



Behind closed doors: Tracking American lobbyists and their effects

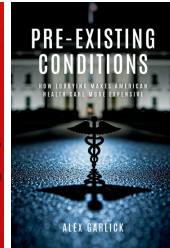
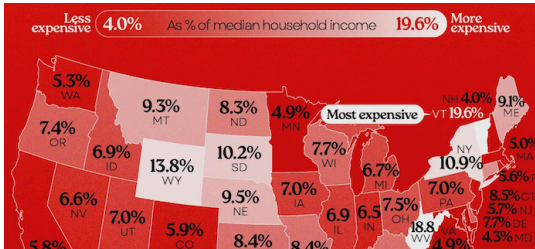
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March 30, 2026

What is lobbying?



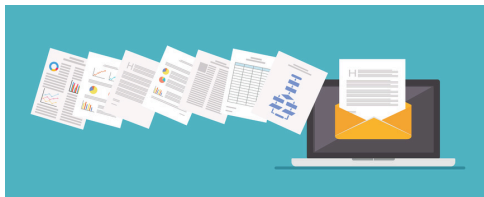
- Interest Groups (businesses, non-profits, governments, citizen-based advocacy organizations) that communicate with public officials or their staff
- Before Congress, White House, bureaucracy, US states

Why do we care?



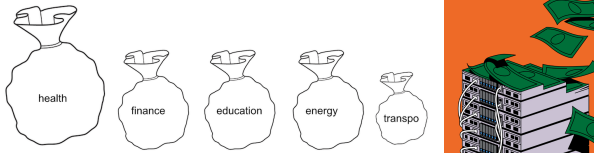
- Lobbying is linked to important policy outcomes, higher health care costs, but we know little about *how* they influence legislation
- Need to measure their presence, growth and communication style

Aims in observing lobbying



- Build an index
 - Where do interest groups lobby? About what?
- How do they communicate?
 - What do experts say in hearings? What type of beliefs do they convey?

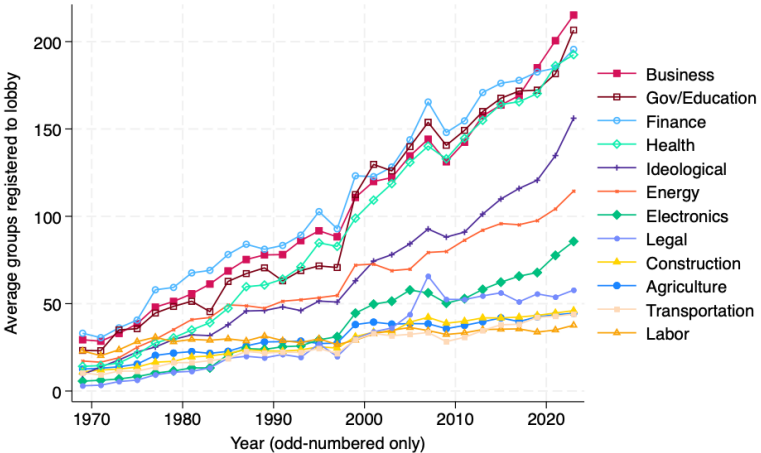
Measuring lobbying



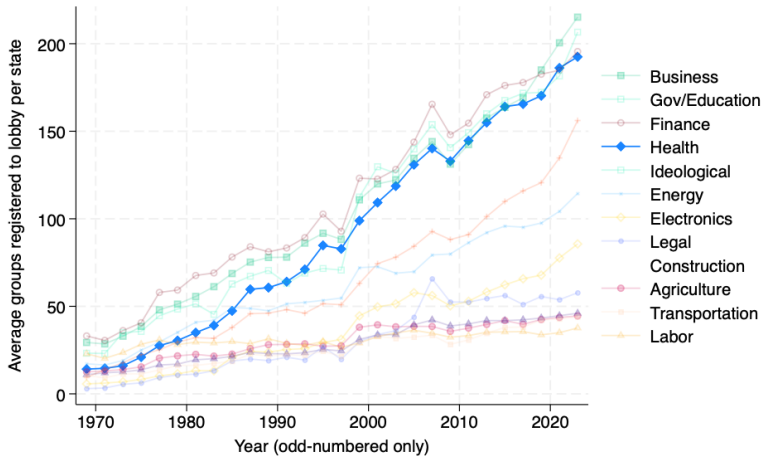
- We collected lobbying registrations (all 50 states, back as far as 1969) to sort by 14 large sectors, and 116 specific industries
- Evolution from bag of words approach to transformers
- Goals of machine learning: cutting edge LLM, but also replicability, reproducibility and transparency

