forefront of legislators' agendas. In particular, for those 501 (c) (6) organizations, we realize the importance of developing a key message to move our agendas. Organizations know that a key message must accurately be consistent and concise to advance legislation to a successful passage for the Governor's signature.

PACs make it happen

To keep the advocacy machine well-oiled, there are a number of steps that must be utilized. Advocacy can be as simple as a target to kill legislation or as complex as a mission statement with goals and objectives to move a bill. It goes without saying that in tandem with key messages, associations PACs are utilized to move and fund their legislative agendas. Members must understand the issues and learn to relay the message in a non-emotional and succinct manner.

Keeping your legislative agendas viable happens through constant PAC reminders for contributions and through event promotions (such as outings and silent auctions) to raise revenue. It's a hard and cold realization that PAC dollars are the only way to make legislation happen. PACs are considered as part of the association's infrastructure planning but are kept separate and distinct. That includes separate Bylaws and bank accounts. Simply put, your legislative efforts should be a grassroots outreach of direct and indirect lobbying, education and public outreach events and materials that will make your key messages discernible to the General Assembly.


Plan your course of action

Once you determine your focus, draft your key message and plan, your in-house or contracted lobbyist should assist you in identifying laws and regulations that affect your association (both pro and con). Likewise, I recommend that as an executive director, CEO or titled chief staff officer, you register as a lobbyist so that conversations, direct or indirect lobby outreaches/contacts, or events aren't misrepresented on behalf of your organization. Along with your government relations lobbyist, you need to identify policymakers who have influence over laws and regulations that affect your trade or profession. This includes House and Senate Committee Chairs, licensing and regulator boards, or State Agency Directors. As you develop an advocacy agenda, your resource gathering efforts through your PAC should begin. Next, you will need to establish an inventory of personal contacts with members of the media as well as government officials. When that list is composed, your next step is to mobilize allies and grassroots. This is done by building coalitions, educating your grassroots membership, and plan-

ning campaign fundraisers. Some organizations have found success by hosting issue briefing sessions for policymakers, public education or community outreach events.

Advocacy's everywhere

Raising awareness with the media and general public can be costly. One practical way that many associations have capitalized their advocacy efforts is through e-Advocacy. Several internet vendors now offer electronic advocacy sites. These sites, which can be populated with template letters or key messages, utilize blast emails to grassroots for the General Assembly or Congress. They may list OH officials and agencies, legislative alerts, issues and a bill search engine. It's a vast electronic tool which has robustly propelled advocacy efforts into the cyber age. Members are more apt to participate in advocacy when asked because its time-effective and simple to use. My staff appreciates the functionality of the site, as we can routinely update members with progress on bills, quantify hits and grassroots uses, and craft each message to legislators with our key message. Most sites also provide members the flexibility to edit the template message which makes their emails more personal or print a letter instead of utilizing the email template. It also assures that the correct district corresponds with the legislator via the entry zip code of the user. Operationally, our site provides my association with a media contact list as well as the functionality of a blast mail feature for regulatory information or alerts. It's a tremendous tool in the advocacy arsenal.

Other electronic tools that we will see more of in the upcoming months are Facebook postings, "Tweeting" on Twitter and blogging. We recently followed one of our OPMA members in his quest for Mayor of Cincinnati through the November Election on Facebook. It was interesting to see his participation in rallies, fundraisers and neighborhood canvassing. His momentum never waned and it kept his supporters informed. Similarly, we've received several emailed newsletters from candidates regarding state and federal campaigns. We have referenced several candidates' Web sites and have found them to be quite useful for our PAC or for general information on the candidate's platform. Five years ago cyber campaigning was just launching. Now it's common place. Should we expect texting in the upcoming races to personalize campaigns to the next level? That's a distinct possibility and one that I certainly wouldn't discount. 

Dr. Rumberg, CAE is the executive director of the Ohio Podiatric Medical Association. She may be contacted at jrumberg@opma.org.



PAC Tips

By Patti DiPietro

If the definition of advocacy is to influence others, then one of the key ways to accomplish this is to create a Political Action Committee. A PAC could be one of the most important components of an advocacy program. While many in business have aversion for politics, sensible association executives recognize that participating in the political process can help ensure their interests are represented.

What is a PAC?

