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Limestone Prophets: Gauging the Effectiveness of Religious Political Action Organizations that Lobby State Legislatures*

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While much study has been conducted into the attitudes of Mainline Protestant, Roman Catholic, Jewish, Evangelical, and Peace Church members concerning various public policy issues, less attention has focused on organized efforts of those faith communities to influence public policy. In this paper, I provide a quantitative analysis of the effectiveness of six religious political action organizations that actively advocate for social change before the Indiana General Assembly: the Lafayette Urban Ministry, the Indiana Catholic Conference, the Jewish Community Relations Council of Greater Indianapolis, Advance America, the American Friends Service Committee, and the Indiana Family Institute. I evaluate each organization's assets and the effect of those assets upon the organization's effectiveness in achieving its goals. I offer specific recommendations to improve the effectiveness of religious political action organizations.

The religious groups or denominations to which most Americans belong have long had an official presence in state capitol buildings. Generally speaking, their purpose is to help their local congregations and central religious bodies to influence the state legislative arena and achieve public policy consistent with those bodies' social and theological underpinnings.

As an elected Indiana State Representative with a special interest in the behavior of religious groups, I am aware of the various religious political action organizations that work the hallways, lobbies, and committee rooms of our state's General Assembly. During my time as an executive director of one of these religious political action organizations, I searched for ways to make my organization

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effective in its mission and successful in its interaction with legislators. This study seeks to learn more about religious political action organizations, specifically why some seem to be more effective than others.

Kraus (2007) examined how 15 religious political action organizations in Washington, D. C. establish their policy agendas, and Olson (2002) has studied the role of clergy associated with Mainline Protestant political action organizations in Washington, D.C. Both of these studies provide important information about national-level religious political action organizations; however, the only research I know of that has looked into state-level religious political action organizations is Yamane's (2005) extensive empirical study about the political advocacy of State Catholic Conferences, which is the public policy arm of the Catholic bishops at the state level.

I think we need more research on the religious groups that try to influence legislation at the state level. First, I will say a few words about Indiana's religious landscape and political climate. Then, I will describe the six religious political action organizations operating in the Indiana General Assembly. Finally, I will tell you about my research into these groups and what I have learned.

RELIGION AND POLITICS IN INDIANA

About six million people live in Indiana. According to the Association of Religion Data Archives' figures for 2000, an estimated 972,810 residents of Indiana (called "Hoosiers") are Evangelical Christians (16% of the population), 836,009 Hoosiers are Roman Catholics (14%), and 723,295 are Mainline Protestants (12%).¹ According Green (2005), 12,160 Hoosiers are Jewish, just 0.20 percent of the population, and 11,069 Indiana belong to the Society of Friends, 0.18 percent of the population. Fifty-eight percent of Hoosiers belong to other groups or are unchurched.

Thus, for a state that is located in America's heartland, Indiana has a surprisingly large number of people who do not have ties to organized religion. I think this helps to explain why Hoosiers have a demonstrated streak of independence. Many of us don't want to be told what to do by anyone, including church leaders. Those who are religious adherents are more likely to be Protestant than anything else, and they are more likely to be evangelical Protestant than mainline Protestant. This helps to explain why Hoosiers tend to be conservative on moral issues.

Political analysts would say that Indiana is a red state, since it has a long history of supporting Republican presidential candidates. In fact, the only time in

¹"State Membership Report." Retrieved 18 October 2007 (http://www.thearda.com/mapsReports/reports/state/18_2000.asp).

recent history that it did not was when LBJ won in the landslide of 1964. True to form, 60 percent of Indiana residents voted for President Bush in 2004, but the political landscape is more complex than that. Hoosiers have supported a mixture of United States Senators over the years, from liberals, such as Vance Hartke and Birch Bayh, to conservatives like Dan Quayle and Dan Coats. Our current senators are Democrat Evan Bayh and Republican Richard Lugar. The people of Indiana also have supported a mixture of Republicans and Democrats at the gubernatorial level. Indiana had three Republican governors between 1969 and 1989 and three Democrats between 1989 and 2005. Republican Mitch Daniels won the 2005 gubernatorial race with 53 percent of the vote. Republicans control the state Senate by a 66 percent to 34 percent margin and Democrats currently hold a one seat majority in the House of Representatives, which is where I sit.

