

Transparency #1

LIMESTONE PROPHETS: GAUGING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF RELIGIOUS POLITICAL ACTION ORGANIZATIONS THAT LOBBY STATE LEGISLATURES

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Introduction

The religious groups or denominations to which most Americans belong have long held an official presence in state capitol buildings. Generally speaking their purpose is to help their local congregations and central religious bodies to impact 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 keenly 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 constantly searched for ways to make my organization more effective in its mission and more successful in its approach and outcomes with legislators. This study seeks to learn more about Religious Political Action Organizations, specifically why some of them seem to be more effective than others.

Rachel Kraus of Ball State University has examined how 15 Religious Political Action Organizations in Washington DC establish their policy agendas (1), and Laura Olsen of Clemson has studied the role of clergy associated with Mainline Protestant

Political Action Organizations in Washington DC (2). Both of these studies provide important information about national-level Religious Political Action Organizations. But, the only research I know ~~of~~ that has looked into state-level Religious Political Action Organizations is David Yamane’s extensive empirical study into the political advocacy of State Catholic Conferences, the public policy arm of the Catholic bishops at the state level (3).

I think we need much more research on the religious groups that try to affect legislation at the state level. I thought I would take a step in that direction this afternoon. First, I’ll say a few words about Indiana’s religious landscape and political climate. Then, I’ll describe the six Religious Political Action Organizations that operate in the Indiana General Assembly. Following that, I’ll tell you about my research into these groups and what I have learned. *PAS,*

Transparency #2

Religion and Politics in Indiana

About six million people live in Indiana. According to ~~Association of Religion~~ *the most recent A.R.O.A. figure*
~~Data Archives figures for 2000,~~ ^{973,000} an estimated 972,810 Hoosiers are Evangelical
 Christians, or 16% of the population (4). ^{836,000} ~~836,009~~ individuals or 14% of Indiana’s
 residents are Roman Catholic. ^{Abnt 723 000} ~~723,295~~ Hoosiers or 12% of the population are Mainline
 Protestant. The Jewish faith in Indiana is claimed by an estimated 12,160 Hoosiers or
 .20% of the population (5). An estimated 11,069 ^{Residents} Indiana _A belong to the Society of Friends,
 about .18% of the population. Fifty-eight percent of Hoosiers belonged to other groups
 or were “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 real 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 profile helps to explain why Hoosiers also tend to be so conservative on moral issues. *P.S.,*

Table 1

Indiana’s Religious Landscape

Category	N	%
Evangelical Protestant	972,810	16
Catholic	836,009	14
Mainline Protestant	721,295	12
Jewish	12,160	.2
Friends	11,069	.2
Other/None	3,533,151	58
Total	6,086,494	100

Transparency #3

Tim Russert would say that Indiana is a red state. It has a long history of supporting Republican presidential candidates. In fact, the only time in recent history that it did not was when LBJ won in the landslide of 1964. True to form, 60% of Indiana residents voted for President Bush in 2004. But, the political landscape is more complex than that. Hoosiers have supported a real mixture of United States Senators over the years—from liberals Vance Hartke and Birch Bayh to conservatives Dan Quayle and Dan Coats. Our current senators are Democrat Evan Bayh and Republican Richard Lugar. The

people of Indiana have also 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% of the vote. Republicans control the state Senate by a 66% to 34% margin. But, Democrats currently hold a one seat majority in the House of Representatives, where I sit. *Pross*

Table 2
Indiana's Political Climate
(percent)

	2004 Presidential Election	2004 Gubernatorial Election	Current State Senate	Current State House
Democrat	39	46	34	51
Republican	60	53	66	49
Other	1	1	--	--

Transparency #4

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 (6), 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 3). Mainline Protestants are the most over-represented

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TABLE 3
Faith Tradition of Legislators

<u>Faith Tradition</u>	<u>% of all Legislators</u>	<u>% of State Population</u>
Evangelical Protestant	19	16
Roman Catholic	21	14
Mainline Protestant	35	12
Jewish	1	.2
Friends (Peace Church)	1	.2
African American Congregation	7	n/a
Other/None	16	58
Total	100	100

group, being 35% of the General Assembly but only 12% of the population. Catholics and evangelical Protestant legislators are also over-represented, but 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 (4).

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

Transparency #5

Six Religious Political Action Organizations

There are six Religious Political Action Organizations currently registered with the Indiana Secretary of State as “lobbying organizations.”

1 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 to them. In fact, it directly communicates with 45,000 evangelical households, 3,700 evangelical churches, and 1,500 evangelical-owned businesses from 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.

2 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~~ effort centers on 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 that same 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, ^{state} government, ~~groups~~ ^{non-profit groups} and ~~organizations~~ to promote and implement effective marriage ministry and marriage enrichment programs. During 2007 the Indiana Family Institute ^{advocates policy} 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).

