

President's Message

by Judith Eschberger, Esq.

The Road Has Been A Long One.

As any lobbyist knows, Pennsylvania has been struggling with its' Lobbying law for a number of years and we have the distinction of being the only state in the nation that does not regulate the lobbying community. That being said, there are as many versions of what that law could look like as there are states. Since PAGR represents approximately 300 lobbyists in various categories - corporate, independent, association and lawyers, our goal has always been to have a level playing field so as not to give one category of members a competitive advantage over another category of members.

The previous Lobbying Disclosure Act, enacted in 1998, was determined by the Pennsylvania Supreme Court to be unconstitutional in 2002 as it pertained to attorneys. In keeping with the non-severability provision of the Act, since the Court would not permit the regulation of attorneys that were lobbying, it was struck down as to all lobbyists. In July, 2003, the Court published a Rule classifying "lobbying" as "non-legal services." Many believe that this is the answer to permitting the Legislature to regulate non-attorney lobbyists AND the actions of attorneys when they are acting as lobbyists.

Initially, Representative John Maher introduced House Bill 1770 and the House State Government Committee began conducting workshops to gather the committee members and stakeholders. It was a painstaking process as we discussed how a lobbying firm performed its' work and the differences for an association or corporate lobbyist and an attorney who provides lobbying services. Some of the terminology has changed to avoid confusion that occurred with the 1998 law. The State Ethics Commission participated in the final meetings so that they could understand that certain changes were made to this new version in order to avoid some of the absurd consequences that resulted under the 1998 law and its' subsequent regulations.

The House State Government Committee met on March 17 to consider House Bill 2080 -the work groups work product. The bill was amended, reported out of Committee, had its' first reading and was laid on the table. Now what. Well, although no one views it as the perfect document, it goes a long way in addressing many of the concerns of the legislative members who signed on as sponsors as well as the stakeholders that participated in the work group.

Following the vote, I had the opportunity to talk with an AP reporter and he asked why the lobbying community was so opposed to regulation. Admittedly, our lives would be easier if we weren't regulated, but I told him that the lobbying community isn't running from regulation, but we want the regulation to be reasonable and manageable. To the Committee's credit, they don't want to create an onerous burden on those who petition government either as independent citizens/their constituents or as paid lobbyists. They recognized that Pennsylvania has a full time Legislature with a two-year session cycle and requiring lobbyists to report every month or list every bill they tricked would indeed be onerous. Likewise, they recognized that the public is most interested in knowing about entertainment/gift expenses and not what portion of an association's heating bill is related to lobbying. So although the road has been long, we will

continue down it on behalf of our members. Please let us know whether you've got any specific concerns or questions as you review the legislation.

Welcome New Members

Leslie Gromis Baker
LG STRATEGIES, INC.

Ralph Kaiser
WQED MULTIMEDIA

Margaret Barron
WEST PENN ALLEGHENY HEALTH
SYSTEM

Patti Lesh
PA LEAGUE of CITIES &
MUNICIPALITIES

Frank Buzydlowski
VERIZON

Marilyn Levin
PA HISTORICAL & MUSEUM
COMMISSION

Catharine Conner
AICUP

David Mayernik
ECKERT SEAMANS CHERIN &
MELLOTT, LLC

Michael Dougherty
WASTE MANAGEMENT

W. Russell McDaid
PANPHA

Jena' Y. East
GLORUSS GROUP

Nevin Mindlin
PA BAR ASSOCIATION

Michelle Fisher Reyes
BUCHANAN INGERSOLL, PC

Lisa Nicholas
PA LANDSCAPE and NURSERY
ASSOCIATION

Colleen Gallagher
HIGHMARK INC.

Frank A. Pinto
PA ASSOCIATION OF COMMUNITY
BANKERS

John Hanger
CITIZENS FOR PENNSYLVANIA 'S
FUTURE

Craig Hoffman
CAPITOLWIRE.COM

Kathy Ryan
PA FUNERAL DIRECTORS
ASSOCIATION

Jennifer M. Hoffman
PA SCHOOL BOARDS ASSOCIATION

Edward Troxell
PA STATE ASSOCIATION of
BOROUGHs

Mark Huenemann
CASE NEW HOLLAND

Pamela Witmer
PA CHEMICAL INDUSTRY COUNCIL

Michael E. Jeannot
MEC PENNSYLVANIA RACING INC

Judith Yupcavage
PA COALITION AGAINST DOMESTIC
VIOLENCE

2004 PAGR Schedule

2004 Schedule

Monday, April 5
MEMBERSHIP MEETING

Thursday, May 6
BOARD MEETING

Monday, June 7
MEMBERSHIP MEETING

Thursday, July 1
BOARD MEETING

Thursday, September 2
BOARD MEETING

Tuesday, September 14
LOBBYPALOOZA 2004
Bluee Ridge Country Club

Thursday, September 30
STARNER-SPITALNY GOLF
Hershey Country Club

Monday, October 4
MEMBERSHIP MEETING

Tuesday, November 2
ELECTION NIGHT PARTY
Firehouse Restaurant

Thursday, November 4
BOARD MEETING

Monday, December 1
MEMBERSHIP MEETING

Lobbypalooza 2004

ONE DAY ONLY!

Tuesday, September 14, 2004
Blue Ridge Country Club

TOPICS INCLUDE:

Leadership Roundtable
Lobbying Disclosure
Strategic Communications
State & Federal PACs
Effective Negotiations

Sponsorships and Vendor Opportunities are available. Please contact Christine at the PAGR office if you are interested.

Deadline for Sponsor/Ad packages is Friday, September 5, 2003

Deadline for Golfer Registration is Thursday, September 11, 2003

For more information, visit our website at www.pagr.org or contact Christine Corrigan at the PAGR office @ info@pagr.org or 717.540.4391.

Starner-Spitalny Golf

The 2004 Starner-Spitalny Memorial Golf Outing is Thursday, September 30th At Hershey Country Club.