



**House  
Legislative  
Analysis  
Section**

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**RESTRICT LOBBYISTS' DELIVERY  
OF CAMPAIGN CONTRIBUTIONS**

**House Bill 4112 with committee  
amendment  
First Analysis (3-20-96)**

**Sponsor: Rep. Bill Bobier  
Committee: House Oversight and Ethics**

***THE APPARENT PROBLEM:***

In January 1991 the House Republican Policy Committee Task Force on Campaign Finance Reform was organized to review and address a number of issues in campaign finance reform. The task force report, which was issued in July 1991, contained a number of recommendations for reforming existing campaign practices. A number of these recommendations have been enacted into law since then, and further legislation to implement other task force recommendations has been introduced.

***THE CONTENT OF THE BILL:***

The bill would add a new section to the lobbying act (Public Act 472 of 1978) to prohibit lobbyists or lobbyist agents from hand delivering campaign contributions to state legislators in the state Capitol building, in legislative office buildings, or in other buildings in which legislative committees had met or were meeting on that day.

MCL 4.421a

***FISCAL IMPLICATIONS:***

The House Fiscal Agency says that the bill has no fiscal implications. (3-18-96)

***ARGUMENTS:***

***For:***

As many commentators on the contemporary political scene have pointed out, public confidence -- and participation -- in the electoral system has been on the decline for a long time. The perception that elected officials can be, and are, disproportionately influenced or "bought" by wealthy special interest groups represented by influential lobbyists, in particular, has resulted in considerable public cynicism about the reality of electoral politics. The more that the policy-making process can be distanced from the payment of money to policy makers, the greater the chance that

public confidence in the electoral system can be improved. As the House Republican Policy Committee Task Force Report on Campaign Finance Reform pointed out, "Delivering a campaign check in the state Capitol, a legislative office building, or a building in which a legislative committee meets on the day of the meeting can imply a link between the contribution and the recipient legislator's actions. Prohibiting the delivery of contributions in these buildings [would] eliminate the appearance of direct and immediate vote buying." The bill, in one form or another, has received bi-partisan support for a number of years, and it is past time that it be enacted into law.

***Response:***

At best, the bill would merely limit only the most egregious examples of how money apparently can "buy" special interest legislation, but it wouldn't have any real impact on what many people see as the undue influence that monied special interests have on legislation. What's really needed is substantive campaign finance reforms, not cosmetic, "feel good" changes.

***Reply:***

While the change proposed by the bill isn't, perhaps, the most important possible reform to campaign financing, it certainly does address a particularly symbolic act, namely, the physical transfer of money from special interest representatives to legislators in the very physical setting in which legislation is decided.

***POSITIONS:***

Common Cause of Michigan supports the bill. (3-19-96)

Michigan Citizen Action supports the bill. (3-19-96)

■ This analysis was prepared by nonpartisan House staff for use by House members in their deliberations, and does not constitute an official statement of legislative intent.

House Bill 4112 (3-20-96)