Political Action Committees are organizations that raise money to contribute to political parties or candidates. A Political Action Committee can be tied to a business, a candidate, a party, or an organization. Proper administration of a PAC is important because if it is done wrong it can adversely affect both the contributors and the organization's representation. Therefore, it is important to understand campaign finance law.


A PAC is an outlet for an individual to have political impact. Individual members are limited as to how much they may contribute to candidates and/or political parties. PACs allow members to further contribute and maximize their donations and voice. Ultimately, PACs allow a large number of small contributors to come together to have maximum influence. The fact is that PACs, particularly the large ones, get noticed.

At the Federal level, the Federal Election Commission oversees all federal campaign finance laws and requirements. The Ohio Election Commission enforces all state campaign and campaign finance laws. Ohio laws can be very complicated and are always changing.

Many Ohio PACs are administered by and are affiliated to an association. Those PACs are organized by management employees and members. How do committees get started and function? Here are 10 tips:

1. Select a name for the political action committee.
2. Appoint officers including chairman, secretary and most importantly a treasurer.
3. File with the Secretary of the State of Ohio.
4. Apply for an EIN from the Internal Revenue Service.
5. Open a bank account in the name of the PAC. PAC funds must be kept in a separate bank account from other association funds.
6. Define the committee's sphere of influence. It should incorporate a mission statement and develop a communicate plan.
7. Solicit contributions. There are limits to how much a political action committee may receive from any one individual member. Be sure to review Ohio campaign restrictions.
8. Create a process to determine how committee funds will be distributed.
9. Make contributions to candidates that support your legislative position. There are limits to how much a PAC may contribute to each candidate and other PACs or political parties. For example, in 2010, a limit of \$11,395.56 per election for each House and Senate. Be sure to review campaign restrictions by reviewing the following website: <http://www.sos.state.oh.us/SOS/Campaign%20Finance/CFGuide/Resources/limchart.aspx>.
10. Record keeping is required of all of the contributions it receives and all of the expenditures it made. Set up a reporting system. There are PAC computer software packages available.

Most Ohio association PACs are non-partisan and do not support candidates based on party affiliation. Their PACs have a history of providing support for candidates across party lines.

Remember, the goal of any political action committee is to contribute money to candidates that share the organization's political views. These candidates carry their vote into legislation that will in turn help the association accomplish their mission. As said by President Obama "Money is not the only answer, but it makes a difference." 

Patricia DiPietro is the retired Chief Executive Officer & Chief Financial Officer of the 300,000-member American Motorcyclist Association, and current board member of the Ohio Motorcyclists for Children Association. She can be reached at pgdipietro@yahoo.com.

OSAE March Luncheon

**March 5, 2010
Westin**

New Media, New Rules

Despite the explosion of social media, newspapers, TV and radio are still vital communications channels. At our March 5 workshop and lunch, you will go behind the scenes to learn how the media are changing and how your association can work more effectively with them.

Join Brad and Janet Ritter, OSAE members and national media consultants/coaches, for fast-paced, hands-on programs that will bring you up to date on the changing media world and help you hone your media communications skills.



Trends & Opportunities: *Social Networks Offer Opportunity for Advocacy and More*

During the 2008 presidential campaign, the Obama campaign announced its choice for vice president via a 3 a.m. text message, while the McCain camp chose a more traditional approach with a highly anticipated public rally staged in Dayton.

The rally provided everything the McCain folks could have asked for; plenty of excitement and free media buzz. Voters of the nation got their first look at then Alaskan Governor, Sarah Palin, and her family as coverage of the rally and the subsequent bus tour through the Buckeye state, an important swing state, dominated the news cycle for a couple of days. The announcement made a big splash.

The Obama campaign approach caused more of a ripple in terms of media coverage, but the ripple created waves that had a longer lasting impact. Those who wished to receive the text heads-up were required to give their email address or cell phone number. The campaign was able to turn many of these connections into two-way communications eliciting volunteers and ultimately into cold hard cash.

Political campaigns are first adopters, because they have the means and needs to find out what works. Methods proven by '08 campaigns became templates for Web 2.0 innovation for the advocacy community.

Slim budgets demand creativity and maximizing resources, but the expectations of membership are now in line with social media tools – there are more folks online and the older groups are the fastest growing.

Advocacy practitioners have discovered the power of social networks and put those tools to use. Among the virtues of social media is the expediency that it offers association advocates.

