

Summer, 2009

# The NewsPAGR

**Pennsylvania Association for Government Relations**

**Post Office Box 116 Harrisburg, Pennsylvania 17108  
(717) 540-4391 Fax (717) 657-9708 www.pagr.org**

**SAVE THE DATE!**

## Lobbypalooza 2009

**Friday, September 18, 2009  
Felicit Garden Resort & Spa  
Harrisburg, PA**

This year's educational forum will focus on the new lobbying regulations & manual

*Registration materials will be available on our website.*



**Last Chance  
to purchase  
2009/2010  
Legislative  
Directories**

PAGR ordered extra copies.

If you would like some,  
contact Christine at the PAGR office.

**They will be sold on a first come basis.  
Cost is \$7.50 each for PAGR members.**

## THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

*by Peter Calcara*



### Campaign Finance Reform: Is it time?

In an effort to curtail exorbitant spending on political campaigning in the state, Rep. Dave Levdansky announced his intention to introduce reform legislation at a press conference June 2<sup>nd</sup>. This comes after what is sure to have been record-breaking election cycle in 2008, since – according to Levdansky – 2006 saw \$57 million spent by House and Senate candidates. His plan would subject campaign contributions to explicit limits and make the overall election process more transparent to the public.

Characterizing Pennsylvania's current system of political fundraising as the "Wild West," Levdansky correctly observed, "This free-for-all style of raising money has eroded public confidence and results in the legislative process being tainted before an elected official is ever elected into office."

He continued by saying, "Exorbitant campaign fundraising deters potential candidates and requires those running for office to spend too much time in the mad dash to raise cash to fund their campaigns. Until we make the reforms outlined in my bill, the legislative process will continue to be compromised."

Specifically, Levdansky's yet-to-be introduced legislation would ensure that a candidate running for General Assembly, Court of Common Pleas, or any county or local office, could not receive contributions totaling greater than \$500 from any one individual over the course of an entire election cycle. This provision alone would alter the landscape of political fundraising.

*(continued on page 2)*

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**'Is this the appropriate  
time for the General  
Assembly to change its  
"Wild West"  
mentality...?'**

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**Meeting Notice**

**Monday October 5, 2009**

**11:30—1:00 pm**

**Firehouse Restaurant**

**Third Floor**

**606 N. 2nd Street • Harrisburg**

Our guest will

**Rep. David Levdansky**

*ALL MEMBERS ARE FREE!  
PLEASE RSVP BY April 3 TO  
717-540-4391 OR INFO@PAGR.ORG.  
THANK YOU.*

**2009 Board of Directors**

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***The President’s Message continued from cover:***

Similarly, contributions made to either statewide office candidates or campaign committees would be curtailed at \$2400 per individual – a limit established in the Federal Election Campaign Act. His legislation would also limit political action committee contributions.

To promote greater transparency in the process as a whole, the legislation would expand the Election Code to require a business entity, which receives a state contract totaling \$50,000 or more, to submit an itemized list of all political contributions by officers, directors, associates, partners, limited partners, or individual owners -- and in some cases, families of these individuals, as well. Reports would also have to list the amount awarded by the contract and describe the service the business entity has been contracted to provide and the project location, where applicable.

Other key provisions include prohibiting campaign funds from being used for personal use; requiring PACs to make evident the name of any sponsoring organization; discontinuing contributions from business partnerships; increasing fines for the late campaign finance filing to \$20 per day, with no limit to the total accumulated thereof; and requiring General Assembly candidates to file two additional campaign expense reports. Names, addresses, and employers would also need to be listed on all campaign expense reports for contributors of more than \$100, as well as for contributors raising \$1,000 or more from a single fundraising event.

At its May meeting, the PAGR Board of Directors discussed this issue at length; and, while we came away with no definitive position, the Board concurred that PAGR must play an active role in this debate, which will in the very least include educating lawmakers and our own members once legislation is introduced and gains traction.

PAGR’s Public Affairs Committee will begin reviewing the Levdansky bill once language becomes available. At the same time, I encourage PAGR members to independently review the legislation and provide the Board with their feedback, concerns, and questions.

In addition, Rep. Levdansky has been invited to our Oct. 5 Membership meeting to further elaborate upon his proposal, as well as to answer your questions directly.

If enacted, Levdansky’s legislation will redefine political fundraising, no doubt significantly impacting the majority of PAGR members, as well as their clients and/or association members.

A question that PAGR members should be considering leading up to the Oct. 5<sup>th</sup> meeting on behalf of their organization and the clients or members they represent is this: Is this the appropriate time for the General Assembly to change its “Wild West” mentality and seriously consider reforming the way in which candidates fund their state and local campaigns?

More importantly, perhaps, are we – the regulated community – ready to rethink the way in which we invest in them, as well? ☼