that NRA opposition would put pressure on conservative Democrats and any Republicans leaning toward support of Sotomayor.[31] Members also try to persuade key groups that are on the fence to back their proposals or at least not publicly oppose them. The passage in 2003 of a major prescription drug benefit for Medicare enrollees was facilitated by Speaker J. Dennis Hastert's wooing of AARP—the multimillion-member seniors' lobby. Seven years later, congressional Democrats and President Obama lobbied AARP and won its backing for the Affordable Care Act.

Given this interdependence, members and leaders actively reach out to organized interests, rather than just passively waiting for group input. For example, House and Senate Democratic leaders and aides schedule regular meetings with their lobbying allies, such as labor unions.[32] The chair of the Senate Democratic Steering and Outreach Committee works "hand in hand with outside advocacy groups to raise public support for bills on the Democratic agenda."[33] Similarly, congressional GOP leaders and their top aides regularly consult with business lobbyists to formulate goals and strategy.[34] House Republican leader John Boehner of Ohio even streamed live on the Internet a Capitol Hill meeting with twenty GOP lobbyists as party leaders solicited "suggestions for a new [GOP] policy agenda" for the 112th Congress (2011–2013).[35] The lobbyists then mobilized grassroots support for these initiatives through petition drives, rallies, radio and television advertising blitzes, national door-to-door campaigns, and other techniques.[36]

Lobbying relationships have evolved in variety and sophistication. Modern-day lobbying varies according to the nature and visibility of the issue and groups' resources. Among the most important practices are direct and social lobbying, coalitions, grassroots mobilization, and electronic advocacy.

Direct Lobbying

In the traditional method of direct lobbying, lobbyists present their clients' cases directly to members and congressional staff. When a group hires a prominent lawyer or lobbyist, such as Ken Duberstein, Heather Podesta, or Steve Elmendorf, the direct approach involves personal contact with senators or representatives. An aide to Speaker Thomas P. "Tip" O'Neill Jr., D-Mass. (1977–1987), explained the importance of the personal touch:

> [Lobbyists] know members of Congress are here three nights a week, alone, without their families. So they . . . [s]chmooze with them. Make friends. And they don't lean on it all the time. Every once in a while, they call up—maybe once or twice a year [to] ask a few questions. . . . Anne Wexler [a former official in the Carter White House, and later a lobbyist] will call up and spend half an hour talking about . . . politics, and suddenly she'll pop a question, pick up something. They want that little bit of access. That's what does it. You can hear it. It clicks home. They'll call their chief executive officer, and they've delivered. That's how it works. It's not illegal. They work on a personal basis.[37]

Former members of Congress are particularly effective at direct lobbying. A retired twenty-year House member wrote to prospective clients that he could "unravel red tape, open doors, make appointments, work with the Administration or government agencies, influence legislation, and assist in any other service required."[38] Recognizing their value, lobbying firms and clients eagerly enlist the services of former lawmakers. "Each member is part of a network of reciprocity," observed scholar James A. Thurber. "You help me, and I'll help you. That's what a lobbying client is buying."[39]

Member-to-member lobbying can be uniquely effective. No outsider has the same access to lawmakers (and certain precincts of Capitol Hill) that former colleagues have. For example, former GOP senators who may be lobbyists can attend the regularly scheduled Tuesday Republican Policy Committee lunch, "where legislative tactics are plotted on issues ranging from tax cuts to foreign policy—information that gives them a decided edge over other lobbyists."[40] Although ethics rules impose restrictions on the former lawmakers (for example, they may not lobby their colleagues while in the chamber), former members still retain privileges denied to others. As former Speaker J. Dennis Hastert, R-Ill., explained, "It's hard to take away benefits from former members. We're all going to be former members one day."[41] (Hastert is now a lobbyist with a D.C.-based firm.) Turnover in Congress hampers direct lobbying. The longer former members have been out of Congress, the fewer personal contacts they have with current lawmakers.

Former top Capitol Hill staff aides are similarly sought after as lobbyists because of their personal knowledge and understanding of key members and congressional processes.[42] The ease with which members and staff rotate from congressional service into lobbying is often referred to as the "revolving door." "The Congress-to-K Street connection has been institutionalized," observed Sheila Krumholz of the nonpartisan Center for Responsive Politics. "It's Plan A for former members of Congress."[43] The revolving door also comes full circle in that many former lobbyists also return to take high-ranking staff jobs on Capitol Hill.[44]

A new type of lobbyist is also much sought after these days: the experienced fund-raiser. The talents that some fund-raisers bring to lobbying were summarized as follows:

> The hiring equation for lobby firms is simple: Campaign fund-raisers spend time with lawmakers—often more than policy staffers. They also have the kinds of connections with CEOs and in-house government relations heads that could mean more business for the lobby shop. And they are comfortable making "the ask," not only to sign clients but also to try to get members of Congress and staff to take action on behalf of clients.[45]

Direct lobbying involves many activities beyond meeting with lawmakers. Lobbyists monitor committees; testify (or have their clients appear

as witnesses) at hearings; interpret Hill decisions for clients; articulate clients' interests to legislators; draft legislation, speeches, and "Dear Colleague" letters for members; and give campaign assistance. The House offers more occasions for contacting members directly than does the Senate, where lobbyists are more likely to target staff aides.