“New communications tools have proven invaluable to groups hoping to line up supporters/protestors on extremely short notice. Groups such as Moveon.org and the National Taxpayers Union have been encouraging their

supporters to inundate their representatives with email, and several groups used email to organize events,” says Aaron Smith, who reports on new media for the Pew Research Institute.


Your members are on social media or will be soon. One of the more striking facts regarding social media is the pace at which older Americans have embraced it over the past year. iStrategyLabs, an online analytics company, reports that there are now over 103 million users on Facebook. Nearly 40 percent of those are over 35 years old and folks over 55 grew at a rate of over 900 percent in 2009.

The Web site www.associationssocialmedia.com lists 135 associations that have linked their social media sites. Facebook is the most popular social media tool deployed by associations.

There are many benefits to this technology, such as low cost ways of increasing members while offering measurable results. The two-

way communications offers additional ways to organize and mobilize your stakeholders.

Still, the most valuable component is the way that this form of communication offers you and your organization, a way to personalize your member's relationship with their association. After all, social media works because everyone wants to feel a part of a community and these tools offer us a great opportunity to make that happen.

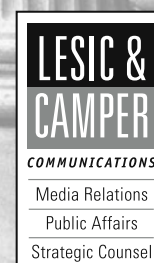
- **Facebook** – a social networking Web site that allows people to communicate and exchange information with their friends.
- **LinkedIn** – a business-oriented social networking site used primarily for professional networking.
- **Twitter** – a social networking and micro-blogging (“Tweets”; text-based posts up to 140 characters) service to send and read other users’ updates.
- **YouTube** – a video sharing Web site where users can upload, view and share video clips.
- **Wikipedia** – an online free-content encyclopedia that anyone can edit. 

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Will Supreme Court Ruling Impact Your PAC?

Money and the influence it may or may not have on politics has always been the nexus of debate in America. It can be argued that the money and its distribution is the core of any political discourse.

Legislators deal with large amounts of money; numbers beyond the comprehension of the average wage earner. The most recent Ohio budget will amount to \$50 billion worth of programs and spending. Debate that kept many association executives and their lobbyists busy well into the Christmas shopping season centered around an \$850 million hole.

It is the constitutional responsibility of legislators to oversee the raising of funds and the spending of the public's treasury.

When not performing their official duties, legislators and elected officials are busy accumulating funds for their reelections. It is necessary to be competitive come election time. Lobbyists are a highly visible source of those contributions.

Campaign contributions and fundraising has been thrust into the forefront both in the Buckeye state and nationally in ways that may impact associations and their PACs.

A recent Supreme Court ruling, *Citizens United Versus The Federal Elections Commission (FEC)* has removed restrictions on corporate spending in political campaigns, and reinforced the First Amendment rights of corporations and labor unions to participate in the political process.

While it may be too early to know exactly how this ruling will impact trade associations and their Political Action Committees (PACs), in a paper prepared by the law firm McKenna Long & Aldridge, LLP and posted in the advocacy and outreach section of www.asaecenter.org, it is noted that many restrictions will remain in place.

“It is important to note, however, that this right to advocate the election or defeat of candidates does not supersede certain other organizational regulations, including those found in the Internal Revenue Code, which must continue to be considered. For example, the IRS ‘major purpose’ test for 501(c)(4) and 501(c)(6) organizations will continue to limit the percentage of those organizations’ funds that may be used for a political purpose, such as running these newly Constitutionally-protected direct candidate

“The Supreme Court held that corporations enjoy that same right. Yet the FEC perversely maintains that a group of individuals who join together in an unincorporated association may be subjected to burdensome rules and regulations and limits on the amounts they can contribute to their common efforts. This is a flagrant violation of the right of association.”

Simpson said, “The First Amendment guarantees not only the right to speak individually, but the right to band together in support of a common cause. Under the First Amendment, individuals, not the FEC, get to decide how to organize themselves in order to speak most effectively. They cannot be compelled to choose between their right to freedom of speech and their right of association.”

“Money and the influence it may or may not have on politics has always been the nexus of debate in America. It can be argued that the money and its distribution is the core of any political discourse.”

advocacy advertisements. In addition, IRS Regulations continue to prohibit tax-exempt 501(c)(3) charitable organizations from spending funds on political candidate advocacy efforts.