How does the religious makeup of the General Assembly compare to the religious composition of the state? According to the Indiana Chamber of Commerce's 2007 Legislative Directory (Schenkel 2007), the Senators and Representatives that make up the Indiana Legislature identify themselves as churchgoers in far greater proportions than the Hoosier population in general (see Table 1). Mainline Protestants are the most over-represented group, being 35% of the General Assembly, but only 12% of the population. Catholics and evangelical Protestant legislators are also over-represented, albeit by smaller margins. Only 16% of the members of the Indiana General Assembly are in the Other/None category, compared to 58% of the Hoosier population in general.

Like their contemporaries nationwide, Hoosier politicians take their faith identities very seriously. In the Indiana General Assembly there are weekly Bible studies sponsored by and for Indiana legislators. The issue is not whether there should be prayer in the statehouse, but what form it should take. How prayer should be spoken before each legislative session in the Indiana House Chamber

TABLE 1
Faith Tradition of Legislators

Faith Tradition	% of All Legislators	% of State Population
Evangelical Protestant	19	16
Roman Catholic	21	14
Mainline Protestant	35	12
Jewish	1	0.2
Friends (Peace Church)	1	0.2
African American Congregation ^a	7	n/a
Other/None	16	58
Total	100	100

^a The historically African American denominations are not included in the 2000 Association of Religious Data Archives congregation and membership totals.

is a controversy currently being litigated before the United States Court of Appeals.

SIX RELIGIOUS POLITICAL ACTION ORGANIZATIONS

There are six religious political action organizations currently registered with the Indiana Secretary of State as lobbying organizations—Advance America, the Indiana Family Institute, the Lafayette Urban Ministry, the Indiana Catholic Conference, the Indianapolis Jewish Community Relations Council, and the Indiana Friends Service Committee. The six organizations vary in their political stances and in the issues upon which they focus their resources.

Advance America is dedicated to informing and educating the citizens of Indiana as to how their government works and what they can do to make a difference on issues of importance. The organization directly communicates with 45,000 evangelical households, 3,700 evangelical churches, and 1,500 evangelical-owned businesses throughout the state. Its priority issues during the 2007 Indiana General Assembly included support of conservative family and social values, support of non-public and home schools, and the repeal of property taxes.

The Indiana Family Institute works in association with 38 other Family Policy Councils across the nation as an associate of Focus on the Family, but the majority of its efforts center upon public policy, research, and education regarding the health and well-being of Hoosier families. It is committed to strengthening and improving the marriages and families of Hoosiers and seeks to partner with other organizations, groups, and individuals who share their mission. Its objective is two-fold. First, to preserve pro-family policy already within State Government; and second, to push for additional policies that will strengthen Indiana families. The Indiana Family Institute works with churches, lay leaders, government, groups, and organizations to promote and implement effective marriage ministry and marriage enrichment programs. During 2007, the Indiana Family Institute lobbied the Indiana General Assembly to implement a constitutional ban against gay marriage and worked against legislation requiring public schools to educate parents about the Human Papilloma Virus (HPV).

The Lafayette Urban Ministry (LUM), a social concerns organization of 47 Lafayette Indiana churches, serves as a social safety net for low-income children and families. Its membership is mostly Mainline Protestant churches, although it has a significant minority representation of Roman Catholic and Peace Church members. The Board of Directors of the Lafayette Urban Ministry is composed primarily of members representing the United Methodist, Presbyterian, Lutheran, and United Church of Christ congregations. While primarily an agency that provides various direct services to needy families and children, LUM has a significant public policy presence at the Indiana State House. Its major pub-

lic policy goals in 2007 were to increase the state's minimum wage, increase various state tax credits for low wage workers and their families, and to strengthen the state's social safety net for low-income children and families.

The Indiana Catholic Conference (ICC) is the official public policy voice of the Catholic Church in Indiana regarding state and national matters. Its agenda is set by Indiana's Catholic Bishops. During the legislative session, the Indiana Catholic Conference communicates weekly with a statewide network of 2,000 Catholic Hoosiers. The ICC also provides a source to which public inquiry can be made about the position of the Catholic Church on matters affecting the common good. Its priority issues during the 2007 Indiana General Assembly included protecting the sanctity of human life from abortion and capital punishment, promoting public support for non-public schools, and advocating for those who live on the margins of society by supporting such issues as diverse as minimum wage increases and state divestment in Sudan.

