



New York State Joint Commission on Public Ethics

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Joint Commission on Public Ethics Releases 2019 Annual Report

Spending on State and Local Lobbying Hits All-Time High of More Than \$298 Million

ALBANY – (July 30, 2020) – The Joint Commission on Public Ethics (“Commission”) today released its [2019 Annual Report](#), featuring highlights of its work over the past year, which include the promulgation of comprehensive lobbying regulations, the launch of a new Lobbying Application, and three settlement agreements for alleged Lobbying Act violations related to donations to the former Campaign for One New York. The year featured a record \$298.1 million in total lobbying expenditures, including \$254.9 in compensation to lobbyists. These two figures represent increases over 2018 levels of \$36 million and \$20.6 million, respectively.

The list of top 10 highest spending lobbying entities for 2019 was once again dominated by traditionally active industries and interests related to budget/appropriations, real estate, general business, and health care. Taxpayers for an Affordable NY, Inc. took the top spot, reporting more than \$3.9 million in lobbying spending. Last year’s top spending entity, Uber Technology & Its Affiliates, fell out of the top 10 highest spenders, reporting 78 percent less in 2019, with \$1.3 million in lobbying expenditures. Notably, both Taxpayers for an Affordable NY, Inc. and Uber Technology & Its Affiliates are members of the Fix Our Transit coalition, which reported nearly \$1.1 million in lobbying spending. The top ten list this year featured two groups filing for the first time in 2019: New Yorkers United for Justice and

Tobacco-Free Kids Action Fund. Previous top 10 entities 1199 SEIU Labor Management Initiatives, Inc. Health Care Education Project, Greater New York Hospital Association, Inc., and New York State Laborers-Employers Cooperation and Trust were also among the top 10. The complete list is at the end of this press release and within the report itself.

The list of top retained lobbyists was again led by Kasirer LLC, followed by Brown & Weinraub, PLLC, Bolton St. Johns, LLC, Greenburg Traurig, LLP and Ostroff Associates. Pitta Bishop & Del Giorno LLC dropped off of the top 10 list of firms in 2019, while Davidoff Hutcher & Citron, LLP entered the list. The largest payment to a lobbyist by a single client, \$2,863,525, was made by 1199 SEIU Labor Management Initiatives, Inc. Healthcare Education Project to SKDKnickerbocker LLC, largely for reimbursement to the lobbyist for media buys related to health issues.

Two major Commission initiatives in 2019, the promulgation of comprehensive lobbying regulations and the launch of its new Lobbying Application, were both designed to provide more specificity in the public disclosure of lobbying activity, including the governmental officials or bodies lobbied, the particular focus of the effort (i.e., the subject matter or whether it was a governmental action), as well as the true beneficiaries of those efforts. The regulations also update and simplify certain reporting requirements, providing more clarity about disclosure requirements related to consultants, direct lobbying, grassroots lobbying, sources of funding, and reportable business relationships.

The Lobbying Application captures the information required by the new regulations, and also helps to streamline the filing process, including consolidating reporting for filers who are considered both a lobbyist and a client by simplifying and eliminating duplicative reporting requirements. A new and improved Public Search Query also provides more public transparency by allowing users to more easily create their own customized searches for lobbyist and client organizations, individual lobbyists, subjects lobbied, and the targets of lobbying.

By providing more detailed expense categories to filers in a user-friendly drop-down format, the new Lobbying Application also shined a brighter light on how lobbyists and clients spent their money in support of their lobbying efforts. Expenses related to social events increased

by over 303 percent to nearly \$3.4 million in 2019 (up from only \$842,078 in 2018). For the second consecutive year, advertising expenses were also up, with more than \$16.8 million reported, representing an increase of over 12 percent from 2018.

The complete source data filed by lobbyists and their clients for 2019 was also published to the Commission's website, jcope.ny.gov, today, and can be found [here](#). Tables summarizing some of the 2019 lobbying data highlights appear at the end of this release. Additionally, Public Search Query results can be downloaded as spreadsheets for further analysis.

