



Bitcoin community upset over political lobbying in Washington

By Andrew Moran

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Political lobbying in the United States has become a common practice for most industries and corporations these days. In fact, if you're a private firm that doesn't lobby Republican and Democratic lawmakers then you face the potential scorn of public officials a la Microsoft during the [1990s](#).

The industry is immense as it is worth more than [\\$40 billion](#): the industries of pharmaceutical and health products, [insurance](#) and electric utilities are the top three lobbying spenders – telecommunication services and equipment is at the bottom with only \$785 million in spending.

Over the years, a negative connotation has been attached to political lobbying, an attempt by the richest and most powerful individuals and companies in the United States to gain favor on Capitol Hill, [change](#) the outcome of the game and perhaps even promote legislation that hurts their competitors.

Indeed, political lobbying has become an often criticized service, especially among those who oppose big government, such as [bitcoiners](#).

During the past year, federal governments, central banks and state/provincial governments all over the world have been sending out [consumer alerts and investor advisories](#) highlighting the perceived dangers of the peer-to-peer decentralized digital currency bitcoin. Some governments have even imposed strict regulations and harsh restrictions on the virtual currency.

In order to circumvent any potential prohibitions on bitcoin in the U.S., the Bitcoin Foundation recently attained the services of [Jim Harper](#), a former official at the Cato Institute, to “identify political impediments to bitcoin adoption, and build confidence in bitcoin among governments around the world.” Essentially, it was a measure to revamp their public relations and boost the alternative currency's image.

“I'm excited by the opportunity to help the foundation achieve bitcoin's promise for improving global financial inclusion, strengthening financial privacy for law-abiding consumers, increasing liberty and dignity for people the world over, and providing a stable money supply in countries where monetary instability may threaten prosperity and even peace,” Harper said in a statement.

After the news made technology headlines, the bitcoin community was displeased by the revelation because users believed bitcoin was to be unchained by the shackles of the establishment and unaffiliated with the political process of acquiring politicians. This can be [viewed on Reddit](#), where one user wrote:

“When you’re most desperate for air is when you struggle hardest to breathe. And when you’re desperate to sustain your livelihood, because your hyperinflating state controlled currency is preventing you from living freely, that’s when you start looking for alternatives. The masses will adopt bitcoin but only by necessity. Lobbying doesn’t change that.”

Bitcoin Foundation and Harper responded to these remarks by arguing that the value of bitcoin has diminished on numerous occasions each time a powerful government has applied crushing bank laws against the virtual currency. The whole purpose, they said, was to gain the positive opinion in Congress.

An example of this was the recent bitcoin ATM demonstration on Capitol Hill in which one Congressman actually [purchased \\$10 worth of bitcoins](#). It garnered mainstream publicity on prominent news websites.

One question that bitcoiners have been asking lately is: why did MasterCard hire five bitcoin lobbyists? What is the connection between bitcoin and one of the biggest [credit](#) card companies in the world?

Another potential connection that some are making is that Harper was hired soon before the Federal Election Commission (FEC) announced that it would [permit political campaigns to accept bitcoin](#) contributions up to \$100.

Bitcoiners appear to be becoming disenfranchised with the Bitcoin Foundation. Many have been upset over the past few days because the organization’s board decision to [elect Brock Pierce](#), a former child actor who had been accused of attempting to engage in sexual activity with a minor, to the board.

A large number of bitcoin users publicly announced their resignation on the Foundation website’s forum because of this news.

“This is not the direction this foundation needs to take. The foundation members need to emulate very high moral values and ethics in business and in personal dealings, especially as it involves money. So far, the track record of prominent Bitcoin Foundation members has been abysmal. I know that most foundation members are probably swell people and are not like this. However, the acts of a few, have overshadowed [us](#) all unfortunately,” wrote Patrick Alexander. “I no longer want to be associated with these people... It is my wish that as the Bitcoin Foundation lay in ashes, another organization can rise up from these ashes and take its proper place representing the great idea that is bitcoin.”

Will the Bitcoin Foundation eventually disband or cave into public pressure?