

## GET THIS JOB

# Lobbyist



## Paul A. Miller

### Miller/Wenhold Capitol Strategies LLC

Paul A. Miller is the president of a small lobbying firm, Miller/Wenhold Capitol Strategies LLC, in Fairfax, Va. "I currently live in Washington," he said, "but I still call Racine home as I spend a lot of time there still."

**AGE:** 37.

**EDUCATION:** Miller earned his Bachelor of Science degree from the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater.

**BRIEF WORK HISTORY:** "I started my career by working for Wisconsin Congressman Les Aspin. In 1996 I ran for the Wisconsin State Legislature. I have worked for a number of trade associations as their lobbyist. I currently run a small lobbying firm. In addition to my work, I have spent two years as president of the national association for the lobbying profession. I have traveled internationally to help other countries with creating lobbying rules for their government. I most recently created and implemented the first-ever Lobbying Certificate Program for our profession."

**MAIN RESPONSIBILITIES:** "The simplest way to describe my job is one part teacher, one part lawyer. I hold neither license nor certificates. I am a lawyer in the sense that I am hired to represent my client's interests. I represent small businesses. I represent hospital administrators. I represent the silver industry. And I represent a group trying to save big cats. My job in this regard is to ensure that our government knows about their issues, and we either work to pass legislation or rules to help them, or we try and defeat rules that would negatively impact them.

"To do this I must act as a teacher in that members of Congress and their staff cannot be expected to be experts in every issue area. Last year more than 5,000 bills were introduced. You can bet that each of those bills had people who lobbied for or against the issue. My job (and the real value we offer members of Congress) is to provide them with information on the issue and its impacts."

**EDUCATION/TRAINING REQUIRED:** "None specifically required, but working on Capitol Hill does give you a better grasp of how the government really works. I believe our profession does need higher standards. This is why I pushed for the Lobbying Certificate Program. I would like us at some point to have actual licenses to practice this profession. That will take a lot of time and legal maneuvering to accomplish, but I think it would be good for our profession."

**SALARY RANGE:** "It is all over the board. It depends on who and where you work."

**TYPE OF HOURS HE WORKS:** "It's not all the glamour you read about. I'm up by 5 a.m. and work usually until 6 p.m. On a couple of nights a week, my work day doesn't end until 9 or 10 p.m. It all depends on what Congress is voting on."

**BEST PART OF THE JOB:** "The people you meet and the issues we work on. Washington is a very unique city and one that offers you a lot. My job is not work at all. I love what I do and wouldn't change for the world — no matter how much abuse we take in the press."

**WORST PART OF THE JOB:** "Listening to the comments about how corrupt lobbyists are. These are naive statements from people who don't understand the value of lobbying and who never met a lobbyist. I hear comments how we should ban lobbyists. If you do, who will look out for the children, elderly? Who will help pass legislation to help kids with autism? Who will help get funding for cancer research, AIDS research?

"Lobbyists are a critical part of our government whether people want to believe it or not. We are not corrupt. Like I have always said, you can't legislate morality and like any profession, we have those who will break the law regardless of the rules. That doesn't make us all bad, just like it doesn't make all teachers bad when one teacher abuses a student. It doesn't make all journalists bad when one lies. It doesn't make all priests bad when one abuses our trust. I could go on and on, but I think you get the point.

"The reason we have such a bad reputation is because lobbying is not widely understood outside of Washington."

**BIGGEST SOURCE OF ON-THE-JOB STRESS:** "The behind-the-scenes work. Just when you think you are about to pass something or kill a bill, something happens and you are back to square one. This town is filled with so much uncertainty. This is a stress, but is also exciting. It's a constant chess game, which I love."

**HOW HE UNWINDS:** "I play basketball and coach youth basketball. Both of these for me help me think about my day and allows me to release the stress I've built up."

**HOW SOMEONE ELSE CAN GET THIS JOB:** "There is no one path to getting a job in the lobbying profession. When I first started, people told me I had to go to law school. I didn't and I'm doing just fine. Then it was you needed to work on Capitol Hill. I believe this helps, but it's not a requirement. Now we are seeing people with sales experience enter our profession. Lobbying is a changing profession. I expect big changes in the next few years. It is definitely a career I'd recommend."

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