Taken together, lobbyists are major players in congressional policy making. Members rely heavily on them for information. "[Lobbyists] provide continuity and institutional memory," observed former representative James P. Moran, D-Va. "Most of them have been around longer than members."[46] Or as a GOP senator put it, "I would have to say the best information I get in the legislative process comes from people directly involved in the industry that is going to be affected—and from people who represent them: the 'nefarious' lobbyists."[47] "Most members may know one or two issues well, if that," said one financial services lobbyist. "Then you have a 26-year-old kid, maybe he's even 30 and went to a good law school, who's on the staff working 10 hours a day and is supposed to tell his boss how to do derivatives regulation or credit-card reform. Are you kidding?"[48]

Social Lobbying

Lobbying also occurs in social settings outside the legislative context, such as at dinner parties, receptions, sporting and entertainment events, or on the golf course or tennis court. Successful direct lobbying is grounded in trust.[49] Lobbyists must convince lawmakers that they are credible and knowledgeable before lawmakers will accept advice from or even listen to them. Social interactions are extremely useful for fostering and developing the personal relationships that lobbyists need to be effective. Lobbyists thus seek out opportunities to interact casually with lawmakers, even when no client business will be discussed.

Travel with members of Congress has long afforded opportunities for lobbyists to engage in social lobbying, but recent ethics laws have placed restrictions on the practice. Until the 2007 ethics rules were in place, it was not unusual, for example, for legislators to accept flights on corporate jets, reimbursing their sponsors only for the cost of commercial airfare. Such settings afforded many possibilities for relationship-building and casual interaction among lobbyists, legislators, and lobbyists' clients. The 2007 ethics reforms, however, "effectively ban travel with registered lobbyists."[50] Lobbyists "may not accompany lawmakers or aides 'on any segment' of a trip."[51] And, although there are some exceptions for nonprofit organizations, lawmakers must receive prior approval for all such travel from the Committee on Ethics of their chamber. Lobbyists are not permitted to pay for meals for legislators, banning the lobbyist-funded lavish dinners that were the source of so much public distaste. There is, however, the "reception exception" or the "toothpick rule," which permits "members and aides to [eat] food [on toothpicks] at receptions, but bans them from attending sit-down meals with lobbyists."[52] As one lobbyist hosting a reception for legislators ruefully put it, "I'm sitting here as vice president of corporate affairs for the National Association of Manufacturers, and I'm

making sure that there's nothing you need a fork for."[53] Members and aides may also attend lobbyist-paid events when carrying out "official duties," and when more than twenty-five people not connected with Congress are in attendance.

A large loophole in all these ethics rules involves political fund-raising. Social and direct lobbying is unrestricted at campaign events. Many fund-raising events such as golf outings, fishing trips, and sit-down dinners offer wide-open opportunities for casual interactions with lawmakers. For example, Heather Podesta hosted a dinner at her home for five Democratic female senators. The fee for attendees, who in return were given a chance to discuss issues with the senators in a private setting, was $30,400 for a "co-chair" of the event, $10,000 for a "vice chair," $5,000 for a "co-host," and $1,000 for an "individual sponsor." Checks, said Podesta, were to be made payable to the Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee (DSCC).[54] Lawmakers can continue to invite lobbyists to attend "lavish birthday parties in a lawmaker's honor ($1,000 a lobbyist), weekend golf tournaments ($2,500 and up), a Presidents Day weekend at Disney World ($5,000), or parties in South Beach in Miami ($5,000)."[55] Lobbyists end up paying for such events because "they pay a political fund-raising committee set up by the lawmaker. In turn, the committee pays the legislator's way."[56] In short, what is illegal if done directly—such as paying for legislators' meals, travel, or gifts—is legal if done indirectly through campaign contributions.

Coalition Lobbying

To enhance their chances of success, lobbyists often construct coalitions in support of their legislative initiatives. Coalitions bring more resources, contacts, and money to lobbying efforts. When individuals and organizations "band together and support one another," noted former senator John B. Breaux, D-La. (1987–2005), now a Washington lobbyist, it makes for "a smoother and more effective [legislative] operation than if fifty or more voices [are] all arguing for the same principle without any coordination."[57]

Examples of such coalitions abound. In 2013 a coalition of university, military, public health, and science groups joined together to try to stop across-the-board budget cuts.[58] Two years earlier, environmental and public health groups worked together to stop legislative efforts to strip the Environmental Protection Agency of its authority to regulate greenhouse gas emissions. The Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America (PhRMA) worked successfully with a variety of technology and financial interests to push for more favorable tax treatment of corporate income earned overseas. A study by researchers at the University of Kansas determined that this single tax break earned companies $220 for every dollar they spent lobbying on the issue, "a 22,000 percent rate of return on their investment."[59]

"We have no permanent friends or permanent enemies—only permanent interests." That oft-repeated line helps to explain why "coalitions, like politics, make strange bed fellows."[60] A coalition between the American Petroleum Institute and the Environmental Working Group to fight subsidies to ethanol offers one recent example. As the head of the environmental group observed,

"This is not a sign of any great, broad alliance with the oil industry."[61] Not surprisingly, these marriages of convenience are often difficult to sustain.