To access the 'Public Data' page, select the 'About' main menu from the JCOPE website and then select 'Public Data' from the drop-down menu. From the Public Data page, access the Public Search Query from the 'Lobbying Data on Demand' section of the page. Scroll down to the 'Alphabetical and other Reports' section of the Public Data page to access the Lobbying Reports.

The report also highlights some of the Commission's achievements and successes in the areas key to its mission – education, regulation, and enforcement activities.

During the year, the Education Unit conducted numerous ethics training programs for financial disclosure statement filers, State agency ethics officers, and lobbying entities, gearing such outreach to the unique needs of agencies and those subject to the Commission's jurisdiction. Commission staff also handled hundreds of requests for advice and guidance. The Financial Disclosure Statement ("FDS") Review Unit conducted more than 1,200 reviews that generated hundreds of findings to improve the accuracy and clarity of the statements filed by State officials and employees and members of the Legislature and legislative employees.

Commission Investigations staff actively initiated and continued to pursue investigations and enforcement actions for alleged violations of Public Officers Law and the Lobbying Act. Two-hundred nine investigative matters were processed, 17 fifteen-day letters were issued, 12 investigations commenced, and 21 matters were settled in 2019; investigations and enforcement actions (some of which may have begun prior to 2019) resulted in penalties and settlement payments of more than \$172,500 for the year.

As noted above, the Commission reached settlement agreements with three clients of lobbyists over alleged Lobbying Act violations related to donations made by them to the Campaign for One New York (“CONY”), a not-for-profit corporation formed in late 2013 by three former campaign officials of City of New York Mayor Bill De Blasio (“the Mayor”) from which the Mayor sought and obtained support for his legislative and policy objectives. These settlement agreements were the latest arising out of an investigation beginning in 2015 in which the Commission learned of lobbyists and clients of lobbyists who, while actively lobbying New York City officials, including the Mayor, donated to CONY at the request of either the Mayor or Ross Offinger, Treasurer at CONY and the Mayor’s campaign treasurer. In addition, the Commission settled a number of alleged Public Officers Law violations, including against former state Senator Marc Panepinto and former Assembly Member Angela Wozniak related to inappropriate sexual conduct and abuse of office involving their employees. In all, settlement agreements in 2019 included more than \$170,000 in fines or other payments to resolve the matters. More information on all investigations and enforcement actions can be found in the Investigations and Enforcement section of the report itself.