As in the past, Section 501(c) organizations will have to carefully craft their public communication programs in order to satisfy the several different facts and circumstances tests that the IRS employs to measure the political activities of not-for-profit organizations. Even though they are now authorized to do so, a Section 501(c)(4) and 501(c)(6) organization may not wish to expand its communications to include independent expenditures with express advocacy, since such communications may subject the organization to taxes on the amount of such expenditures (or its investment income, if less). Member dues and contributions that are used to fund such communications also will not be tax-deductible. Section 527 organizations will continue to be valuable tools to take full advantage of the Citizens United decision, while avoiding unintended taxes and possible loss of tax-exempt status.”

Still the influence of the Citizens United decision is already sending ripples through lower courts. In the week following the Citizens United decision a federal Appeals court heard oral arguments in *SpeechNow.org v. The Federal Elections Commission* where several judges questioned existing limits on political action committees and the Associated Press reported that one of the judges told a government lawyer, “You don’t seem to value the First Amendment very highly.”

SpeechNow.org is a pro-First Amendment group questioning whether it must comply with FEC regulations concerning PACs. SpeechNow’s lawyers argue that since the group operates strictly independently, the Citizens United ruling is relevant since it erased the ban on direct campaign spending by corporations and unions as long as the expenditures remain apart from, and not associated with, any candidates or parties.

“The Constitution guarantees individuals the right to speak without limit,” said Institute for Justice Senior Attorney Steve Simpson, who is arguing the case on behalf of SpeechNow.org.

ASAE watches the proceedings while taking a wait and see attitude

“We feel strongly and really work hard to get members involved. We think it is important to support those who understand association issues,” said Jim Clarke, Senior Vice President, Public Policy. Still, ASAE hasn’t spent a lot of energy on this issue.

“The one issue we have watched with this decision was the portion that dealt with McCain-Feingold about the limitations it imposed on speech 60 days and 30 days prior to an election.”

Small and medium size associations may very well be impacted differently from large associations who may be more dependant on the decisions large for-profits corporations make.

Clarke pointed out that legislation is almost certain to be introduced to address some of the issues.


“Already we have seen disclosure legislation brought up in an effort to clip this ruling,” said Clarke.

Disclosure and compliance has been a major issue closer to home

In January, Ohio’s Joint Legislative Ethics Committee (JLEC) announced that a searchable database tracking political contributions by lobbyist has been made accessible to the public.

The new database allows anyone interested to search for data in different ways, including by legislator, bill number or lobbyist or employer.

Legislative Inspector General Tony Bledsoe believes that the new system will encourage lobbyists and employers to file accurate reports, because the reports are easier for him to audit, and easier for lobbyists to track.

OSAE members may find this to be a valuable tool or they may just find it to be a new source of entertainment. 

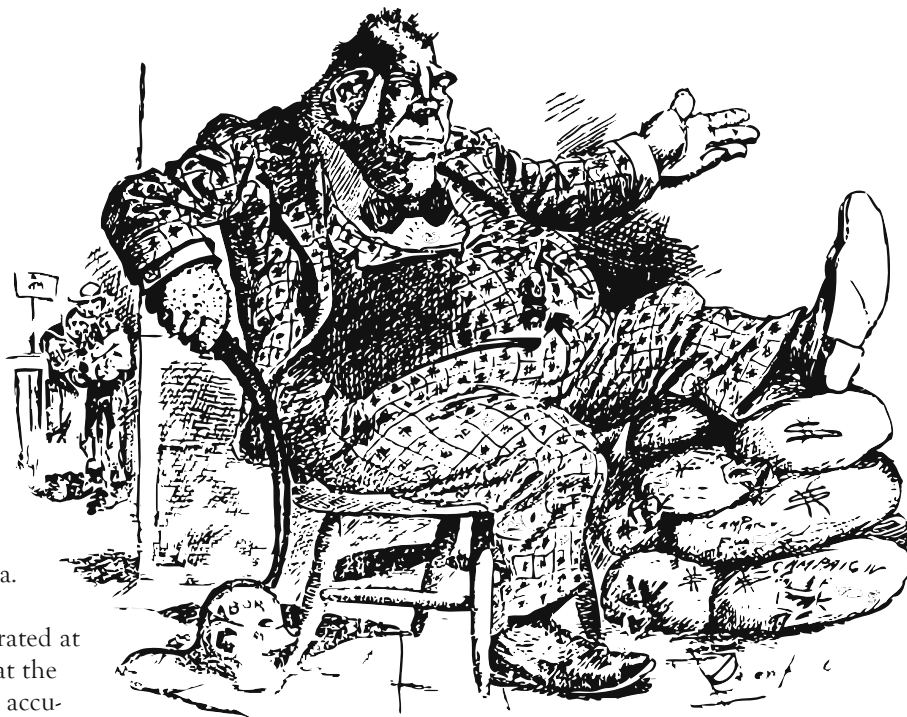
Ohio:

The Cradle of Big Money Presidential Politics?

