

**ATTEMPTS TO INFLUENCE LEGISLATION  
BY XYZ FOUNDATION GRANTEES**

Under United States law, XYZ Foundation grant monies may not be used to pay for attempts to influence legislation, unless they qualify under certain specific exceptions. (These laws do not affect how grantees may spend money received from other sources.) This paper will generally describe what activities are regarded as attempts to influence legislation and some of the exceptions available. Also, attached is a chart describing some permissible and prohibited public policy activities.

**Lobbying**

Attempts to influence legislation, commonly known as lobbying, may be of two types, direct or indirect:

*Direct Lobbying*

Direct lobbying refers to certain communications directly with government personnel who are involved in the legislative process. They may be legislators or employees of legislative bodies, or other government personnel who participate in the formulation of the legislation concerned.

A communication with these government personnel will be lobbying only if it both refers to specific legislation and indicates a view on that legislation.

*Indirect Lobbying*

Indirect (or "grass roots") lobbying refers to communications with members of the general public. Certain "public relations" or educational activities may constitute indirect lobbying, and others will not. Indirect lobbying communications include only communications that (1) refer to specific legislation, (2) indicate a view on the legislation, and (3) encourage the recipient of the communication to take action with respect to the legislation.

*Specific Legislation*

"Specific legislation" includes both legislation that has already been introduced in a legislative body and a specific legislative proposal.

*Legislation*

Legislation refers only to action by a legislative body -- such as a congress, senate, chamber of deputies, house of representatives, state legislature, local council or municipal chamber of

representatives -- or by the public in a referendum or similar procedure. Legislation of the United States or any other country or of any local government is included.

Legislation also includes proposed treaties required to be submitted by the President of the United States to the Senate for its advice and consent from the time the President's representative begins to negotiate its position with the prospective parties to the proposed treaties.

Action by an executive or by a judicial or administrative body does not constitute legislation, so attempts to influence such action do not constitute lobbying.

*Encouraging Recipient to Take Action*

A communication may encourage the recipient to take action with respect to legislation, and therefore meet the third test for indirect lobbying, in any one of the following four ways:

1. It may state that the recipient should contact a legislator (or other government official or employee who may be involved in the legislation).
2. It may state the address, telephone number, or similar information of a legislator or an employee of a legislative body.
3. It may provide a petition, tear-off postcard, or similar materials for the recipient to send to a legislator or other government official or employee.
4. It may specifically identify one or more legislators who will vote as:
  - a. opposing the communication's view with respect to the legislation,
  - b. undecided about the legislation,
  - c. the recipient's legislative representative, or
  - d. a member of the legislative committee that will consider the legislation.

**Exceptions**

There are a few specific exceptions from prohibited lobbying. The most important of these for XYZ Foundation grantees are the exception for examinations and discussions of broad social, economic, and similar problems and the exception for nonpartisan analysis, study, or research.

A communication regarding broad social, economic, and similar problems will not constitute lobbying, even if the problems discussed are of a type with which government would be expected to deal eventually. Accordingly, it is permissible to speak to legislators or the general public about problems that the legislature should address. These communications may not, however, discuss the merits of a specific legislative proposal or directly encourage recipients to take action with respect to the legislation.

Nonpartisan analysis, study, or research means an independent or objective exposition of a particular subject matter. It may advocate a particular position or viewpoint, so long as there is a full and fair discussion of the pertinent facts, which is sufficient to enable an individual to form an independent opinion or conclusion.

The results of nonpartisan analysis, study, or research may indicate a view on specific legislation, and they may be communicated to a legislator or government official or employee involved in the legislative process. They may not, however, be communicated to members of the general public with a direct encouragement to the recipient to take action with respect to the legislation.

A grantee may not use the nonpartisan analysis, study, or research exception, such as by omitting the direct encouragement to take action, and then later use the communication for lobbying purposes. If it does, and if the grantee's primary purpose in preparing the original communication was for use in lobbying, the amounts spent to prepare the original communication will be treated as funds used for lobbying.

#### **Related Issues**

The use of XYZ Foundation grant monies to participate in any political campaign on behalf of or in opposition to any candidate for public office is also prohibited by United States law. This applies to elections both inside and outside the United States.

Also, no XYZ Foundation grant monies may be used to make any payments that would be illegal under local law, such as to offer money to a public official to perform an official action or to omit or to delay an official action.

#### **Questions**

If you have any questions regarding the rules discussed in this memorandum, or if you would like further information please contact the Office of the General Counsel, at the XYZ FOUNDATION ADDRESS / PHONE / EMAIL

**PERMISSIBLE AND PROHIBITED ACTIVITIES*****Some Permissible Public Policy Activities***

1. Meetings with or letters to government officials, including legislators, about a problem needing a legislative solution, so long as there is either no reference to specific legislation or no view expressed on specific legislation.
2. Communications with members of the general public about a social problem, so long as there is either no reference to specific legislation, no position taken on the legislation or no encouragement of the public to contact legislators or other government personnel concerning the legislation.
3. Meetings with or letters to government personnel other than legislators or their staff (such as mayors, governors or their staff) about specific legislation if the personnel contacted are not participating in formulating the legislation.
4. Efforts to influence regulations or other actions of an executive, judicial or administrative body.
5. Public interest lawsuits.
6. Communications directly to legislators or their staff regarding legislation that might affect the communicating organization's existence, powers and duties, or its exemption from taxes.
7. Responding to written requests from a legislative body or committee (but not one legislator) for technical advice or assistance on particular legislation.
8. Communicating the results of nonpartisan analysis, study or research on a legislative issue, so long as there is no direct encouragement of members of the general public to contact legislators or other government personnel concerning the legislation.

***Some Prohibited Public Policy Activities***

1. A letter to or meeting with a legislator encouraging the legislator to vote either for or against specific legislation or to submit a specific legislative proposal to the legislature.
2. An advertisement or pamphlet encouraging people to contact their legislators and to urge them to vote for or against specific legislation.
3. A public meeting where individuals are asked to sign a petition urging legislators to vote for or against specific legislation.
4. Publishing articles and producing radio and television broadcasts urging recipients to become involved in a political campaign on behalf of or in opposition to a candidate.
5. Preparing a fact sheet for a legislative committee describing one view of proposed legislation important to an organization's objectives, when such fact sheet has not been requested in writing by the committee.