The Indianapolis Jewish Community Relations Council (JCRC) is the public affairs and intergroup relations arm of the organized Jewish community. It is one of 117 Jewish Community Relations Councils in the country, which together with 11 national organizations, constitutes the Jewish Council for Public Affairs (JCPA). The Jewish Community Relations Council works to foster a secure environment for Jewish living by advocating democratic values. It acts in coalition with other groups advocating civil rights and social and economic justice. Key issues before the Indiana General Assembly in 2007 included separation of church and state, education, and economic justice.

The Indiana Friends Service Committee (IFSC) seeks to be a highly respected non-partisan research group known for its integrity, consistency, and tenacity for truth. It seeks to provide information to Quakers about bills before the Indiana Legislature often without comment in order to allow individual Quakers to speak their convictions. At other times, the IFSC serves as a resource for Indiana legislators. The Indiana Friends Service Committee began with a questionnaire to members of Quaker Churches from which the first policy statement was drawn and has been revised from time to time. The Indiana Friends Committee on Legislation is directed by its policy statement and does not claim to speak for all Friends. That policy statement focuses on issues promoting peace, environmental stewardship, equal rights, restorative justice, representative government, public education, and fair housing.

While there have been faith-based coalitions of churches that have organized in Indiana to promote or oppose various single issues during recent years such as anti-gaming, anti-gun violence, and protecting children from abuse and neglect, the difference that distinguishes these six religious political action organizations is their permanence. Each is registered with the Indiana Secretary of State as a lobbying organization, their general issue agendas stay constant over time, and they return to the statehouse to promote that agenda each January when the

General Assembly re-convenes. In other words, they are consistent and permanent components of Indiana's religious and political landscape.

FOUR QUESTIONS

In preparation for this lecture, I did a survey of my colleagues, asking them about the effectiveness or presence of these six organizations, as well as their success in affecting legislation. Their responses allow me to address four questions. First, how do legislators rate these religious political action organizations in terms of their presence in the General Assembly? Which ones are seen as the most effective? Which ones are seen as least effective? Second, how do legislators rate them in terms of the religious organizations' abilities to achieve their goals? Which are seen as the most successful? Which are the least successful? Third, is there any relationship between the religious groups' effectiveness and their success? Fourth, what are the characteristics of the most effective and most successful religious political action organizations, and what are the characteristics of the least effective and least successful organizations? While effectiveness and success might seem to be concepts with only nuanced differences, legislators clearly understand that an organization's success is directly tied to its legislative performance and to how well it is able to advance or hinder specific bills while the General Assembly is in session.

As I try to answer these questions, I will examine five organizational characteristics. First is the groups' location on a liberal-to-conservative continuum. I want to know whether liberals or conservatives have more impact, or if ideology plays no part. Second is the lobbyists' performance. To what extent do the legislators know the lobbyists by name and how often do they interact with them? Third is the relationship between lobbyists' salaries and the effectiveness/success of their organizations. Do these organizations get what they pay for? Fourth is the relationship, if any, between the size of the organizations' constituencies and their effectiveness/success. Do the groups representing large constituencies do any better than groups with fewer members? How much impact can smaller groups like the Friends and Jews really have? Fifth is the organizations' efforts to mobilize their constituents. In the process, I'll discuss one of the more controversial strategies that some groups use but others avoid—candidate surveys.

METHODOLOGY

The six religious political action organizations evaluated here were identified for inclusion in this study because each has registered with the Indiana Secretary of State's Office as a lobbying organization. Indiana Code 2-7-1-9 defines a lobbying organization as an organization that "employs an individual for the purpose

of communicating by any means with any legislative official for the purpose of influencing any legislative action.” An organization is a lobbying organization if it expends more than \$500 per year for the purpose of lobbying.² The various registration forms and activity reports required by this statute provide significant public information about an organization’s lobbying expenditures, issue agenda, board leadership, and the nature of their contact with elected members of the Indiana General Assembly. In addition, five of the six organizations under consideration here have extensive websites, which provide significant insight into their goals, objectives, and activities. Finally, questionnaires were administered to and personal interviews were conducted with four of the six organizations’ directors. All three sources—public reports, websites and interviews—combine to provide a clear and consistent understanding of the structure, staffing, activities, and public policy agendas of the six religious political action organizations.

