

## Confessions of an Ex-Legislator

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Visitors to the Ohio General Assembly are given a pamphlet entitled “How a Bill Becomes Law.” After just one tumultuous week in the District (Cleveland Heights, East Cleveland, University Heights), a colleague and I decided that we would write our own version. Based on *realpolitik*, ours would be entitled: “How a Bill (Really) Becomes Law—and Why.”

Among other things we might have revealed—probably to a less than attentive public—were (1) the pervasive influence for good or ill of lobbyists generally and of certain lobbyists in particular: (2) the coercive influence of campaign financing on the legislative process: (3) the accretion of political power to those with seniority not only within the legislature but in the bureaucracy and in the lobbying corps as well: (4) the “culture” of compromise or “get along/go along”: (5) the absence of any discernible philosophy within either caucus along the continuum from “conservative” to “liberal”: (6) the existence of legislative bottlenecks completely controlled by legislative leadership giving interest groups friendly to leadership significant control over the legislative agenda: and, finally, (7) the marked shift over time of a legislator’s allegiance from a local to an institutional Columbus “constituency.”

While most of these things have positives well as negative impacts, the public interest would be better served if the electorate took more of an interest in how a bill *really* becomes law—and why.