



Fiscal Note

Legislative Council Staff

Nonpartisan Services for Colorado’s Legislature

SB 26-147: LOBBYIST REGULATION

Prime Sponsors:

Sen. Cutter; Pelton R.
Rep. Johnson; Froelich

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Fiscal note status: The fiscal note reflects the introduced bill. Due to time constraints, this analysis is preliminary and will be updated following further review and any additional information received.

Summary Information

Overview. The bill modifies lobbyist registration and disclosure requirements for both private and state agency lobbyists.

Types of impacts. The bill is projected to affect the following areas on an ongoing basis:

- State Revenue
- State Expenditures

Appropriations. For FY 2026-27, the bill requires an appropriation of \$140,400 to the Department of State.

**Table 1
State Fiscal Impacts**

Type of Impact	Budget Year FY 2026-27	Out Year FY 2027-28
State Revenue	\$0	\$0
State Expenditures (Cash Funds)	\$140,400	\$0
Transferred Funds	\$0	\$0
Change in TABOR Refunds	\$0	\$0
Change in State FTE	0.0 FTE	0.0 FTE

Summary of Legislation

The bill modifies registration and disclosure requirements for private and state agency lobbyists.

Private Lobbyist

Under current law, a lobbyist may be either a professional lobbyist or a volunteer lobbyist. A professional lobbyist must register with and submit monthly disclosure statement to the Department of State (DOS), but the DOS may waive any fee for not-for-profit organizations.

The bill creates two new categories of lobbyists and changes who is or may be subject to lobbyist registration and disclosure requirements. Specifically, the bill:

- creates a new category of lobbyist—advocacy day participants—for individuals who lobby on behalf of a person without pay during that person’s advocacy day. A person organizing an advocacy day must register for an advocacy day with the General Assembly, in accordance with the joint legislative rules. Advocacy day participants are exempt from the lobbyist registration and disclosure requirements of the DOS;
- creates a new category of lobbyists—nonprofit advocates—for individuals who lobby exclusively for a nonprofit entity, and only as an incidental duty of the person’s employment with the nonprofit. Nonprofit advocates are still subject to lobbyist registration and disclosure requirements. The new category limits and clarifies who may be eligible for a registration fee exemption at the discretion of the DOS;
- exempts the employees of clients who are assisting a professional lobbyist from registration and disclosure requirements; and
- requires volunteer lobbyists to attest to the General Assembly that they are not being paid.

State Agency Lobbyists

Under current law, legislative liaisons for executive state departments are subject to distinct registration and disclosure requirements. Each principal executive branch agency must designate a legislative liaison, who must register with the DOS and disclose monthly any expenditure of public funds used for lobbying, and an estimate of the time spent on or preparing for lobbying elected officials. The bill requires that liaisons also disclose the agency position on legislation they lobby for, against, or amend, and update that disclosure within 72 hours of any change.

Under current law, only the principal executive branch agencies and institutions of higher education are subject to these registration and disclosure requirements. This bill adds the Judicial Branch, and the Governor’s and Lieutenant Governor’s offices to the agencies that are required to designate and register lobbyists, and make monthly disclosures of lobbying activity and positions.

State Revenue

The bill may decrease revenue to DOS from lobbyist registration fees and may increase revenue to DOS from business filing fees, as discussed below. This revenue is subject to TABOR.

Lobbyist Registration Fees

If fewer lobbyists register with DOS as a result of the bill, revenue from registration fees will decrease. The current fee is \$40 per year but the impact to revenue cannot be estimated at this time since the number of current professional lobbyists who may become exempt from the fee as a nonprofit advocate or under other provisions of the bill is not known and will depend on individual decisions and business practices.

Business Filing Fees

Under current law, the DOS is authorized to adjust fees so that the revenue generated approximates its direct and indirect costs. The DOS is primarily funded through business filing fees. To cover the costs described in the State Expenditures section below, fees may need to be raised to cover all or some of the costs of this bill. The fees affected and the actual amount of fee charges will be set administratively by the DOS based on cash fund balance, total program costs, and the estimated number of business activities subject to fees.

State Expenditures

The bill increases state expenditures in the Department of State by \$140,000 in FY 2026-27 only. These costs are paid from the Department of State Cash Fund, are summarized below. The bill also affects workload in all executive branch agencies, the Judicial Department, and in the offices of the Governor and Lieutenant Governor. These impacts are discussed below.

Department of State

In FY 2026-27 only, DOS will have \$140,000 in computer programming costs to update its lobbyist registration and reporting system. These updates will require about 1,080 hours of developer time. The costs are paid from the Department of State Cash Fund. Workload in DOS will increase to enforce the requirements of the bill. Since DOS already enforces lobbyist requirements, this impact is expected to be minimal.

Legislative Department

The bill minimally impacts the Legislative Department. Workload will minimally increase to adopt rules concerning advocacy days, receive attestations from volunteer lobbyists, and update information and resources for lobbyists. The bill may also reduce the number of volunteer lobbyists who register with the Chief Clerk of the House of Representatives. These impacts are minimal and no change to appropriations is required.

Judicial Department, Governor's Office, and Board of Higher Education

Workload will minimally increase for lobbyists from the Judicial Department, Governor's office, and institutions and governing boards of higher education to meet the additional registration and disclosure requirements currently placed on state departments. This estimate assumes that the required estimate of the time spent on or preparing for lobbying can be an estimate of time spent on these activities and does not require a detail time-logging or tracking system.

All State Departments

Workload will minimally increase for all state departments to disclose their position on any legislation they lobby on and update that position within 72 hours of any change.

Effective Date

The bill takes effect 90 days following adjournment of the General Assembly sine die, assuming no referendum petition is filed.

State Appropriations

For FY 2026-27, the bill requires an appropriation of \$140,400 from the Department of State Cash Fund to the Department of State.

Departmental Difference

The Governor's Office estimates that the bill requires \$369,516 in FY 2026-27 and \$275,616 in future years. This includes programming costs and 2.3 FTE. The Governor Office estimate assumes that the office will require a new hour tracking system and that all of the governor's staff are required to track any time spent on legislation. The fiscal note assumes that precise hour tracking is not required, and that only individuals directly engaged in lobbying elected officials are required to track lobbying efforts, not support staff, or other employees of an agency that do not directly engage in lobbying.

State and Local Government Contacts

Administrative Services for Independent
Agencies

Alternate Defense Council

Bridges

Child Welfare

Commission On Judicial Discipline

Governor

Higher Education

Independent Ethics Commission

Judicial

Legislative Council Staff

Office of Public Guardianship

Office of the Child's Representative

Office of the Child Protection Ombudsman

Office of the Respondent Parents' Counsel

Public Defender

Secretary of State