Twenty legislators were randomly selected to participate in this study and 15, or exactly 10 percent of the 155th Indiana General Assembly, responded. The respondents proportionately represent the Indiana House and Senate, including political party representation. Seven of the respondents are Roman Catholic, two are United Methodist, and one each is Jewish, Presbyterian, Missouri Synod Lutheran, Unitarian Universalist, Wesleyan, and Independent Christian. Nine of the respondents hold graduate degrees and six of the respondents hold bachelor’s degrees. Women are slightly overrepresented in the sample (47% of respondents), compared to their representation in the General Assembly.

In May and June of 2007, following the April 29th adjournment of the 115th session of the Indiana General Assembly, I administered a questionnaire asking legislators to rate the effectiveness of the six religious political action organizations on a number of different scales. The questionnaire utilized a combination of Likert scale and open-ended responses to gauge legislators’ attitudes about various measures of organizational effectiveness. Those responses are compared to information gleaned from public reports, organizational websites, and interviews with leaders of the various religious political action organizations concerning their organization’s activities, budgets, staffing, and membership.

²IC 2-7-1-9 “Lobbying”

Sec. 9. “Lobbying” means communicating by any means, or paying others to communicate by any means, with any legislative official with the purpose of influencing any legislative action.

As added by Acts 1981, P.L.9, SEC.1.

IC 2-7-1-10 “Lobbyist”

Sec. 10. “Lobbyist” means any person who:

- (1) engages in lobbying; and
- (2) in any registration year, receives or expends an aggregate of five hundred dollars (\$500) in compensation or expenditures reportable under this article for lobbying, whether the compensation or expenditure is solely for lobbying or the lobbying is incidental to that individual’s regular employment.

As added by Acts 1981, P.L.9, SEC.1. Amended by P.L.9-1993, SEC.4.

RESULTS

I'll consider the results from the four questions in the order presented in the introduction. Each of the organizational characteristics mentioned previously will be examined.

Question #1: Organizational Effectiveness

Legislators were asked to rate each organization's effectiveness on a scale from 1 to 10, with 1 being "not very effective" and 10 being "very effective." Legislators who asked for clarification about the term "effectiveness" were asked to consider how good each organization was at making a favorable impression upon the legislator and to consider how well each organization was able to produce actual tangible results rather than outcomes that were merely potential or theoretical. None of the groups scored at the upper end on the effectiveness scale (8 to 10). Advance America's average rating was 7.3, and the Jewish Community Relations Council's and Indiana Catholic Conference's were both 7.0. Two organizations averaged ratings in the middle range of the scale: the Lafayette Urban Ministry at 5.8 and the Indiana Family Institute at 5.3. The Indiana Friends Service Committee averaged only 2.7 on the scale.

Question #2: Organizational Success

Legislators were also asked to rate, on a scale of 1 to 10, the "success" of each organization during the 2007 session of the Indiana General Assembly. The most successful groups were the Jewish Community Relations Council (average rating of 7.9 out of 10), the Indiana Catholic Conference (average rating of 6.9), and the Lafayette Urban Ministry (average rating of 6.4). Moderately successful organizations with average ratings of 4.3 and 5.0 were Advance America and Indiana Family Institute, respectively. The least successful group (average rating of 2.3) was the Indiana Friends Service Committee.

The Jewish Community Relations Council was successful during the 2007 session in building a broad bi-partisan coalition of support for divestment of Indiana state funds from the genocide-torn region of Darfur in western Sudan. The Indiana Catholic Conference was successful in helping to pass an increase in Indiana's state minimum wage and they maintained a high profile throughout the session on this issue. The Lafayette Urban Ministry was able to pass legislation providing state sales tax cuts to recipients of state and federal utility assistance. It also played an important leadership role in raising Indiana's state minimum wage. Advance America and the Indiana Family Institute were unsuccessful in advancing their two highest profile issues: a constitutional ban on same sex marriage and the elimination of property taxes. The Indiana Friends Service Committee was unsuccessful this session in advancing various bills concerning issues of climate change and restorative justice.