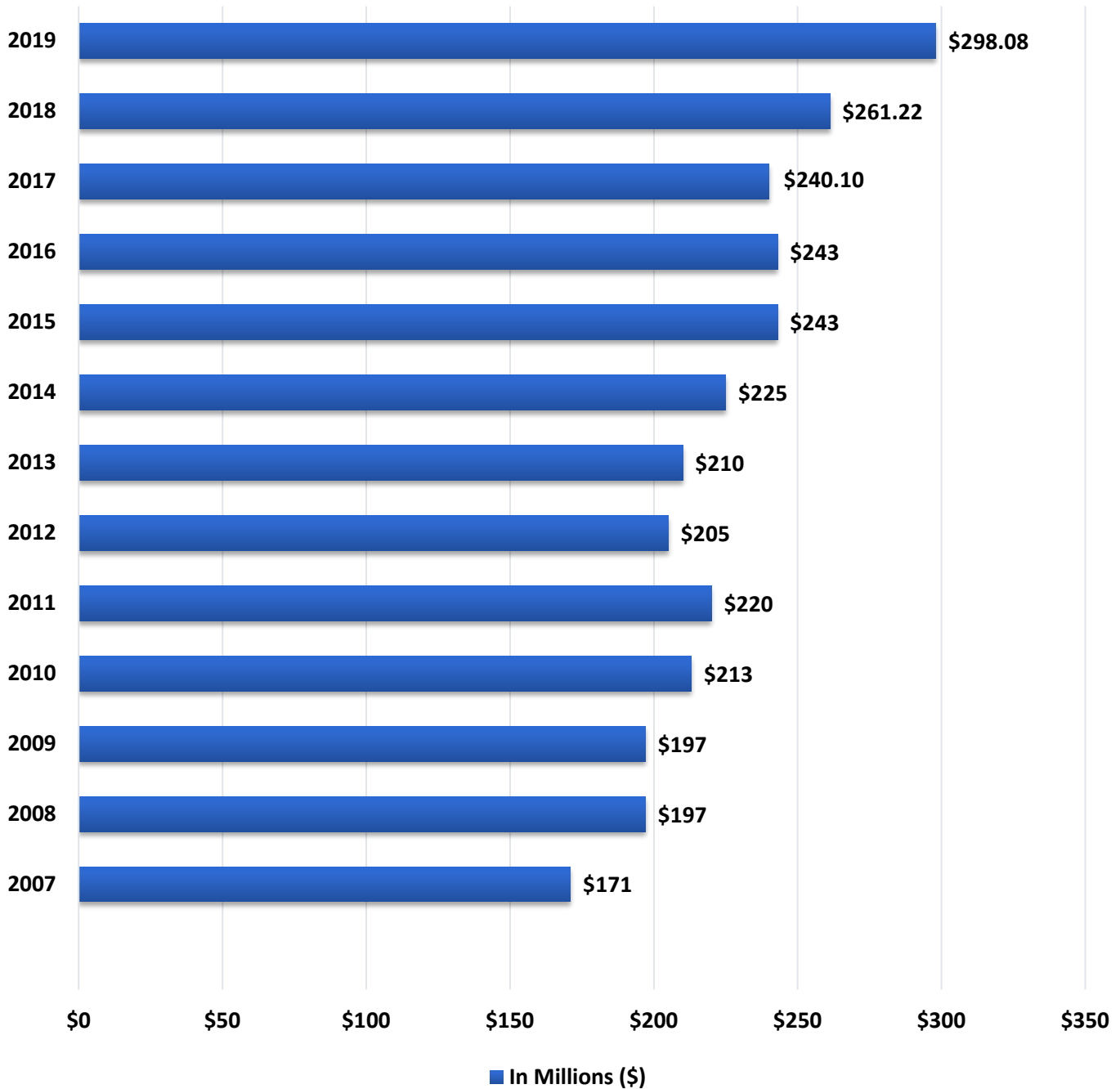
2019 Lobbying Data Highlights

The following tables summarize additional lobbying data.

LOBBYING SPENDING

Year-over-year comparison on Total \$ spent on Lobbying

\$298,078,705 for 2019



Based on the combined figures of compensation and expenses reported on Client Semi-Annual and Public Corporation Reports.