“There are two things that are important in politics. The first is money, and I can’t remember what the second one is,” said political kingmaker Senator Marcus Alonzo Hanna.

Hanna (1837 – 1904), a native Clevelander, operated at the highest levels of the cigar filled back rooms at the close of the 19th century. Hanna was peerless at accumulating political contributions, but his famous quote is cloaked in the cunning of a first rate political operative who is keeping his secrets because he knew that the second thing was how to spend all that cash.

He was a favorite of political cartoonists of his day who revelled in depicting Hanna as America’s quintessential Political Boss.



He’s best remembered for shepherding the 1896 Presidential candidacy of fellow Ohioan William McKinley and is relevant today for being responsible for ushering in modern presidential electioneering.

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McKinley's run for the Executive Mansion, as the White House was then known, followed the established protocol. The candidate remained at home while surrogates gave speeches on the candidate's behalf. An estimated 1,500 elected and campaign officials spoke to America's garden and men's clubs about McKinley's virtues.

McKinley and Hanna recognized that their opponent, William Jennings Bryant, possessed vastly superior oratory skills. Both agreed that daily speeches delivered from the front porch of his rented home at 723 North Market Avenue in Canton

Silver" policies would set in motion spiraling inflation and erode the value of the U. S. dollar and their fortunes. Hanna was able to convert these fears into campaign contributions.

Hanna implemented a cohesive national strategy. The campaign spent liberally on a direct mail campaign that included printing over 200 million pieces with the Civil War veteran's likeness, name and slogan, "McKinley and A Full Dinner Pail."


The legacy of 1896 McKinley campaign remains relevant because many of the tactics and strategies in use today are evo-

"There are two things that are important in politics. The first is money, and I can't remember what the second one is,' said political kingmaker Senator Marcus Alonzo Hanna."

allowed McKinley a better opportunity to stay on message. He delivered the same speech for months, often several times a day, to throngs of well-wishers. This also helped the former Ohio governor appear presidential while bowing to the contemporary notion that a presidential candidate traipsing across the country begging for votes was considered beneath the dignity of the office.

Hanna, speaking to small groups of powerful industrialist and financiers, was McKinley's most important surrogate. These men who feared that a Bryant election and the enactment of his "Free

lutions of practices borrowed from this campaign. It's greatest impact is most likely its reliance on fundraising and the possibilities amassing huge amounts of money can provide.

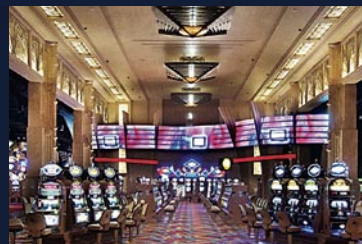
It is difficult to estimate exactly how much was raised, since this was an era proceeding mandated campaign financial disclosures. It has been reported that the McKinley campaign outspent its opponent in excess of 5-1 and that Hanna raised over \$3.5 million in 1896. This sum has been estimated to be worth the equivalent of \$3 billion today and began what we recognize as modern presidential campaigns. 



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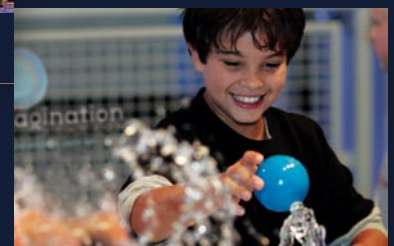
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*Some restrictions apply. See Website for details.

The OSAE 2010 Annual Conference

By Mary Vlahos, Canton/Stark County CVB
Annual Conference co-chair

The OSAE Annual Conference will be returning to Canton Stark County after a 13-year absence and Canton is excited to be the host! The theme for the conference will be "OSAE Academy Class of 2010" with the tagline Committed to Quality Education. Quality Education will be the theme and the focus of the conference. There will be a lot of new additions to the 2010 Annual Conference that will add value for all attendees.