Question #3: Effectiveness and Success

My third question is whether there is any relationship between effectiveness and success. I cross-tabulated the scores for the two measures in an attempt to address that relationship question. The results are shown in Table 2. In general, there is a rather close, but not a perfect, correlations between effectiveness and success. The two groups rated as most effective were also rated most successful: the Jewish Community Relations Council and the Indiana Catholic Conference. Advance America was rated as highly effective but only moderately successful. The Lafayette Urban Ministry, by contrast, was rated only moderately effective but highly successful. The Indiana Family Institute falls in the middle of ratings on both dimensions: moderately effective and moderately successful. Finally, the Indiana Friends Service Committee is the least effective and the least successful.

TABLE 2
Relationship between Effectiveness and Success

		Success		
		Low (2.3)	Moderate (4.3-5.0)	High (6.4+)
Effectiveness	High (7.0+)		Advance America	Jewish Community Relations Council, Indiana Catholic Conference
	Moderate (5.3-5.8)		Indiana Family Institute	Lafayette Urban Ministry
	Low (2.3)	Indiana Friends Service Committee		

Question #4: Characteristics of Religious Political Action Organizations

Ideology. To what extent is the effectiveness and success of these groups linked to ideology? To answer that question, I placed the groups along a liberal-conservative continuum like the one Wade Clark Roof and William McKinney (1987) described in their book, *American Mainline Religion*. In this case, the more liberal the groups are, the more they seek change, usually in the form of improving the environment, assisting the poor, and advocating social and economic justice. The more conservative they are, the more they try to preserve traditional values and social arrangements, usually by focusing on family values, pro-life issues, education linked to families and churches, and tax cuts.

The Jewish Community Relations Council is the most liberal group, followed by the Indiana Friends Service Committee. The Lafayette Urban Ministry is more liberal than conservative. The Indiana Catholic Conference is a fairly equal

mix of liberal on social justice issues and conservative on personal-family issues. Advance America and the Indiana Family Institute are at the conservative end of the continuum.

There was no obvious pattern between liberal or conservative groups and perceived effectiveness. Advance America is conservative and effective, the Jewish Community Relations Council is liberal and effective, and the Indiana Catholic Conference is a mixture of liberal and conservative and is effective. The Indiana Family Institute, a conservative group, ranks fifth in effectiveness, while the Indiana Friends Service Committee, a liberal group, ranks sixth. There also was no clear liberal-conservative split on the success dimension. Both liberal and moderate groups were successful. Indiana Family Institute and Advance America are on the conservative end of the continuum and were deemed less successful while Indiana Friends Service Committee, a liberal group, was also considered less successful. So, ideology does not have much to do with a religious political action organization's impact at the statehouse. But if ideology does not explain the groups' impact, what does?

Lobbyists. One possibility is that these ratings are linked to legislators' relationships with the groups' lobbyists. Lobbyists vary in the extent to which they are known to legislators and the frequency of their contacts with them. The data in Table 3 suggest that lobbyists have a lot to do with the groups' effectiveness and success. Over 90 percent of legislators know the names of the Advance America, the Jewish Community Relations Council, and the Indiana Catholic Conference lobbyists. Eighty percent know the Lafayette Urban Ministry's lobbyist, and seventy-five percent know the Indiana Family Institute's lobbyist. The Indiana Friends Service Committee's lobbyist is a virtual unknown.

TABLE 3
Knowledge of Lobbyists' Names and Frequency of Contact with Them

Organization	Know Names (%)	Have Contact	Effectiveness	Success
Advance America	100.0	6.7	7.3	5.0
Jewish Community Relations	100.0	7.7	7.0	7.9
Indiana Catholic Conference	93.0	7.4	7.0	6.9
Lafayette Urban Ministry	80.0	6.6	5.8	6.4
Indiana Family Institute	75.0	5.0	5.3	2.3
Indiana Friends Service Committee	13.3	3.1	2.7	2.3

Furthermore, legislators are most likely to interact with the lobbyists for the Jewish Community Relations Council and the Indiana Catholic Conference. They have somewhat less frequent contact with the Advance America and Lafayette Urban Ministry lobbyists. They have even less interaction with the Indiana Family Institute's lobbyist, and the least contact of all with the Indiana

Friends Service Committee's lobbyist. These relationships are positively correlated with the groups' effectiveness and success.

Comments offered by the legislators about lobbyists were perhaps as compelling as the quantitative ratings.

