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Front cover photograph of Minnesota State Capitol

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This Handbook is intended to provide general information for those interested in state legal requirements affecting lobbying and campaign finance. Because the facts in each situation vary, the legal authorities discussed in this publication may not be applicable to your specific circumstances. Consequently, readers of this Handbook are urged to consult their own attorneys concerning specific legal questions.

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Introduction

§ 1:1 Chapter author SCG Legal by David E. Poisson

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§ 1:2 Overview

This 2018 volume of Lobbying, PACs and Campaign Finance: 50 State Handbook, the publication’s 24th annual edition, summarizes lobbying, governmental ethics, and campaign finance laws of the 50 states and the United States, and demonstrates how states and the federal government regulate outlets through which money influences legislation, government, and elections. Chapters are written by attorneys in the independent member

[Section 1:1]

*David E. Poisson became CEO of SCG Legal on May 1, 2011. Previously, he was of counsel to the law firm of Howe, Anderson & Steyer in Washington, DC. He was elected in 2005 to the first of two terms in the Virginia House of Delegates, where he served as deputy minority whip. Mr. Poisson was also legislative director and chief counsel to the late U.S. Senator Terry Sanford of North Carolina and later served as chief of staff and counsel to then-U.S. Representative, now Assistant Senate Minority Leader, Richard J. Durbin of Illinois. He received his Ph.D. and J.D. from the University of Arizona and his bachelor’s and master’s degrees from the University of Massachusetts at Amherst.
firms of SCG Legal, many of whom act as lobbyists for clients as well as advise on compliance with the laws discussed in this publication. These laws are frequently amended, litigated, and interpreted, and readers should confirm that statutory language and judicial interpretations are current before relying on them.

The chapters reflect how state and federal judicial and legislative bodies try to balance constitutionally protected First Amendment rights of expression and association against concerns about the appearance or reality of corruption in legislation, government, or elections. Of these issues, campaign finance matters are most frequently before the courts.

As indicated in the pages that follow, interpretation of laws regulating lobbying, governmental ethics, and campaign finance is an ongoing process, yielding an endless stream of new material for future annual editions of this Handbook.

* * *

The Handbook’s chapters use similar subject headings for each jurisdiction according to the following outline to facilitate the summarization and comparison of state and federal laws.

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