LOBBYING ENTITIES BY TOTAL SPENDING

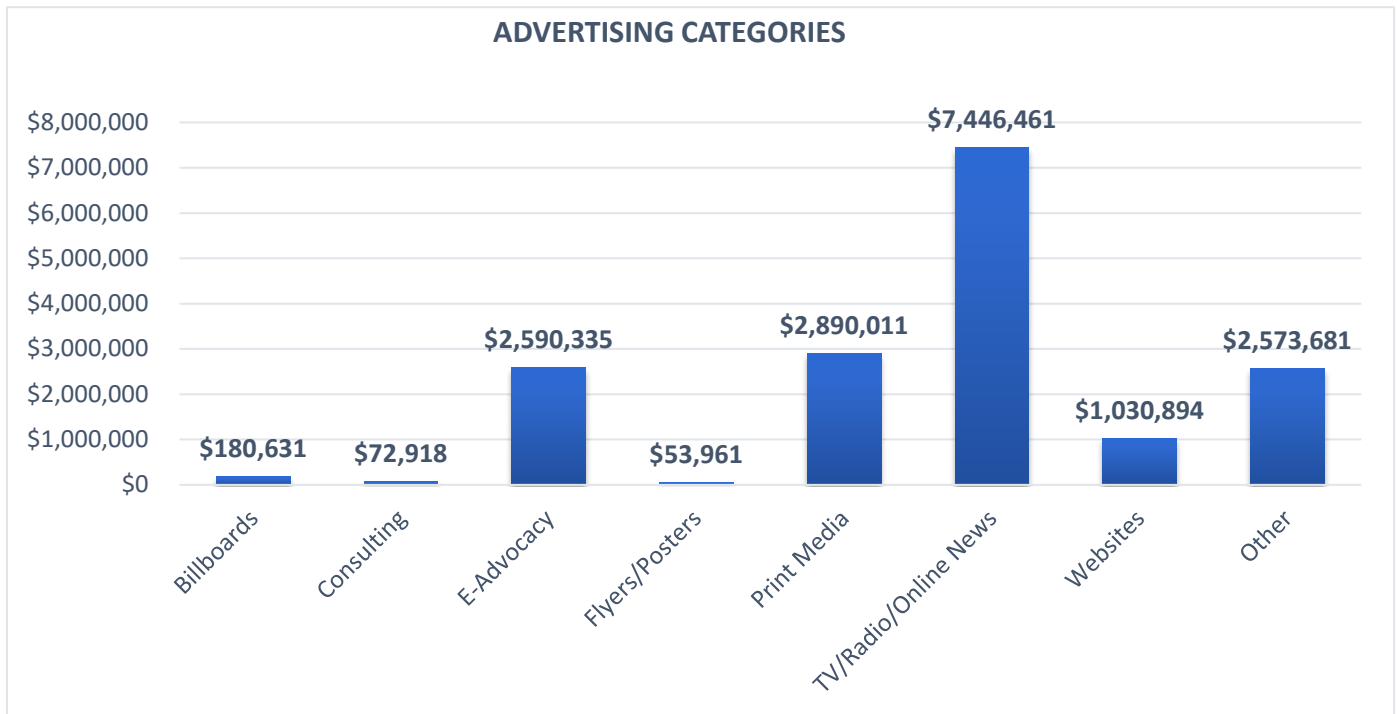
Clients and Public Corporations Ranked by Compensation and Expenses

CLIENT	AMOUNT
TAXPAYERS FOR AN AFFORDABLE NY, INC.	\$3,906,987
1199SEIU LABOR MANAGEMENT INITIATIVES, INC. HEALTHCARE EDUCATION PROJECT	\$3,043,525
GREATER NEW YORK HOSPITAL ASSOCIATION, INC.	\$3,018,220
NEW YORKERS UNITED FOR JUSTICE (Coalition)	\$2,404,697
NEW YORK STATE LABORERS-EMPLOYERS COOPERATION AND EDUCATION TRUST	\$2,173,702
TOBACCO-FREE KIDS ACTION FUND	\$2,097,470
SUCCESS ACADEMY CHARTER SCHOOLS, INC.	\$1,572,675
COALITION FOR NEW YORK'S FUTURE, INC.	\$1,507,258
UNITED TEACHERS (NYS)	\$1,460,606
TRIAL LAWYERS ASSOCIATION (NYS)	\$1,447,960

