

SPENDING

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The EO Media Group/Pamplin Media Group Capital Bureau categorized lobbying spending in Oregon by industry and sector using data from the Center for Responsive Politics, which tracks spending on lobbying by industry at the federal level. In total, groups spent more than \$251 million on lobbying over the last nine years, according to state data.

The health care sector — whose ranks include nurses, pharmaceutical companies, hospitals, and doctors — reported spending the most on lobbying from 2007 through 2015, a total of \$36.5 million. Next was the business sector, which spent \$30.8 million, followed by finance, insurance and real estate interests that reported spending a total of \$27.3 million on lobbying during the same period.

Unlike several other states including Idaho, Oregon does not require lobbyists to disclose the specific bills or executive branch actions they seek to influence. Oregon lobbyists are only required to disclose food, drinks and entertainment purchased for a specific lawmaker or other state official if the cost exceeds \$50 on a single occasion, and lobbyists do not have to report individual expenses reimbursed by their clients.

Until this year, the only way to know how much lobbyists and their clients were spending to entertain Oregon state officials was to request a copy of the paper reports filed with the Oregon Government Ethics Commission.

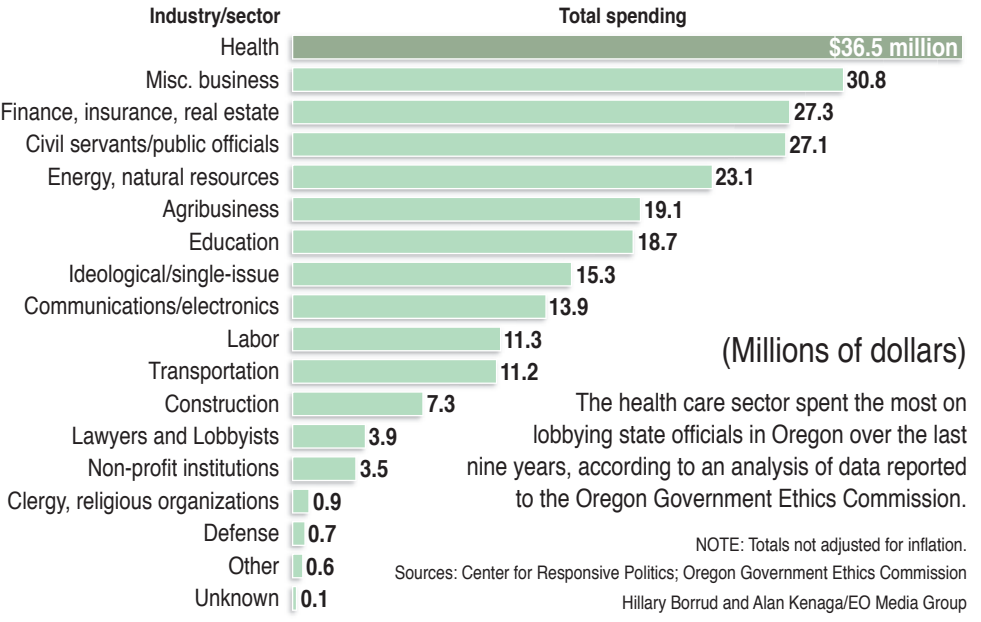
The agency launched a new electronic filing system for lobbyists late last year, but that system is not displaying certain spending details due to technical glitches. Even if the system were working correctly, however, it would likely provide only a small sample of lobbyists' activities. Of the \$35.9 million in reported spending last year, only \$93,189 was explained in detailed reports.

These minimal reporting requirements contributed to Oregon receiving one of the lowest rankings in the nation for transparency in lobbying activity.

Last summer, the Sunlight Foundation evaluated how all 50 states track spending on lobbying and created a scorecard ranking the states. The foundation awarded Oregon an F grade, meaning lobbyists and their clients face fewer disclosure requirements than in most other states.

Most of Oregon's neighbors received higher grades, from an A in California to a C in Idaho. Emily Shaw, a senior analyst at the Sunlight Foundation who was involved in the project, said the goal was to eval-

Oregon lobbying cash by industry sector, 2007-15



uate how much information states collected about lobbyists' specific activities and the costs of those actions.

"People should be able to find out who has come to influence their laws," Shaw said. "That's not to say there needs to be any particular restriction on lobbying in a particular situation. But for good public awareness of what's happening in these processes, we need good information about what lobbyists are doing, and when."

Pete Quist, research director at the National Institute on Money in State Politics in Montana, agreed that it is important for states to require lobbyists to disclose more about how they influence lawmaking. The institute is collecting information about state-level spending on lobbying across the nation. "The lobbying piece isn't analyzed as much in the media as it should be," Quist said. "What we see a lot of public discussion about is the campaign contributions."

Oregon lobbyists have resisted efforts to require them to disclose more details of their work, most recently in 2015 when they won passage of a bill that allows them to avoid reporting spending to lobby other lobbyists, for example to build a coalition for or against an issue. The 2015 bill — which easily passed both chambers of the Legislature and was signed into law by Gov. Kate Brown — extended the disclosure exemption through mid-2017.

Dan Meek, a public interest attorney and co-chair of the Independent Party of Oregon, said this exemption is a major

reason the public cannot find out how lobbyists use much of the money their clients report spending. Still, Meek said he remains more concerned that Oregon has no campaign contribution limits because political donations do not have to be reported as gifts, even if they are connected to lobbying efforts.

"Lobbying regulation in Oregon is really of secondary importance because it can be so easily evaded," Meek said.

The extension of the lobbying reporting exemption last year provided another example of how lobbyists avoid revealing their impact on Oregon's laws.

