ETHICS REPORTER
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Kentucky Legislative Ethics Commission
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Top Spenders on Lobbying in 2026

Although the General Assembly was not in session, 698 legislative agents and their 938 employers spent close to $23 million on lobbying in the first 8 months of the year. Almost all ($21 million) of the total was spent on lobbyist compensation, since most employers pay lobbyists throughout the year in monthly installments.

Using the numbers from the employer expense reports, the leading spenders for the first 8 months of 2026 were:

KY Chamber of Commerce $495,139
KY Education Association $179,708
KY Bankers Association $133,651
Altria Client Services LLC $129,343
LG&E and KU Energy LLC $119,113
KY Hospital Association $114,666
Airbnb, Inc. $113,453
KY Primary Care Association $112,878
KY Medical Association $109,947
Amazon.com Services, LLC $109,859
Elevance Health & Affiliates DBA Anthem $108,999
KY Justice Association $106,340
KY League of Cities, Inc. $106,232
One Louisville $104,739
Pharmaceutical Res. & Manuf. of America $104,490
HCA Healthcare, Inc. $104,432
Humana $103,100
KY Distillers' Association $93,427
Churchill Downs Incorporated $90,193
Light & Wonder, Inc. $90,000

Employers and lobbyists joined together to spend over $75,000 on "Kentucky Night" receptions for Kentucky legislators and LRC staff attending the three major legislative conferences held this summer. At the **Southern Legislative Conference** (SLC) in Lexington, Kentucky, about $34,483 was spent on the Kentucky Night event. At the **American Legislative Exchange Council** (ALEC) in Orlando, Florida, lobbyists and employers spent about $9,462 on the Kentucky Night event; and at the **National Conference of State Legislatures** (NCSL) Legislative Summit in Chicago, Illinois, Kentucky lobbyists and employers spent about $31,067 on the Kentucky Night event.

In addition to the "Kentucky Night" events at the conferences, the **Brown-Forman Corporation** spent $8,067 on a Kentucky Elected Officials Derby Brunch at the Cardinal Stadium in Louisville, Kentucky in May; the **Kentucky Farm Bureau Federation** spent about $7,053 on the Country Ham Breakfast & Picnic at the Kentucky State Fair in August; at SLC in Lexington, Kentucky **Via Science, Inc.** and **Zaya Education** joined together at SLC to spend $5,000 for dinner at Tony's Steakhouse; and **Louisville Tourism** spent $2,224 on legislators to attend a Louisville Bats game in Louisville, Kentucky.

For a complete list of lobbying spending by all businesses and organizations, and compensation paid to each of the lobbyists, see the Legislative Ethics Commission's website at:

http://klec.ky.gov/Reports/Pages/Employers-and-Legislative-Agents.aspx

Newly-Registered and Terminated Lobbying Employers

Since the end of the 2026 General Assembly, several businesses have registered to lobby, while others have terminated registration and are no longer lobbying in Kentucky. The following organization recently registered to lobby in Kentucky**:**

Church World Service
City of Stanton, KY
Compass Pathways, Inc.
Flock Safety
GSL Government Consulting
PPL First
Stable Recovery Incorporated
VGW Corporate Services Australia Pty. Ltd.

The following organizations recently terminated their status in Kentucky**:**

American Assn. for Marriage & Family Therapy
Arthur Street Hotel, LLC
Ascend Elements
Blue Grass Community Foundation
City of Greenup
CoinFlip
Dare to Care
EdChoice Kentucky, Inc.
Electronic Payment Coalition
Gen Y Capital 1 LLC
Graduation Alliance
Guaranteed Asset Protection Alliance
Harrison Memorial Hospital
Hazel Health
Healthplan Data Solutions, Inc.
Junior Achievement of Kentuckiana
Kentuckians for the Arts
KY Assn. for Economic Development
KY Humane Society
KY Industrial Alliance, LLC
KY Patient Access Alliance LLC
KY Science Center
KY Transportation Employees Association
Madison County, KY
Magpul Industries Corp.
Microsoft Corporation
Modern Ag Alliance
Owensboro Symphony
Pet Advocacy Network
Petland
Recovery Now
Saige, Inc.
Schmidt Associates
Trajector Medical
Vitronic Machine Vistion, Inc.

Ethics & Lobbying News from around the U.S.

Legislature Approves Anti-Corruption Crackdown on California Lobbyists

By: Lia Russell - **MSN.com** - August 31, 2026

The Legislature passed late Sunday a bill that would banish lobbyists convicted of corruption from the Capitol for 12 years. It now heads to Gov. Gavin Newsom's desk for his signature, three weeks before Dana Williamson, his former chief of staff and a powerful lobbyist, is set to be sentenced after she pled guilty to fraud and lying to the FBI last month.

The Assembly voted 60-0 to pass Assembly Bill 2592, which requires lobbyists to undergo ethics training and certify with the California Secretary of State when registering as a lobbyist that they have not been convicted of public corruption within the last 12 years.

The bill would void any existing lobbyists' certification immediately if they are convicted of corruption and require them to withdraw their lobbying registration with the Fair Political Practices Commission immediately after conviction.

Assemblymembers Dawn Addis, D-Morro Bay and Blanca Pacheco, D-Downey, co-sponsored the bill. Addis also sponsored AB 2691, which would ban lobbyists convicted of certain kinds of sexual assault or human trafficking from the Capitol, and also ban people convicted of those crimes from running for public office.

