

Federal Employee and Federal Sector Union Representatives Right to Lobby



Prepared by the National Weather Service Employees Organization

Since the Lloyd-La Follette Act of 1912, Federal employees have had a statutory right to lobby Congress.



A nearly identical version of the Lloyd-La Follette Act was enacted as part of the Civil Service Reform Act of 1978.
Title 5 U.S.C. section 7211 reads:



“ The right of employees, individually or collectively, to petition Congress or a member of Congress, or to furnish information to either House of Congress, or to a committee or member thereof, may not be interfered with or denied.”



The **Anti-Lobbying Act** does not prohibit direct communications between Federal employees and Congress. Rather, it only prohibits Federal employees from using government time and resources to conduct “grass roots” lobbying campaigns that encourage members of the general public to pressure Congress to support the Administration’s positions. (a/k/a “indirect lobbying”)



Although the Anti-Lobbying Act prohibits Federal employees from using agency time and resources to engage in “grass roots” lobbying campaigns, it does not limit what Federal employees may do on their own time and with their own resources.



The Federal Service Labor Management Relations Statute also specifically protects the right of representatives of Federal sector labor organizations “to present the views of the labor organization to . . . the Congress and other appropriate authorities.”

Union representatives may use “official time” to engage in direct lobbying and to contact the press and the public about matters “affecting terms and conditions of employment” - such as agency staffing and funding.



