

# THE DAILY CALLER

## Politico Presents .... Washington Lobbyists!

By David Boaz

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I noticed that my paper copies of Politico have been quite thick this week. Is there a lot of news? Well, yes. But newspapers usually run all the news the advertising will support. And Politico is just chock-full of ads in this budget season. As I wrote in my favorite chapter of [\*The Libertarian Mind\*](#), “What Big Government Is All About,” there’s been a huge boom in the business of getting taxpayers’ money in the past few years:

“Every business and interest group in society has an office in Washington devoted to getting some of the \$4 trillion federal budget for itself: senior citizens, farmers, veterans, teachers, social workers, oil companies, labor unions, the military-industrial complex—you name it. The massive spending increases of the Bush-Obama years have created a lot of well-off people in Washington. Consulting and contracting exploded after 9/11. New regulatory burdens, notably from Obamacare and the Dodd-Frank financial regulation bill, are generating jobs in the lobbying and regulatory compliance business.

“Walk down K Street, the heart of Washington’s lobbying industry, and look at the directories in the office buildings. They’re full of lobbyists and associations that are in Washington, for one reason: because, as Willie Sutton said about why he robbed banks, “That’s where the money is.”...

“How much would you spend to get a \$200 million subsidy from the federal government? About \$199 million if you had to, I’ll bet.”

So what does that have to do with the page counts in Politico? Well, check out this list of the full-page ads in Tuesday’s and Wednesday’s editions:

International Council of Shopping Centers (tax the internet)  
National Multifamily Housing Council/National Apartment Association  
My Plate, My Planet (federal food guidelines)  
CA Technologies  
American Medical Association (more Medicare money for doctors)  
Innovation Alliance (patent law)

Alzheimer's Association (federal research money)  
United Launch Alliance (NASA contracts)  
Navy League (military spending)  
Beer Institute (beer taxes)  
Society for Human Resource Management  
United Technologies  
Americans for the Arts (taxpayer funding)  
Better Medicare Alliance (insurance companies and others, more Medicare funding)  
Natural Products Association  
[Oil](#) and [Natural Gas](#) Industry  
Boeing/Textron (fund the V-22)  
Application Developers Alliance (patent law)  
American Bankers Association  
Aerospace Industries Association (fund the Ex-Im Bank)  
Aircraft Carrier Industrial Base Coalition (build more carriers)  
Patient Access to Pharmacists' Care Coalition (more Medicare money)  
U.S. Travel Association (increase tax on air travelers)  
NextEra Energy (recipient of \$2 billion in federal subsidies)  
Boeing  
Comcast (allow merger with TimeWarner Cable)

Some of these organizations ran full-page ads both days, or even two ads in the same edition. Some had a specific request, generally for taxpayers' money. Others just ran image-enhancement ads, so Politico's readers in Washington would look kindly on them.

A century ago the Italian economist Vilfredo Pareto explained how the lobbying process works. Imagine, he said, there is a proposal to take one dollar from every citizen and give the total to 30 people. "Those who hope to gain a million a year will know no rest by day and night. They will win newspapers over to their interest by financial inducements and drum up support from all quarters. A discreet hand will warm the palms of needy legislators, even of ministers." On the other hand, he said, those who were threatened with the loss of a dollar would likely never know of the scheme, and even if they did, wouldn't find it worth taking the trouble to protest. Which is how you get to a \$4 trillion federal budget funding everything from – well, from aircraft carriers to pharmacists.

Never underestimate the creativity of the lobbyists and their clients. I wrote recently [in Reason](#) about how General Dynamics, worried that military spending was no longer a boom area, "suddenly ... managed to become the largest contractor to Medicare and Medicaid. 'For traditional defense contractors,' wrote Kaiser Health, 'health care isn't the new oil. It's the new F-35 fighter.'" And now the [Washington Post reports](#) that Lockheed is finding "growth opportunities" in "a different threat to national security: climate change." Those with their eyes on the taxpayers' money will know no rest by day or night.

*David Boaz is the executive vice president of the Cato Institute and has played a key role in the development of the Cato Institute and the libertarian movement. He is the author of [The Libertarian Mind: A Manifesto for Freedom](#) and the editor of [The Libertarian Reader](#).*