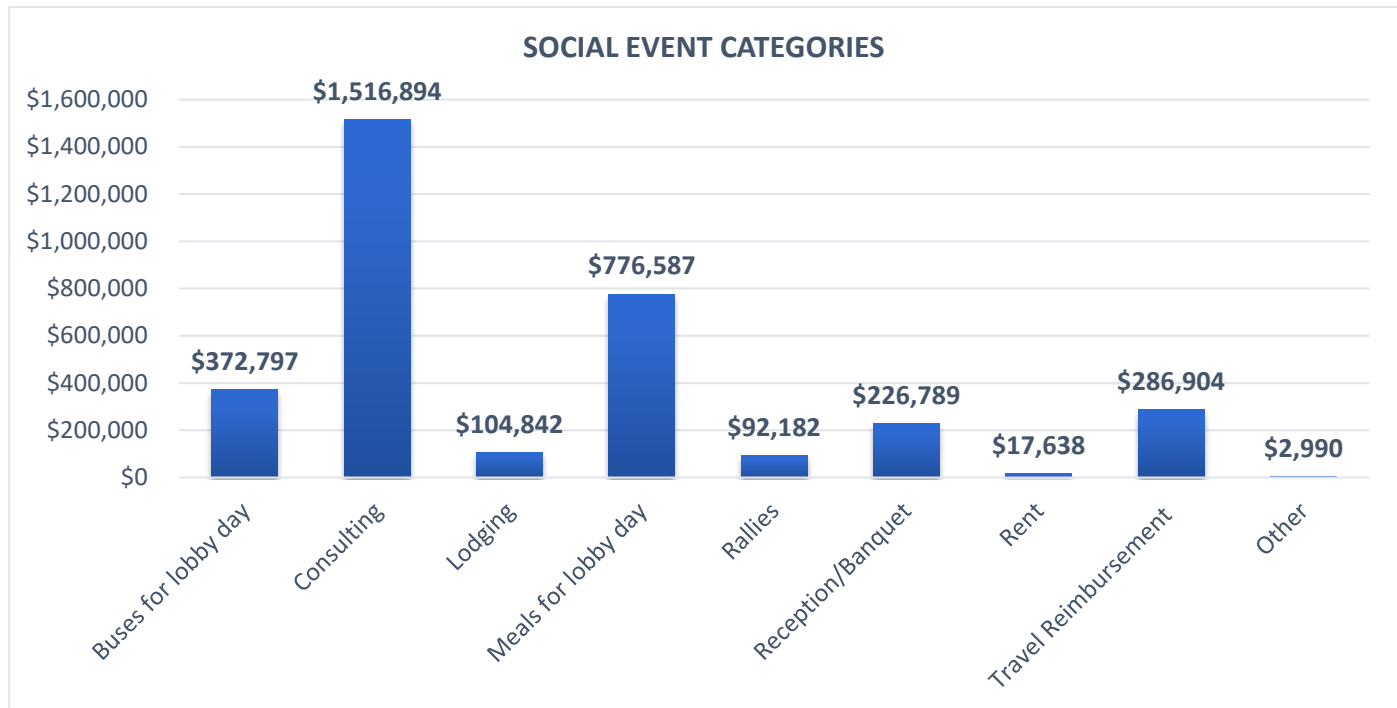
Ranking based on compensation and expense information (aggregate expenses less than \$75; aggregate expenses of salaries of non-lobbying employees; and itemized expenses) reported in Client Semi-Annual Reports and Public Corporation Filings submitted as of July 3, 2020.

LOBBYING EXPENSE COMPARISON

Information collected from defined expense categories indicated on itemized expenses reported in Client



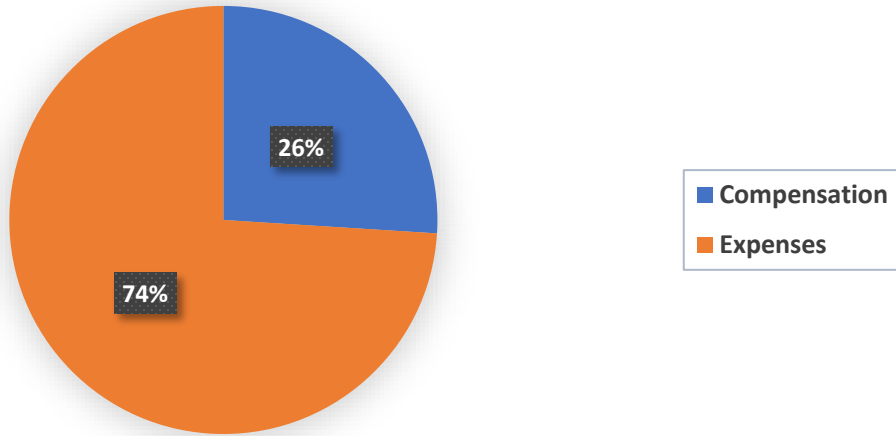
Semi-Annual Reports submitted as of July 3, 2020.