3 The Lafayette Urban Ministry (LUM) a social concerns organization of 47 Lafayette Indiana churches that serves as a social safety net for low-income children and families. Its membership is comprised primarily of Mainline Protestant church members

although it has a significant minority representation of Roman Catholic and Peace Church membership. The Board of Directors of the Lafayette Urban Ministry is primarily composed of members of United Methodist, Presbyterian, Lutheran, and United Church of Christ congregations among others. 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 public 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.

4 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. *Indiana Catholic Conference*
 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 (anti-abortion & anti-death penalty), promoting public support for non-public schools, and standing with those who live on the margins of society (supported ^{it} minimum wage ^{the} increase and state divestment in ^{Defense} ~~Sudan~~).

5 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 that, together with 11 national organizations, constitute 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. ^{It} Key issues before the Indiana General Assembly in 2007 included ^{divestment of state funds from ~~the~~ ~~state~~ ~~of~~ ~~Indiana~~} the separation of church and state, education and economic justice.

lastly

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, 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} ~~the~~ ^{IFSC} 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. ^{PAISI}

While there have been faith-based coalitions of churches that have organized in Indiana to promote or oppose various single issues during recent years (anti-gaming, anti-gun violence, 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 consistent over time, and they return to the statehouse to promote ^{those agendas} ~~the 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. *Fluor*

Transparency #6

Four questions

In preparation for this lecture, I did a survey of ^{legislators} my colleagues, asking them about the effectiveness or presence of these six organizations, as well as their success in affecting legislation. The results allow me to address four questions:

1. 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?
2. How do legislators rate them in terms of ^{their} ~~the~~ ability to achieve their goals? Which are seen as the most successful? Which are the least successful?
3. Is there any relationship between the groups' effectiveness and their success?
4. 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?

As I try to answer these questions, I will examine five organizational characteristics. One is the groups' location on a liberal-to-conservative continuum. I want to know if the liberal groups have more impact than conservatives, if it is the other way around, or if ideology has nothing to do with it. A second characteristic has to do with the lobbyists' performance. To what extent do the legislators know the lobbyists by name and how often do they interact with them? Third, I'll look to see if there is any relationship between lobbyists' salaries and the effectiveness and success of their organizations. Do

these organizations get what they pay for? Fourth, I'll discuss 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, I'll review 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.

Transparency #7

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 (8). The various registration forms and activity reports required by this statute provide significant public information about the 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 had extensive websites that provide^d significant insight into their goals, objectives and activities. Finally, questionnaires and personal interviews were administered to four of the six organization's directors. All three sources (public reports, websites and interviews) combine^d to provide a clear and consistent understanding of the

structure, staffing, activities and public policy agendas of the six Religious Political Action Organizations.

I surveyed the opinions of a random and representative sample of members of the 115th Indiana General Assembly asking them 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.

~~The~~ Confidential interviews with members of the Indiana General Assembly provided the quantitative basis for evaluating the organizations. Twenty legislators were randomly selected to participate in the study and fifteen, or exactly 10% of the Indiana General Assembly, responded to the questionnaire. The respondents are members of, and proportionately represent both the Indiana House and Senate. Members of both political parties are proportionately represented in the sample as well. 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 (60% of the sample) hold graduate degrees and 6 of the respondents (40% of the sample) hold bachelor's degrees. Women are slightly overrepresented in the sample making up 7 of the 15 respondents (47%).

All data utilized in this analysis was obtained during May and June of 2007, following the April 29th adjournment of the 115th session of the Indiana General Assembly.

P
WJSC

discuss

Findings

I'll ~~take~~ the four questions in the order I presented them to you. As I go along, I'll examine each of the organizational characteristics I mentioned.

Transparency #8

Question #1: Organizational Effectiveness

Legislators were asked to rank each organization's effectiveness on a scale from 1 to 10, with 1 being "not very effective" and 10 being "very effective (See table 4).

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 outputs that were merely potential or theoretical.

TABLE 4

Effectiveness of Organizations

Organization	Score
Advance America	7.3
Jewish Community Relations Council	7.0
Indiana Catholic Conference	7.0
Lafayette Urban Ministry	5.8
Indiana Family Institute	5.3
Indiana Friends Service Committee	2.7

None of the groups scored in the upper 8 to 10 range on the effectiveness scale. Advance America scored 7.3, the Jewish Community Relations Council 7.0 and the Indiana Catholic Conference 7.0. Two organizations scored 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 scored only 2.7 on the scale.

Transparency #9

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. 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, to how well it is able to advance or hinder specific bills while the General Assembly is in session (See table 5).