Lobbyist Marla Rae, who previously served on the Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission and worked for the Oregon Department of Justice and former Gov. Ted Kulongoski, advocated for the bill during legislative hearings on behalf of the Capitol Club of Oregon, a professional organizations for lobbyists. However, the Capitol Club did not report spending any money on lobbying last year and Rae does not appear to have registered to lobby on behalf of the group.

In an email, Rae explained the Capitol Club did not have to report spending any money on lobbying because she volunteered her time to advocate for the bill. Rae wrote that she did not spend enough time working on the issue — the threshold is 24 hours in a quarter — to trigger the state's requirement to register as a lobbyist for the group.

Bill Cross, the Legislative Committee chair for the Cap-

itol Club, said the group still wants a permanent reporting exemption for lobbying other lobbyists, partly because it is burdensome for lobbyists to track the information.

"I'm sure we'll be pursuing some sort of way to adjust that because the value of that information just doesn't seem apparent to us," Cross said.

Cross said it would also create a lot of work for lobbyists — with minimal benefit to the public — if lobbyists were required to report all the bills or executive actions they work to influence, because he sometimes tracks hundreds of bills during a legislative session. At the moment, no one is advocating for expanded lobbying disclosures in Oregon, Cross said. "I'm not aware of any issues, I guess, that have evolved in the last four or five years where other organizations have said, 'Wait a minute, we really need to reform our lobbying disclosure laws because of problems with corruption or something,'" Cross said.

The Capital Bureau is a collaboration between EO Media Group and Pamplin Media Group. Hillary Borrud can be reached at 503-364-4431 or hborrud@eomediagroup.com.

FOR THE RECORD

Dispatch highlights:

Monday, May 23

7:03 a.m.: Gerrit Johnson, 23, of Enterprise was arrested by Enterprise Police Department on probation violation on original charges of burglary, violation of release agreement and distribution of a controlled substance. Subject released by P&P.
11:03 a.m.: Possible wolf depredation in rural Enterprise.
12:35 p.m.: Civil dispute in rural Joseph.
1:42 p.m.: Jack Donald Fuller, 51, of Joseph was arrested on a Wallowa County detainer warrant for probation violation on an original charge of failure to perform the duties of a driver when property is damaged. Subject was transported to Umatilla County Jail.
2:08 p.m.: Misty Beebe, 35, of Joseph was arrested on charges of violation of release agreement on an original charge of theft. Beebe was transported to Umatilla County Jail.
10:27 p.m.: Joshua Rhodes, 28, of Enterprise was arrested for probation violation and transported to Umatilla County Jail.
Tuesday, May 24
9:47 a.m.: Report of a scam call from Joseph.
12:27 p.m.: Traffic complaint in rural Enterprise.
1:45 p.m.: Theft complaint in rural Joseph.
4:32 p.m.: 911 theft complaint in Enterprise.
6:54 p.m.: Theft complaint in Joseph.
Wednesday, May 25
5:18 p.m.: Complaint of a dog as a public nuisance. Owner located.
7:51 p.m.: Report of an injured deer on Highway 3.
Thursday, May 26
7:03 a.m.: Report of violation of a no-contact order in Wallowa.
11:12 a.m.: Report of possible scam in rural Enterprise.
12:46 p.m.: Report of a disabled vehicle as a road hazard in rural Joseph. Owner notified.
2:01 p.m.: Welfare check in Enterprise resulted in Enterprise Police Department arresting Jimmy Joe Weber, 39, of Wallowa for probation violation on an original charge of disorderly conduct. Subject was sanctioned and released.

5:48 p.m.: Arrest detainer issued by Parole and Probation for David Jesse Drinkard, 35, of Enterprise for probation violation on original charges of felon in possession of a weapon and hindering prosecution.

Friday, May 27

7:40 a.m.: Report of a missing juvenile in Wallowa. Subject located.
11:57 a.m.: Animal neglect reported in Wallowa.
2:48 p.m.: Traffic stop in Enterprise. Citation issued for driving uninsured.
5:11 p.m.: 911 call reporting a domestic disturbance in Enterprise.
9:16 p.m.: Kyle Power, 31, of Enterprise was arrested by Enterprise Police Department for disorderly conduct. Power was transported to Umatilla County Jail.
10:00 p.m.: 911 call reporting a possible intoxicated subject in Joseph. Referred to Oregon State Patrol.

Saturday, May 28

8:00 a.m.: 911 call to report possible forest fire in Garfield County, Washington.
9:45 a.m.: Lost wallet in Enterprise.
7:57 p.m.: 911 call reporting a disturbance in Enterprise.
9:21 p.m.: Traffic complaint in Joseph.
11:56 p.m.: Randy Dale Dover, 33, of Kennewick was arrested by Wallowa County Sheriff's Office on a Multnomah County warrant for failure to perform the duties of a driver when property is damaged. Dover was transported to Umatilla County Jail.

Sunday, May 29

4:11 p.m.: Tyus James Wright, 20, of Pasco was arrested by Enterprise Police Department for giving false information to a police officer. Subject was cited and released.

Monday, May 30

4:15 a.m.: Pendleton Police arrested David Jesse Drinkard, 35, of Enterprise on an arrest detainer issued by Parole and Probation for probation violation on original charges of felon in possession of a weapon and hindering prosecution. Drinkard was lodged at Umatilla County Jail.



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Lamprey: friend or foe?...
(what good is a lousy parasite anyway?)



Thursday
June 2nd • 7pm

Tod Sween
Project Leader, Resident Fish Division • Nez Perce Tribe Dept. of Fisheries

- Biology and Life History of the Pacific Lamprey
- Importance of Lamprey to the Ecosystem
- The Nez Perce Tribe and Heesu
- Challenges and Responses

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