- "An organization's lobbyist is the most important factor in gauging its effectiveness. If an organization doesn't have a lot of money, it can compensate with a good lobbyist who provides good information."
- "The frequency of an organization's contact with me through their lobbyist is critical to that organization's overall effectiveness."
- "The most effective organizations are the ones with the most trustworthy lobbyists. It all comes down to trust."
- "Lobbyists representing faith based organizations must be held to a higher standard. They must be factual and tell the truth. They must walk in integrity."

A lobbyist's work ethic, honesty, integrity, and trustworthiness clearly play an important role in a legislator's perception of a religious political action organization.

Everyone knows Advance America's lobbyist's name, and legislators have fairly frequent contact with that person; however, it should also be noted that there was significant legislator sentiment critical of Advance America's lobbyist. This sentiment was expressed by legislators of both political parties.

- "Advance America's lobbyist has a trust problem."
- "Advance America is effective because legislators are afraid to stand up to its lobbyist."
- "Advance America's lobbyist is overbearing."

I have to believe that these perceptions help to explain why Advance America's score on the success dimension is lower than its score on the effectiveness dimension.

Compensation. I looked to see if there was any relationship between an organization's effectiveness/success and the amount of money it spent to compensate its lobbyist for his or her services. A review of official lobbying activity reports in 2007 shows those organizations that spent the most money to compensate an employee for lobbying services tended to be the organizations that scored highest on the effectiveness scale (see Table 4).³ While not a clear and direct case of "you get what you pay for," the data is suggestive. The Indiana Catholic Conference and Advance America spend the most to compensate their lobbyists, and both groups have demonstrated an impact. The Lafayette Urban Ministry and the Jewish Community Relations Council spend less on lobbyist compensation, but these groups are still highly rated. The Indiana Family Institute and

³On file with the Indiana Lobby Registration Commission, 10 West Market Street, Suite 1760, Indianapolis, IN 46204.

TABLE 4
Lobbyist Compensation

Organization	Compensation	Effectiveness	Success
Advance America	\$32,443	7.3	5.0
Indiana Catholic Conference	\$36,024	7.0	6.9
Jewish Community Relations Council	\$ 6,753	7.0	7.9
Lafayette Urban Ministry	\$12,600	5.8	6.4
Indiana Family Institute	\$ 2,038	5.3	4.3
Indiana Friends Service Committee	\$ 1,759	2.7	2.3

Indiana Friends Service Committee spent the least on lobbyist compensation and were the least effective and least successful of all the groups.⁴

Adherent base. There also is some relationship between an organization's effectiveness/success and the size of its adherent base. Three of the four religious political action organizations with large adherent bases rate highly in terms of effectiveness and success—Advance America, the Indiana Catholic Conference, and the Lafayette Urban Ministry. The other one (Indiana Family Institute) had less influence. One of the groups with a small adherent base (Jewish Community Relations Council) also rated highly, but the other (Indiana Friends Service Committee) ranked last on both dimensions.

Engaging constituents. Next, the groups' successes and failures in engaging their constituents in the political process should be discussed. Like legislative bodies in many states, Indiana's General Assembly is a part-time citizen's legislature. Members typically hold down jobs outside of their elected duties, living eight to nine months each year at home in their districts where they remain active in their local communities. Their work load is heavy and their staff support is minimal. A member of the Indiana General Assembly typically shares one legislative aide with two other members.

One way legislators manage their workload is by giving the highest priority to their own constituents. Those phone calls, emails, letters, and requests for constituent services are always answered first. It should be of little surprise, then, that the most effective religious political action organizations are the ones which have perfected the art of lobbying legislators indirectly through their own constituents in their own districts. In the late 1980s the widening availability of the personal computer allowed organizations to manipulate constituent data to quickly target letters, telephone calls, and faxes to specific legislators. In the late 1990s, wide-

⁴It should be noted that expenditures on gifts, meals, or receptions for legislators were only made by two organizations. Advance America spent \$300 on meals and entertainment for legislators while the Indiana Catholic Conference spent \$308 on receptions. With those exceptions, all of the expenditures reported by the various organizations were to compensate their lobbyists.

spread use of email and the internet allowed that kind of targeted communication to happen more quickly and more efficiently.