The OSAE Marketplace will now be integrated into the Annual Conference. It will be in conjunction with the opening reception Wednesday evening at the University Center, a state-of-the-art IACC conference facility. Join us for fun and games and loads of networking at the Pro Football Hall of Fame for the Thursday night reception and meet our special mystery guest. Clues to who this guest will be are going to be posted on the conference Facebook fan page www.facebook.com/OSAEEConference2010 with a prize for the first one to guess the identity. Become a fan of our Facebook page and get all the breaking news on the conference as it happens.

The OSAE 2010 Annual Conference Committee is hard at work putting together a stellar education program tailored to the needs of the membership. You should have received the education survey put together by the Annual Conference Committee and the Professional Development Committee. This survey will tell us what education topics the OSAE membership would like to see, not only at the Annual Conference but throughout the year.

The committee is also working with the Ohio Chapter of the National Speakers Association to put together a speaker showcase for us on Friday. This is a great

way to experience several speakers at one time for your future needs. In an effort to get great national speakers but still save on costs, OSAE will be teaming up with Ohio MPI (Meeting Professionals International) to secure a speaker to address both the OHMPI luncheon on Wednesday and our educational sessions on Thursday. Look for lots of new technology we will be integrating into the conference and new sponsorship opportunities as well. The 2010 OSAE Conference will allow you to experience many things at one time and in one location; a tradeshow, quality education, a speaker showcase and awesome networking events.

Mark your calendars today for August 11-13th, 2010 and keep your eye on the Facebook fan page and the OSAE Web site for the latest updates!



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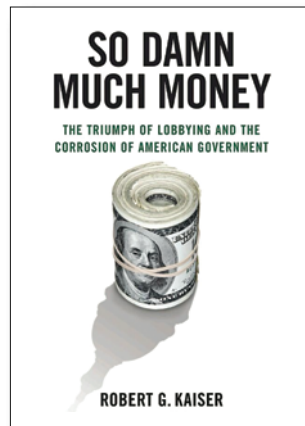
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A true insider, Robert G. Kaiser has monitored American politics for The Washington Post for nearly half a century. In this sometimes shocking and always riveting book, he explains how and why, over the last four decades, Washington became a dysfunctional capital. At the heart of his story is money—money made by special interests using campaign contributions and lobbyists to influence government decisions, and money demanded by congressional candidates to pay for their increasingly expensive campaigns, which can cost a staggering sum. In 1974, the average winning campaign for the Senate cost \$437,000; by 2006, that number had grown to \$7.92 million. The cost of winning House campaigns grew comparably: \$56,500 in 1974, \$1.3 million in 2006.


Politicians' need for money and the willingness, even eagerness, of special interests and lobbyists to provide it explain much of what has gone wrong in Washington. They have created a mutually beneficial, mutually reinforcing relationship between special interests and elected representatives, and they have created a new class in Washington, wealthy lobbyists whose



The startling story of the monumental growth of lobbying in Washington, D.C., and how it undermines effective government and pollutes our politics.

careers often begin in public service. Kaiser shows us how behavior by public officials that was once considered corrupt or improper became commonplace, how special interests became the principal funders of elections, and how our biggest national problems—health care, global warming, and the looming crises of Medicare and Social Security, among others—have been ignored as a result.

Kaiser illuminates this progression through the saga of Gerald S. J. Cassidy, a Jay Gatsby for modern Washington. Cassidy came to Washington in 1969 as an idealistic young lawyer determined to help feed the hungry. Over the course of thirty years, he built one of the city's largest and most profitable lobbying firms and accumulated a personal fortune of more than \$100 million. Cassidy's story provides an unprecedented view of lobbying from within the belly of the beast.

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Week In Review

Provided by The Hannah Report

ECONOMY

The Ohio Association of Community Action Agencies and Community Research Partners jointly released *The State of Poverty in Ohio: Building a Foundation for Prosperity*, a report showing poverty rose by nearly a full percent in 2008, while food stamp usage doubled from 2002 to 2009. The report said stemming the tide of poverty would require creation not just of more jobs but of well-paying ones, as well as greater access to education, affordable housing, alternative transportation and maintenance of the social safety net.