Interest group lobbying over time

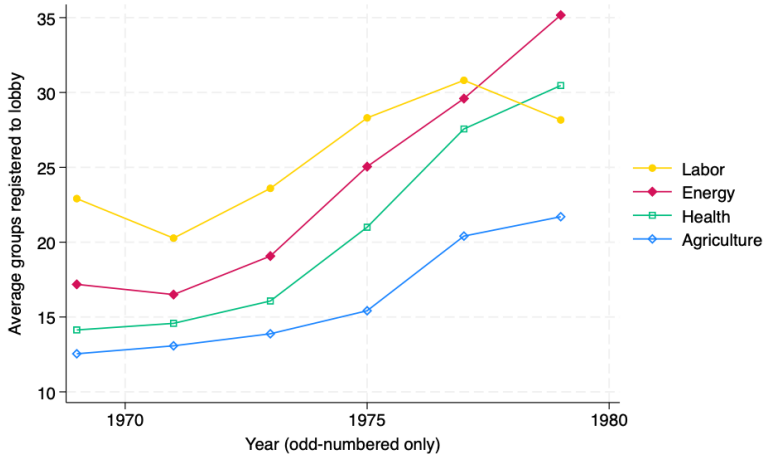
The average size of an industry lobby in states has grown over decades



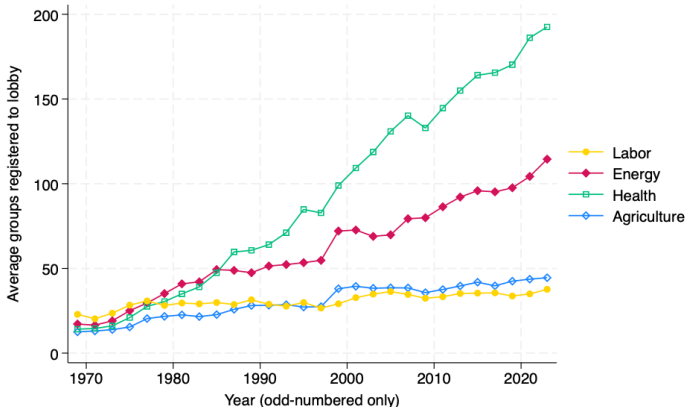
Health care has risen in relative strength



Early years: Labor led



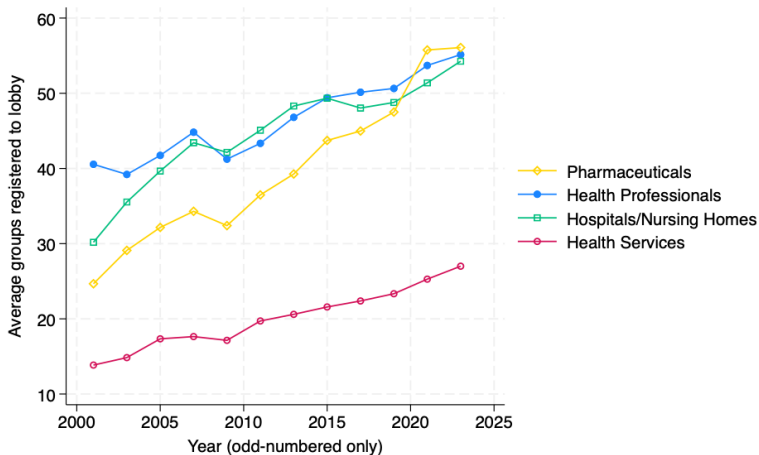
Pivot points as health care outpaces other fields



- Leading lobby: Labor (1969-1977), Energy (1979-1985), Health Care (1987-today)

Looking at industries within sectors

The health care lobby has been led by professionals, then hospitals and pharmaceutical firms



Next steps

What interest groups are testifying before Congress? And what are they saying?



Thank you!

- Questions, comments: alex.garlick@uvm.edu