Now that our legislative sessions are broadcast live over the internet, I am impressed whenever a constituent emails me on the floor of the House, literally seconds after I cast a vote, to share with me their approval or disapproval. If the email comes from somebody else's constituent in another part of the state, I do not always have the time to make a reply. If it comes from my own constituent, I make the time.

A sampling of legislator comments about the role of constituent advocacy is provided below:

- "It's not unusual for a member of my church to approach me after mass and ask me to support a bill they've learned about through a Catholic Conference or Lafayette Urban Ministry email. I take notice when that happens."
- "I pay greater attention to organizations that have active members who live in my district."
- "An organization's ability to mobilize my constituents makes them more effective."

Finally, I want to discuss the use of candidate surveys as a means of engaging constituents. All of the six organizations are not-for-profit organizations registered under section 501(c) 3 of the Internal Revenue Code. Their tax status allows their donors to deduct financial contributions they make to the organizations from their federal income taxes. Federal non-profit status also prohibits the organizations from endorsing or opposing political candidates. A 501(c)3 organization may attempt to influence the way legislators vote on particular issues, but may not contribute financially to a candidate or attempt to influence the outcome of an election by endorsing or opposing particular candidates (Davidson 1998).

A 501(c)3 organization may also distribute legislators' responses to candidate surveys, as well the voting records of incumbents, to its membership. Of the six organizations studied here, the two most conservative groups (Advance America and the Indiana Family Institute) engage in this practice. The moderate to liberal groups do not. Although the practice is clearly linked to the liberal-conservative axis, it is not clearly linked to effectiveness and success. Neither the most nor the least effective and successful groups use it. The Indiana Family Institute, one of the groups utilizing it, is moderately effective and moderately successful, while Advance America is highly effective, although less successful.

Summary. The overall results of this analysis are summarized in Table 5. I have listed the groups down the left side according to each organization's combined "effectiveness" and "success" scores (legislator's ratings on a scale of 1 [low] to 10 [high]). I have also listed various organizational characteristics across the top and provided results for each organization. In summary, well-paid lobbyists who develop good working relationships with legislators and mobilize their constituents are the key to religious political action organization's impact on state

government. The use of candidate surveys may increase a religious political action organization's visibility, but it jeopardizes the lobbyist-legislator relationship and the group's success. The size of the groups' adherent bases has only a limited effect on its success. Ideology has no demonstrated effect.

TABLE 5
Summary of Findings on Characteristics of Religious Political Action Organizations

	Know Name	Frequency of Contact	Ideology	Compen- sation	Adherent Base	Use Candidate Surveys
<i>Highest Ratings for Effectiveness and Success</i>						
Jewish Community Relations Council (14.9)	High	High	Liberal	Medium	Small	No
Indiana Catholic Conference (13.9)	High	High	Moderate	High	Large	No
Advance America (12.3)	High	High	Conservative	High	Large	Yes
Lafayette Urban Ministry (12.2)	Medium	Medium	Moderate	Medium	Large	No
<i>Lowest Ratings for Effectiveness and Success</i>						
Indiana Family Institute (9.6)	Medium	Medium	Conservative	Low	Large	Yes
Indiana Friends Service Committee (5.0)	Low	Low	Liberal	Low	Small	No

Note: Numbers in parentheses represent sum of legislators' rankings of organizational "effectiveness" and "success" on a scale of 1 (low) to 10 (high).

CONCLUSIONS

The findings presented here give a clear indication of which assets contribute most to an organization's effectiveness: lobbyists who are well-paid, have strong relationships with legislators, and are effective in mobilizing their adherents. Applying these findings to specific practices and activities is critical in helping religious lobbies to be more successful in state legislatures and ultimately in achieving their goals and objectives of social change.

Focus on the Lobbyist

One of the most interesting dynamics found in this study was the high ratings for effectiveness and success earned by the Jewish Community Relations Council (JCRC). The JCRC is effective at the statehouse despite its relatively small budget, small adherent base, and small membership. What it has working in its favor is a well-known and well-respected lobbyist. When it comes to effectiveness, an organization's lobbyist is its single most important asset.

