

February 26, 2025

Common Cause MN is a nonpartisan grassroots organization working to create an open, transparent, and accountable government. Although we have a C4 arm, we have never endorsed a political party or candidate. Our base is over 1.5M nationwide and we have offices in 28 states, I lead the MN office. We have more than 26,000 members in MN. Despite belonging to various party affiliations, or not being affiliated, the one thing they've come together to do is support our work ensuring our Republic's democracy is safeguarded, and everyone's vote counts.

We are grateful to Senators Klein and Marty for creating space for this discussion on the need to stop the revolving door between politics and lobbying.

We are asking members of this committee to support SF567. SF567 strategically gets to the problem and moves a solution that members of our base, allies, and democracy partners think most effectively centers the need to protect the integrity of the legislative process.

One of the most concerning threats to the integrity, and confidence, of our legislative process is the increasing "revolving door" between politicians and lobbying jobs with special interest – the same special interest entities that may have moved bills in committees they sat on. Right now, too many politicians leave and immediately take up jobs as lobbyists gaining unfair influence in the very laws and policies, they once helped shape.

This practice undermines the trust we place in our elected officials and weakens the public's confidence in the legislative process. When politicians can simply walk out the door and into a well-paid lobbying job without any cooling-off period, they carry with them years of insider knowledge and access to key decision-makers. The result? The public loses out, while those with money and power gain an unfair advantage.

Our elected representatives should not be allowed to use their time in office as a stepping stone to lucrative lobbying careers, where they can wield their influence for private interests rather than the public good. Without a cooling-off period, these former officials can leverage relationships and knowledge gained in office, giving special interests an outsized voice in our political system—while leaving everyday Minnesotans at a disadvantage.

Allowing this to continue has far-reaching effects. It encourages a culture of self-serving politics, where public office is seen as a pathway to private gain, rather than a responsibility to serve the people. It leads to policy decisions that benefit powerful lobbyists and donors, rather than the needs of regular citizens. And most importantly, it erodes the very foundation of a democracy that should be built on fairness, transparency, and accountability.

Minimally, I'm sure you will agree that we should see a cooling-off period of at least four years to ensure both chambers have gone through 1 election cycle. That means that there would be an opportunity for each chamber to have some change in committee assignments and possibly even leadership structure. It works to level the playing field and neutralize the unfair advantage they've had all these years under an unchecked revolving door of politics and lobbying. This simple change will help restore faith in our legislative process and ensure that politicians remain accountable to the people they were elected to serve.

Our Republic and democracy are stronger when elected officials are truly working for constituents, not for personal gain or special interests. SF567 works to protect the integrity, and confidence, of our legislative process. Members, please vote “yes” on SF567.

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