Grassroots Lobbying

Instead of contacting members directly, many organizations mobilize citizens in districts and states across the country to pressure their senators and representatives. For example, when eBay, the online auction website, wanted to influence federal telecommunications policy so that phone and cable companies could not favor certain types of Web traffic at the expense of others, it sent an e-mail to more than a million eBay users urging them to contact their members of Congress in support of "network neutrality."[62] Similarly, Uber aggressively employs its large base of smartphone-wielding customers to pressure government officials.[63] One researcher recently estimated grassroots lobbying as a "$1-billion-a-year industry."[64]

Interest groups use tools such as e-mail, phone banks, and social media to stir up public opinion on issues and generate communications to members' offices. Although lawmakers recognize that lobbying groups orchestrate these campaigns, they also realize they may serve as a rough measure of sentiment and organizational strength behind an issue:

> The congressman has to care that somebody out there in his district has enough power to get hundreds of people to sit down and write a postcard or a letter—because if the guy can get them to do that, he might be able to influence them in other ways. So, a member has no choice but to pay attention. It's suicide if he doesn't.[65]

Lawmakers often try to distinguish between genuine grassroots and fake grassroots (often called "Astroturf") groups. Many so-called grassroots groups are nothing more than front organizations for their financial backers. One group with an environmentally friendly name, the Save Our Species Alliance, was actually pushing "a rewrite of the Endangered Species Act to ease paper and logging business's access to federal lands where those species live."[66] An attractive name can often be a way for a single interest to bankroll an initiative while masking its identity. To combat such efforts, Congress adopted reforms in 2007 that require more disclosure of the groups that fund and lead coalition efforts.

Mass mobilizations have become so common that some firms now specialize in "grass tops" lobbying. Whereas the goal of grassroots lobbying is to mobilize the masses, the goal of grass tops lobbying "is to figure out to whom a member of Congress cannot say no: his chief donor, his campaign manager, a political mentor. The lobbyist then tries to persuade that person to take his client's side" during talks with the lawmaker.[67]

Electronic Lobbying

As in most other areas of life, advances in communication technology have transformed lobbyists' work. Smartphones, tablets, and other devices allow

lobbyists sitting in a congressional hearing room or office to instantly send out alerts on legislative developments to clients, coalition partners, and their home offices.

Similarly, text messaging, e-mail, and social networking sites such as Twitter, YouTube, and Facebook have all greatly increased the speed with which lobbyists can galvanize supporters. For example, a debate over how to deal with online piracy and file sharing triggered, according to one account, the "biggest online protest in history," resulting in ten million petition signatures, three million e-mails, and 100,000 telephone calls to lawmakers.[68] On a smaller scale, the conservative Family Research Council, which opposed the confirmation of Elena Kagan to the Supreme Court, hosted webcasts with legal experts during her confirmation hearings to explain why Kagan should not serve on the Supreme Court. The council also provided people visiting their website with a letter they could send to their senators objecting to Kagan's confirmation. Individuals only had to put in their ZIP code and hit "Enter."[69]

Messages can be conveyed immediately to sympathizers anywhere in the country to bring pressure to bear when and where it is most needed. A Twitter message sent to AARP members concerning President Obama's 2013 State of the Union message said: "Keep your word, Mr. President. Protect seniors. No Social Security Cuts!"[70] One of the most influential of all lobbying groups, the National Rifle Association, draws much of its political clout from its ability to generate an outpouring of communications to members' offices. According to Sen. Charles Schumer, D-N.Y., the NRA can mobilize "2, 3, 4 million people who care passionately about this issue . . . at the drop of a hat," without a similar intense and sustained grassroots activism that backs additional gun-control legislation.[71]

GROUPS AND THE ELECTORAL CONNECTION

Today it is often hard to differentiate the roles of interest groups and political parties in electoral politics. "The standard distinction between interest groups and parties used to be that parties were committed to winning elections and that pressure groups let elections happen and then tried to influence the people who got elected," remarked a political scientist. "Now interest groups through their PACs [political action committees] and a variety of other methods are very much involved in the pre-policy arena."[72] As one example, the grassroots operation of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce "has begun to rival those of the major political parties."[73] Box 13-2 provides an interesting example of a group that is blending issue advocacy and electoral politics. Union workers are being trained as lobbyists in order to make them more effective advocates, organizers, and potential candidates for elective office.

Some gro[illegible] extensively involved in partisan electoral politics that