Religious political action organizations must pay special attention to the personnel issues surrounding this critical aspect of staff members. They must hire the right individual, supervise their work, and evaluate their performance. It is imperative that the lobbyist develops strong relationships with the legislators and actively engages lawmakers on both sides of the political aisle. Practical religious political action organizations would be wise to elicit feedback from legislators concerning the day-to-day performance of their lobbyists. When it comes to lobbyists, integrity, trust, and reliable information are commodities lawmakers value the most.

Focus on Engaging the Legislator's Constituents

Legislators give first priority and attention to their own constituents. The most effective religious lobbies are those that have cultivated good communication channels between their members and their members' lawmakers in support of the organization's issue agenda. Effective religious political action organizations are those that are proficient in the technical aspects of member recruitment. They cultivate relationships with local pastors who in turn provide access to church members. Pastors are the gatekeepers who allow staff members from religious political action organizations to preach guest sermons, teach adult Sunday school lessons, and gain access to church bulletins and newsletters. Effective religious political action organizations urge local pastors to preach about their public policy agenda directly from the pulpit.

Once a membership base is established in a specific legislative district, effective religious political action organizations are proficient in targeting email and telephone communication from a legislator's constituents prior to important committee or floor votes. Effective religious political action organizations provide timely and factual talking points to their members and urge those members to communicate with their Senator or Representative. Advance America is especially adept in activating its members to communicate with their local state lawmakers concerning the organization's issue agenda. With 45,000 members statewide, an average Indiana House district has literally hundreds of Advance America members. I received at least fifty Advance America generated emails during the recent session concerning the organization's unsuccessful attempt to pass a constitution amendment banning same sex marriage.

Religious political action organizations also need to calculate the costs and benefits of candidate surveys. They draw attention to the groups that use them,

but they introduce tension into the lobbyist-legislator relationship. Moderate to liberal groups have decided that the cost of using them is too high. Conservative groups think otherwise. This leads me to believe that liberals and conservatives walk the halls of power for different reasons. Liberals are there to pass legislation that fits their values and interests. Conservatives have similar motives, but seem willing to sacrifice some legislative success for increased attention to their causes. So, if a group seeks attention even at the risk of legislative failure, I'd recommend they consider using candidate surveys; but if they want to achieve legislative results and maintain long-term relationships with legislators, I would suggest they do not.

Implications for Future Research

Finally, my research has implications for further study. The primary data source for this evaluation was a sample of current members of the Indiana General Assembly. While legislators' viewpoints are essential, there are others whose viewpoints are important. For example, membership of the organizations, clergy or denominational hierarchy, as well as staff and board directors would each have valuable opinions to share. Further study from those other perspectives would be in order.

As mentioned earlier, Indiana's General Assembly is a part-time citizens' legislature. As such, legislative staff is in short supply. Legislators in citizen's legislatures depend heavily upon lobbyists to provide policy information and minute-to-minute updates on what other legislators think and feel about a particular bill. In a citizen's legislature, lobbyists are an integral part of the legislative process. It is important to document whether the relationship between a legislator and lobbyist works differently in a full-time state legislature whose members have access to more staff members. Do legislators depend more upon staff and less upon lobbyists for information and support? If so, are legislator's perceptions of a religious lobby's effectiveness still so closely linked to that legislator's relationship with the organization's lobbyist?

Next, effectiveness was measured here primarily according to groups' presence in the General Assembly, but there are other outcomes upon which to measure the effectiveness of a religious political action organization. For example, do members of the organization gain insight and knowledge into church social teachings because of the work of the organization? Does a member's horizontal or vertical religiosity strengthen because of their association with the organization? Are collaboration and cooperation with other faith-based or secular organizations important to the organization and what role does collaboration play in the organization's success? These questions should be considered as future study of these organizations is contemplated. The answers to these questions will add further to our knowledge base of religious political action organizations and their critically important work inside the limestone hallways and lobbies of state capitol buildings throughout our nation.

Finally, at a time when so much attention is given to the liberal-conservative divide or culture wars, I think it is important to note that ideology apparently has little to do with the effectiveness and success of the six groups studied. In a state where the religious climate tends to be more conservative than liberal, it is interesting that the conservative groups did not dominate over the liberal groups. Regardless of political positions, the impact of the various groups was dependent upon practical or pragmatic factors. This finding needs to be the focus of additional research in other statehouses around the country. In the meantime, it is an encouraging finding for those of us who work in an ecumenical and bi-partisan environment and who sincerely endeavor to build a better world.

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