

# Experts help lobbyists navigate California Capitol

*Longtime legislative veterans offer lobbyists and advocates tricks of the trade in customized courses.*

SACRAMENTO, CA, UNITED STATES, February 18, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Please contact Steven Harmon to arrange an interview with Ray LeBov, CEO and Founder of Capitol Seminars 916-539-5005



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*Ray LeBov*

Ray LeBov has worked in and around the State Capitol for 50 years, has offered sophisticated counsel to thousands of lobbyists and advocates seeking the secret to working effectively in the legislative arena. But it all comes down to some very simple rules:

1. BE A SPONGE. Listen and observe. You may learn something.
2. TELL THE TRUTH. It's easier to remember than a lie.
3. YOUR WORD IS YOUR BOND. Live up to your end of the

bargain.

Oh, and in case you hadn't heard: A bill is never really dead. Some bills, like cats, have nine lives.

For nearly two decades and for more than 5,000 registrants, LeBov's Capitol Seminars has offered these nuggets of wisdom as part of a roadmap through the often tangled web of action at the Capitol.

Now, LeBov, founder and CEO of Capitol Seminars, is offering customized sessions that fit the needs of individuals, and has cast a wider reach throughout California with Zoom sessions. Courses can run for as little as one hour to as much as multiple days.

Two Capitol veterans, Chris Micheli and Diane Cummins, are expert lecturers for Capitol Seminars on two topic areas: regulatory agency advocacy and budget advocacy.

The course can be useful for wannabe lobbyists who are trying to navigate the Capitol for the first time, or veteran lobbyists looking for new strategies. Others who've taken the course include companies, public agencies, trade unions, public interest groups, and other private sector or

nonprofit organizations, community activists, staffers for legislative committees, or people who want to be better informed citizens and want to learn more about how the legislative process works even if they have no intention of lobbying.

A common mistake among lobbyists is failing to pay attention to detail in taking a bill to its final place — whether to get it approved or killed. LeBov has seen it all in his time at the Capitol -- including 17 years as staff counsel in the California Legislature, including counsel for the Assembly Judiciary Committee. He was a lobbyist for the Judicial Council for 13 years.

"They may know the civics class version of how a bill becomes a law, but the subtleties and nuances of how to carry a bill all the way to a governor's desk are learned through experience," said LeBov. "My seminar provides lobbyists some lessons in those nuances that they can share with legislators. It's all about ensuring a smooth process that serves the public."

LeBov's seminar covers the basics of the legislative process but can get into intricate detail on how to lobby state agencies and the administration, or unique approaches on how to maneuver a state budget, how to stay in compliance with the Fair Political Practices Commission (FPPC), or even on how to handle the media.

The seminar addresses how lobbyists can maximize their effectiveness when it appears their adversaries have more influence than them. It also advises how to form alliances with powerful interests and how clients can work with the news media.

LeBov's Capitol Seminars offers thick packets of everything you wanted to know about the legislative process and more that include:

- A diagram of how to write an effective lobbying letter.
- A guide through a mock Assembly Daily file with annotated remarks.
- A Legislative Counsel's glossary.
  
- Dos and Don't of Effective Testimony, such as:
  - If you are asked a question, answer it as specifically as you can. If you do not understand the question, ask for clarification. If you do not know the answer, say so.
  - Do not read from a written statement. Use of notes may occasionally be necessary, but reading from a prepared text is generally not tolerated, and in any case is less effective.
  - Do not interrupt legislators or other witnesses.
  - Do not take criticism or disagreement personally.

The seminars are provided year-round, but they are especially critical at the outset of legislative

sessions when hordes of new legislators make their way through the early days. For the 2025-26 legislative session, 36 freshmen are learning the ropes in the early months two years after 39 newbies arrived.

This is the time when lobbyists attempt to establish relationships with the new members -- and continue to build on relationships they'd just begun with the previous class.

The most effective advocates will be those able who can offer a deep understanding of and deft touch on how government works. This is where a crash course on effective lobbying can come in handy — for new and veteran lobbyists alike.

Biographical information on Ray LeBov:

LeBov, a Yale University graduate and USC law school alumnus, became a staffer at the Capitol in 1975 before eventually rising to counsel to the Assembly Judiciary Committee, where he served for 12 years. He then became chief lobbyist for the state's Judicial Council for 13 years before retiring in 2004 to start his own lobbying firm. He created Capitol Seminars in 2006.

Steven Harmon  
Harmon Consulting  
+1 916-539-5005  
[email us here](#)

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