Addis said she introduced both bills to hold lobbyists to a "higher standard," noting it's nearly been a decade since cultural movements like We Said Enough and MeToo exposed rampant sexual assault and harassment in the Legislature.

"It's very important that anyone inside the Capitol or outside the Capitol working in the Capitol is held to these high levels of ethics standards," Addis said. "I think it's just particularly salient with what we're seeing in the national news with Epstein, with the Epstein class, and then with all of those who are in Congress right now or running for Congress right now."

Earlier this year, former Rep. Eric Swalwell, D-Dublin, was leading the field of Democratic governor candidates before five women came forward and accused him of sexual misconduct. Within days, he resigned from office and suspended his campaign.

The Senate previously amended AB 2591 to absorb parts of a similar bill from Assemblymember David Tangipa, R-Clovis, that he introduced in January after the FBI arrested Williamson, lobbyist Greg Campbell and former Deputy Attorney General Sean McCluskie last year in a public corruption scheme.

Tangipa voted in favor of AB 2591. "Imitation is the sincerest form of flattery," he said.

Federal authorities accused McCluskie of masterminding a plot to siphon $225,000 from his boss, former Attorney General Xavier Becerra, to pad his salary after he took a pay cut to follow Becerra to Washington, D.C., when the two served in the Biden administration.

Campbell and Williamson both helped McCluskie obtain the money by disguising the payments to McCluskie's bank account and claiming they were remittances for McCluskie's wife, who they claimed was working for Williamson's consulting firm.

Campbell and McCluskie both previously pleaded guilty and are awaiting sentencing in October. Williamson is set to be sentenced on Sept. 17.

Influential State Senator Facing Ethics Complaint Over Sons' Business Says He Followed State-Issued Guidance

By: Dan Boyd - **Albuquerque Journal, N.M.** - September 10, 2026

SANTA FE — An influential Democratic state senator is facing an ethics complaint over records that suggest he lobbied a New Mexico Department of Transportation engineer in 2024 about his sons' paving company.

But Sen. George Muñoz, D-Gallup, chairman of the Senate Finance Committee, said Thursday he was following guidance he'd sought from the State Ethics Commission and did not cross any ethical bright lines.

"I don't get paid in any way from that company," Muñoz said in a Thursday interview.

The complaint against him and the NMDOT — along with three individual DOT employees — was filed with the Ethics Commission last week by former state Sen. Jacob Candelaria, who is an attorney in Albuquerque.

It hinges on DOT emails discussing work done by Prestigious Paving, a Gallup-based company established in 2019 by Muñoz's two sons that has been paid more than $18.8 million by the state over the last four-plus years.

One particular email referenced in the complaint was sent in November 2022 by DOT district engineer Lisa Boyd Vega to a state DOT official. It references a phone call Boyd Vega said she received from Sen. Muñoz about "striping." The email goes on to say that Prestigious Paving was requesting approval for a change of plans regarding road painting projects it was doing under contract for DOT.

Separate emails appear to show that approval was granted, along with an additional $175,000 to pay for road striping work on U.S. 550.

While Candelaria did not specifically allege any criminal wrongdoing in his ethics complaint, he did question whether Muñoz — and the state DOT — had violated provisions dealing with nepotism in the state Governmental Conduct Act.

Specifically, those provisions deal with state contracts with companies owned by a legislator or a legislator's family, and when legislators are allowed to represent others before a state agency.

In requesting advice from the state Ethics Commission in 2022, Muñoz said he had rented storage space to his sons' company. But he said he removed himself from any other involvement with Prestigious Paving before the company began receiving state contracts.

He also said Thursday he does not remember making the phone call referenced in the 2024 email.

But Candelaria questioned that assertion, saying the denial "strains common sense." He also cited the rapid rise of Prestigious Paving as a state contractor.

As for DOT, an agency spokeswoman said Thursday the department does not maintain an information database about the family members of private contractors or legislators. But some DOT employees might be aware of such family connections, she acknowledged.

"As a general matter, NMDOT does not provide preferential treatment to any contractor and adheres to the Governmental Conduct Act and all procurement procedures," agency spokeswoman Kristine Mihelcic added.

Muñoz is a five-term state senator who took over the reins of the Senate Finance Committee in 2021. In that position, he has significant sway when it comes to crafting the state's annual budget bill, which is set at $11.1 billion for the current fiscal year.

During recent legislative sessions, Muñoz has worked closely with Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham's office to codify a universal childcare initiative in state law and overhaul New Mexico's behavioral health system.

For his part, Candelaria has verbally sparred with the governor's administration and some former legislative colleagues since leaving the state Senate in 2022.

In addition to filing the ethics complaint against Muñoz, Candelaria also referred the matter to New Mexico Attorney General Raúl Torrez and First Assistant U.S. Attorney for New Mexico Ryan Ellison for further investigation, according to records provided to the Journal.

Candelaria's law firm has also filed a lawsuit against the state General Services Department for allegedly not complying with an open records request for records dealing with Prestigious Paving, including the company's bids for state road projects.

Meanwhile, the ethics complaint against Muñoz was cited by Senate Republican floor leader William Sharer of Farmington in a statement this week accusing Democrats of having a "corruption problem" in New Mexico.

Specifically, Sharer said Muñoz was entitled to have the allegations against him "fully and fairly investigated," but claimed they fit into a pattern of self-dealing among Democratic legislators.