TABLE 5

Organizational Success

Organization	Score
Jewish Community Relations Council	7.9
Indiana Catholic Conference	6.9
Lafayette Urban Ministry	6.4
Advance America	5.0
Indiana Family Institute	4.3
Indiana Friends Service Committee	2.3

The most successful groups had scores of 6.4 or higher. They included the Jewish Community Relations Council, the Indiana Catholic Conference and the Lafayette Urban Ministry. Moderately successful organizations (with scores of 4.3-5.0) were Advance America and IFI. The least successful group (at 2.3) was the Indiana Family Institute.

The Jewish Community Relations Council was successful during the 2007 in building a broad bi-partisan coalition of support for divestment of Indiana state funds from the genocide-torn nation of Darfur. The Indiana Catholic Conference was successful in helping to pass an increase in Indiana's state minimum wage and 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: constitutional ban on same sex marriage and elimination of property taxes. And the Indiana Friend Service Committee was unsuccessful this session in advancing various bills concerning issues of climate change and restorative justice.

Transparency #10

Question #3: Effectiveness and Success

My third question was whether there is any relationship between effectiveness and success. To answer that question, I cross-tabulated the scores for the two measures. The results are shown in ~~Table 6~~ *here*

Table 6

Relationship between Effectiveness and Success

		Success		
		Low (2.3)	Moderate (4.3-5.0)	High (6.4+)
Effectiveness	High (7.0+)		Adv Am	JCRC ICC
	Moderate (5.3-5.8)		IFI	LUM
	Low (2.3)	IFSC		

In general, there is a rather close connection between effectiveness and success.

Two groups were rated as most effective and most successful. One was the Jewish Community Relations Council. The other was the Indiana Catholic Conference. Advance America was rated as effective and moderately successful. The Lafayette Urban Ministry was moderately effective but highly successful. The Indiana Family Institute is moderately effective and moderately successful. The Indiana Friends Service Committee is least effective and least successful.

Now onto my
4th question
Re: --

Question #4: Characteristics of most effective/~~successful~~ and least effective/~~successful~~

Religious Political Action Organizations

Transparency #11

Let's talk about...

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 described in their book *American Mainline Religion* (9). 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 that is linked to families and churches, and tax cuts.

The Jewish Community Relations Council would be the most liberal group. Next would be Indiana Friends Service Committee. The Lafayette Urban Ministry would be more liberal than conservative. The Indiana Catholic Conference would be a more equal mix of liberal on social justice issues and conservative on personal-family issues. Advance America and the Indiana Family Institute would be at the conservative end of the continuum.

There was no obvious pattern for liberal or conservative groups to be considered most effective. 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, and 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. But on the less-successful end of the continuum were two conservative groups (Indiana Family Institute and

Advance America) and a liberal group (Indiana Friends Service Committee). ~~When I~~
~~combined the two dimensions in Table 6, there still was no clear left-right distinction. So,~~
 ideology does not have much to do with a Religious Political Action Organization's
 impact at the statehouse.

So If ideology has ^{so} little to do with the groups' impact, ^{at the statehouse} what does? Why are Jewish
 Community Relations Council and the Indiana Catholic Conference the most effective
 and most successful Religious Political Action Organizations, compared to the Indiana
 Family Institute, which is rated as moderate in both areas, and Indiana Friends Service
 Committee, which is the least effective and least successful?

Transparency #12

~~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 7~~
 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 three-quarters know the Indiana Family
 Institute's lobbyist. The Indiana Friends Service Committee's lobbyist is a virtual
 unknown. Legislators are most likely to interact with the lobbyist for the Jewish

TABLE 7

Knowledge of Lobbyists' Names and Frequency of Contact with Them

Organization	Know Names(%)	Have Contact(1-10)	Effectiveness	Success
Advance America	100.0	6.7	7.3	5.0
Jewish Community Relation Council	100.0	7.7	7.0	7.9
Indiana Catholic Conference	93.3	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	4.3
Indiana Friends Service Committee	13.3	3.1	2.7	2.3

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.

Perhaps as compelling as the empirical data were the comments offered by the legislators about lobbyists. 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.

One legislator
said -

"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."

Another said

"The frequency of an organization's contact with me through their lobbyist is critical to that organization's overall effectiveness."

One community leader

"The most effective organizations are the ones with the most trustworthy lobbyists. It all comes down to trust."

And / or
Another said

"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."

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...

One said --- *Advance America's lobbyist has a trust problem.*

Another said --- *Advance America is effective because legislators are afraid to stand up to its lobbyist.*

Still Another said *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.

Transparency #13

~~Compensation~~. I looked to see if there is 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 (10) 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 8).

While not a clear and direct case of "you get what you pay for," the data is relational. The Indiana Catholic Conference and Advance America spend the most to compensate their lobbyists, and both groups have a real impact. The Lafayette Urban Ministry and the Jewish Community Relations Council spent less on lobbyist

compensation, but these groups are still highly rated. The Indiana family Institute and Indiana Friends Service Committee spent the least on lobbyist compensation and were the

TABLE 8
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

least effective and least successful of all the groups. It 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.

