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## Interest group urges ban on 'revolving door'

AUSTIN (AP) — With 110 former state legislators and other ex-officials reporting up to \$44 million in income from lobbying, a public interest group says the "revolving door" from government to the lobby should be closed.

The group Texans for Public Justice called for a lifetime ban on paid lobbying jobs by former legislators, the governor and lieutenant governor, along with top state agency officials.

"Stepping through the revolving door can instantly transform a \$7,000-a-year legislator into a \$1 million-a-year lobbyist," Craig McDonald, the group's director, said Monday.

He said allowing officials to become lobbyists raises questions about conflict of interest and erodes public confidence in government.

"When the Legislature functions as a finishing school for future lobbyists, the public loses confidence in the institution," McDonald said.

The group released a study that examined state financial disclosure reports filed by the 1,662 registered lobbyists on 1997 contracts, the last time the Legislature met in regular session. The reports do not require precise values on contracts, instead using a range such as \$10,000 to \$24,999.

The Texans for Public Justice study said lobbyists reported between \$91 million and \$210 million in contracts from 2,304 clients.

Ninety-one lobbyists were former members of the Legislature; 13 were former heads of state government agencies; and six were former legislative officers. Those 110 ex-officials reported 1,159 contracts worth up to \$44 million.

Andrew Wheat, the study's author, said that while the average lobbyist reported income up to

\$126,000, the average financial reported lobbying income was \$400,000.

"That's the premium lobby puts on people with access," he said.

Noting that 25 state federal government restrictions on moving government service into lobbying group made several restrictions.

Chief among them was a time ban on paid lobbying for former lawmakers and top

It also urged a lifetime ban on former agencies or companies lobbying on subjects in which they were significantly involved in two-year general prohibition on lobbying for all senior officials.

McDonald said legislation seems unlikely unless Gov. W. Bush were to "make" this legislative session.

Bush spokeswoman Hughes said the governor has imposed restrictions on staff.

"The governor's strong policy. Members of the governor's office are not allowed to lobby for a year, or one legislative session after they leave. Other members of our staff are not allowed to lobby for the governor's office while they worked on while here," she said.

"That's a strong policy that strikes a balance between the public interest and the fundamentally American principle of freedom to work where one chooses to."

Hughes said Bush's policy is "appropriate for each branch and each leader in the executive branch to set their own policies."

## Settlers' cemetery discovered

OLD RIVER (AP) — An early settler's family cemetery has been discovered on the site of a \$3.2 million road expansion project after a backhoe operator uncovered nails and discolored soil in the shape of two coffins.

The state project to widen FM 1409, about 15 miles east of Houston, has been halted while officials unearth the remains and rebury them elsewhere.

In the meantime, official notice has been printed in the local newspapers to alert any descendants of plantation owner John Carman that the Carman family cemetery has been found.

The cemetery, located on a bluff near a bridge that crosses Old River on FM 1409, is supposed to include five graves with burials from 1850 to 1867, according to historical records.

Evidence of two of those graves has been found and there are plans to search for a third, but two others are believed to have been covered when FM 1409 first was built, said Texas Department of Transportation engineer Ed Seymour.

After being warned of the cemetery's existence by historians, the contractor spent three days before uncovering the discolored soil and nails. No markers have been found.

Plans call for an archaeologist and mortician to exhume the remains and rebury them in another family cemetery nearby that belongs to man's brother-in-law, Dees and G. Hartman, a German immigrant and physician.

Local historian John Carman was born in Tennessee and had a plantation in Louisiana before moving to Old River. Records indicate he had nine children with his wife and four with his second wife.

After fighting in the Mexican War, Carman relocated to Harris and Newton counties. He died in 1859 and was buried in the Old River cemetery in Monticello, Texas.

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Where: Wehner, Room 133

Who: Students interested in exploring a career in sales

Dress: Business Casual

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