2010 ELECTIONS

After a request to do so from Ohio Republican Party Chairman Kevin DeWine, Delaware County Auditor Dave Yost announced he'd switch from running for attorney general to running for state auditor, filling the gap in the ticket when current State Auditor Mary Taylor said she'd run for lieutenant governor. The move helps avoid a GOP primary with former U.S. Sen. Mike DeWine in the attorney general's race, but could lead to one in the auditor's race, where Rep. Seth Morgan (R-Huber Heights) has launched a bid.

Franklin County Clerk of Courts Maryellen O'Shaughnessy has entered the race for secretary of state, following state Rep. Jennifer Garrison (D-Marietta) decision to not seek the office.

ELECTIONS

In a question-and-answer session with local elected officials, Secretary of State Jennifer Brunner said she expects to issue a new directive on use of the revamped statewide voter registration database that stemmed from an agreement on information sharing with the Bureau of Motor Vehicles. She said the directive would create a uniform process for non-matches, protect voters from purges based solely on non-matches, and ensure adherence to federal law to protect boards of elections from lawsuits.

EMPLOYMENT/UNEMPLOYMENT

The state shed 16,700 additional jobs in December, bringing the joblessness rate up to 10.9 percent, from 10.6 percent the month

before. The number of unemployed workers was 641,000, up from 624,000 in November. Ohio, which lost the third most jobs nationally, was one of 43 states to see a month-to-month increase.

FEDERAL STIMULUS (ARRA)

U.S. Department of Labor Secretary Hilda Solis joined Democratic state and local officials to announce that Ohio will receive \$400 million to restart passenger rail service between Cincinnati, Dayton, Columbus and Cleveland – the 3C corridor. Strickland said that it would restore service to the most densely populated area in the nation that does not currently have passenger rail service and estimated that it would bring \$1.2 billion and up to 11,000 new jobs to Ohio's economy. Republicans, however, remained skeptical.

GAMING

Both the Senate and the House this week approved SJR8 (Goodman), which places the moving of the Columbus casino on the May ballot. In both houses, efforts by Youngstown area legislators to add a fifth casino in their city were turned aside.

The Ohio Lottery Commission voted unanimously to endorse draft rules for the operation of the multi-state Powerball game. The commission estimates it could bring the rules to the Joint Committee on Agency Rule Review on March 29, and start offering the game after that committee's approval.

HOUSING

Ohio Realtors said that final quarter housing sales in 2009 beat the year before, and December's average price was 10 percent above the same month in 2008, but those late gains weren't enough to pull up overall sales for the year, which came in 8 percent below the previous year.

PEOPLE

John Mossbarger of Washington Court House was elected to the board of trustees of the Ohio Farm Bureau Federation.

The Ohio Association of County Behavioral Health Authorities (OACBHA) presented

Rep. Linda Bolon (D-Columbiana) with its Award for Legislative Excellence at its state meeting for her "great interest in prevention and treatment of addiction and mental illness."

Officers for 2010 of the Ohio Clerk of Courts Association (OCCA) include the following: Kathy Fortney, (Medina), president; Greg Brush (Montgomery), vice-president; Jim Dean (Pickaway), second vice-president; Dan Horrigan (Summit), third vice president; Teresa Dankovic (Guernsey), secretary; and Ann Dunbar (Wyandot), treasurer.


STATE GOVERNMENT

The Ohio Department of Commerce said liquor sales in 2009 again broke the record with Ohioans' buying \$734.8 million worth of liquor and netting the state a record \$224.2 million in liquor profits. Kamchatka Vodka, Jack Daniel's Tennessee Whiskey and Bacardi Superior Light Rum remained the three top-selling brands.

TAXATION

An analysis by the Legislative Service Commission says a plan to phase out the state income tax over 10 years would eventually cost county governments and libraries about 67 percent of the direct assistance they get from the state of Ohio. The analysis acknowledges the split in opinion between Democrats who say the phase-out would gut necessary public services and Republicans who maintain it would spark economic development that would rebuild the tax base but doesn't estimate the likelihood of either scenario.

TRANSPORTATION

The Transportation Review Advisory Council (TRAC) approved the first round of accelerated transportation projects under Gov. Ted Strickland's proposed FAST TRAC initiative announced during his State of the State speech. TRAC had introduced the concept as a way to consider important projects on an "as needed" basis instead of the typical four-year planning cycle. 

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