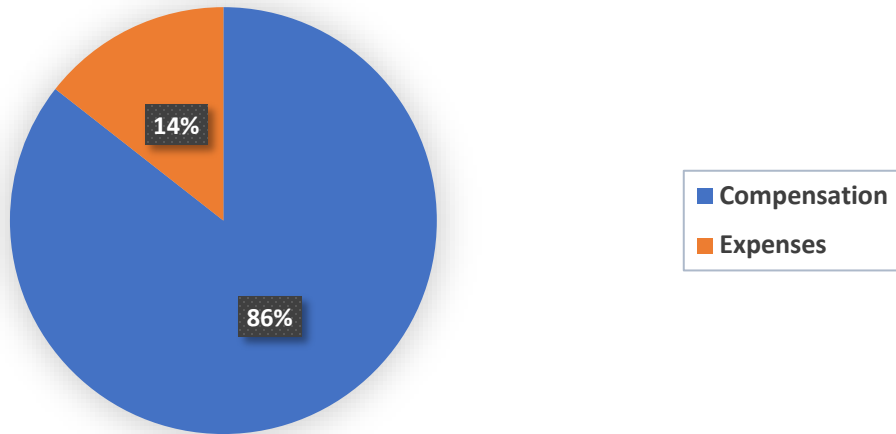
ALLOCATION OF LOBBYING EXPENDITURES

Compensation and Expenses from Top 10 Lobbying Entities and all Lobbying Entities

Top 10 Lobbying Entities



All Lobbying Entities



Based on compensation and expenses (aggregate expenses less than \$75; aggregate expenses of salaries of non-lobbying employees; and itemized expenses) reported in Client Semi-Annual Reports and Public Corporation Filings submitted as of July 3, 2020.

PROFESSIONAL LOBBYISTS

Retained Lobbyists Ranked by Compensation Reported

LOBBYIST	AMOUNT
KASIRER LLC	\$14,333,412
BROWN & WEINRAUB, PLLC	\$13,380,592
BOLTON ST. JOHNS, LLC	\$11,876,118
GREENBERG TRAURIG, LLP	\$9,886,811
OSTROFF ASSOCIATES, INC.	\$7,290,049
JAMES F. CAPALINO & ASSOCIATES, INC.	\$6,964,538
MERCURY PUBLIC AFFAIRS LLC	\$6,769,437
HINMAN STRAUB ADVISORS, LLC	\$6,275,519
PARK STRATEGIES, LLC	\$6,112,130
DAVIDOFF HUTCHER & CITRON, LLP.	\$5,472,274

Ranking based on compensation information reported in Lobbyist Bi-Monthly Reports submitted as of July 3, 2020.

TOP PAYMENTS TO LOBBYISTS FROM A SINGLE CLIENT

Retained Lobbyists Ranked by Compensation and Reimbursed Expenses Paid by a Single Client

CLIENT	LOBBYIST	AMOUNT
1199SEIU LABOR MANAGEMENT INITIATIVES, INC. HEALTHCARE EDUCATION PROJECT	SKDKNICKERBOCKER LLC	\$2,863,525
TAXPAYERS FOR AN AFFORDABLE NY, INC.	SKDKNICKERBOCKER LLC	\$2,846,923
NEW YORK STATE LABORERS-EMPLOYERS COOPERATION AND EDUCATION TRUST	KIVVIT	\$2,167,399
NEW YORKERS UNITED FOR JUSTICE (Coalition)	SKDKNICKERBOCKER LLC	\$1,959,338
TOBACCO-FREE KIDS ACTION FUND	THIES & GRENELL LLC	\$1,651,984
FWRA LLC	STROOCK & STROOCK & LAVAN LLP	\$885,765
AMAZON.COM SERVICES LLC	SKDKNICKERBOCKER LLC	\$811,721
EDUCATION EQUITY CAMPAIGN (Coalition)	TUSK STRATEGIES, INC.	\$790,000
FUR INFORMATION COUNCIL OF AMERICA	SKDKNICKERBOCKER LLC	\$589,076
FIX OUR TRANSIT (Coalition)	SKDKNICKERBOCKER LLC	\$588,367

Ranking based on compensation and reimbursed expense information reported in Lobbyist Bi-Monthly Reports submitted as of July 3, 2020.