Transparency #14

~~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 (JCRC) also rated highly, but the other (IFSC) ranked last on both dimensions.

Pass,

Pass

Transparency #15

Engaging Constituents. Next, we need to talk about the groups' successes and failures in engaging their constituents in the political process. 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 8 to 9 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 2 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 that have perfected the art of lobbying legislators indirectly through their own constituents in their own districts.

In the late 1980's the widening availability of the personal computer allowed organizations to manipulate constituent data to quickly target letters, telephone calls, and later faxes, to specific legislators. In the late 1990's widespread 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 always 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 don't always have the time to make a reply. If it comes from my own constituent I make the time.

Legislator comments....

One Legislator ~~commented~~ ^{said}, "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."

Another ~~commented~~ ^{said}, "I pay greater attention to organizations that have active members who live in my district."

Still another ~~commented~~ ^{said}, "An organization's ability to mobilize my constituents makes them more effective." ^{Pause}

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. That status allows their donors to deduct financial contributions they make to the organizations from their federal income taxes. But 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].

(11)

A 501(c)3 organization ~~may~~ ^{may} also distribute to its membership legislators' responses to candidate surveys, as well the voting records of incumbents. 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~~ ^{and} ~~successful~~ ^{successful} groups use it. One of the groups that use ~~it~~ ^{Candidate Surveys} (Indiana Family Institute) is

moderately effective and moderately successful. The other one (Advance America) is highly effective but less successful. PAJ51

Transparency #16

So, let's add up what we've found (see Table 10). I've listed the groups down the left side from the highest ranking to the lowest. (I ranked the groups 1-6 in terms of their scores on each dimension, and then totaled their scores. Theoretically, the range is from 2-12. Empirically, it is 3-12.) I've listed the organizational characteristics across the top.

Table 10
Summary of Findings

	Ideology	Know Name	Frequency of Contact	Compensation	Adherent Base	Use Candidate Surveys
Highest ratings						
JCRC (3)	Lib	Hi	Hi	Med	Small	No
ICC (5)	Mod	Hi	Hi	Hi	Large	No
Adv Am (5)	Con	Hi	Hi	Hi	Large	Yes
LUM (7)	Mod	Med	Med	Med	Large	No
Lowest ratings						
IFI (10)	Con	Med	Med	Low	Large	Yes
IFSC (12)	Lib	Low	Low	Low	Small	No

So 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 effect.

~~Conclusions~~

The findings presented here give clear indication as to 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.

Transparency #17

Focus on the Lobbyist.

first it is critical that Religious lobbies

One of the most interesting dynamics found in this study was the high rate of effectiveness and success of the Jewish Community Relations Council. The JCRC is effective at the statehouse despite its relatively small budget, small adherent base, and small membership. What it had working in its favor was a well-known, 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 most critical of staff members. They must take great pains to hire the right individual, supervise their work and evaluate their performance. They must make sure that their lobbyist develops strong relationships with and actively engages lawmakers on both sides of the political aisle. Where 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 most. *Prv*

Transparency #18

Focus on Engaging the Legislator's Constituents

This important for Religious Lobbyists to

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 their church's bulletin and newsletter. Effective Religious Political Action Organizations ~~use local~~ *are successful in convincing* ^{local} pastors to preach about ~~their~~ ^{its} public policy agenda directly from the pulpit.

local

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 some 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 ^{surveys} 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 finding 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 also want that, 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 success, I'd recommend they consider using candidate surveys. But, if they want to achieve legislative results and maintain long-term relations with legislators, I would suggest they do not.

Transparency #19

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 insightful and important, there are others whose viewpoints are also 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 perspectives is in order.

As mentioned here already, 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 had so little to do with the effectiveness and success of the six groups I looked at. And, in a state where the religious climate tends to be more conservative than liberal, it is interesting that the conservative groups did not dominate the liberal groups. Whether they were on the left or the right, the groups’ impact came down to much more practical or pragmatic issues. Of course, 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.

Thank you for your kind attention

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6. *2007 Indiana General Assembly Legislative Directory*, edited by Laura Schenkel, Indianapolis, IN, Indiana Chamber of Commerce.
7. The historically African American denominations are not included in the 2000 Association of Religious Data Archives congregation and membership totals.
8. **IC 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.
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10. 2007 Reports of Lobbyist Activity on file with the Indiana Lobby Registration Commission 10 West Market St., Ste 1760, Indianapolis, IN 46204, 317/232-9860.
11. James D. Davidson, "Why Churches Cannot Endorse or Oppose Political Candidates," *Review of Religious Research* 40 (September 1998): 16-34.