

STUDENT SENATE BILL 2009-1042

TITLE: Student Government Lobbyists Accountability Act

AUTHORS: Senator Ben Cavataro

**SPONSORS: Senators Ben Cavataro, Travis Baker, Gary Benedix, Dylan Billiodeaux, Jacob
Fyda, Alden Gillespy, Jonathan Ossip, Sam Miorelli, Stacey Gray, Alan Yanuck**

Findings. The Student Senate, finding that:

To date, \$41,250 in Student Body Funds have been paid to Capitol City Consulting, LLC, a lobbying firm, toward a \$55,000 “Lobby Fee” for services from the period of July 10, 2008 to June 30, 2009;

The Capitol City Consulting lobbyists retained by Student Government, Nicholas V. (Nick) Iarossi and Ronald C. (Ron) LaFace, Jr. of Capitol City Consulting, represent 33 other principals, including major industries and interest groups, according to the 2009 state Legislative Lobbyist Directory, and representation of the University of Florida Student Body is evidently not their primary focus;

Iarossi and LaFace have few distinct accomplishments, and have not been able to avert large-scale budget cuts for public higher education;

The extent of Iarossi and LaFace’s reports to the Student Senate on their activities has been limited to 13 emails to the Student Senate in 2008 and a once-a-year appearance before the body;

Several other lobbyists represent the University of Florida, the University of Florida Foundation, the United Faculty of Florida, groups advocating for higher education, and other groups whose interests overlap those of students;

There are already Student Government officials charged with lobbying on behalf of a Student Body, including the Student Body President, who is the chief representative of students and a member of the Board of Trustees, and an External Affairs Director of Student Government, tasked solely with lobbying government on behalf of students;

The Florida Student Association, comprised of the student body presidents from the 11 state universities, represents students at the state level, and the chair of the Association services as a member of the Board of Governors, the governing body of the State University System of Florida;

The best representatives of students’ interests are students themselves:

Amends Student Body Statutes Chapter 800 as follows:

- 808.6** **Restriction on expenditures for lobbying.** No Student Body Funds shall be allocated or disbursed to, or reimbursed or expended for, the services of any lobbyist or lobbying firm, unless the contract providing for such is adopted by the Student Senate as a Student Body Law, as per the Student Body Constitution.
- 808.61** **Definitions.**
(a) “Lobbyist” shall be any person registered on the Registered Legislative Lobbyist Directory pursuant to Florida Statute 11.045 or Registered Executive Lobbyist Directory pursuant to Florida Statute 112.3215.
(b) “Lobbying firm” means a business entity, including an individual contract lobbyist that receives or becomes entitled to receive any compensation for the purpose of lobbying, where any partner, owner, officer, or employee of the business entity is a lobbyist.
- 808.62** **Florida Student Association Excepted.** Nothing in this section shall be construed to prohibit Student Body Funds from being allocated or disbursed to, or reimbursed or expended for, dues and other payments to the Florida Student Association, Inc.
- 808.63** **Effective Date.** This section shall become effective for the Fiscal Year 2010-2011.