



Written by [Brian Koenig](#) on January 24, 2012

Former Rep. William Delahunt Pockets \$90,000 From Earmarks

Former Congressman William D. Delahunt (left) from Massachusetts established a lobbying firm, the Delahunt Group, soon after retiring as one of the federal legislature's most liberal lawmakers. After claiming an office on the 16th floor of a Boston skyscraper, Delahunt launched his business, and one of his first clients was the small town of Hull, on Massachusetts Bay, which agreed to pay him \$15,000 a month for assistance in launching a wind energy project.



Delahunt's lawmaker-gone-lobbyist conversion last year has already reaped a generous bounty, as he stands to rake in at least \$90,000 for six months of work for his client. And 80 percent of those earnings come from the earmarked funds he generated through two Energy Department grants administered in his final congressional term.

Philip Lemnios, the city's town manager, said local officials resolved last spring that a wind-driven power plant would be too expensive, so they began researching wind turbines, which convert kinetic energy from wind into mechanical energy that is convertible to electricity. Lemnios claimed the Delahunt Group would be the most strategic source for effectively pursuing this alternative. "Obviously he's got connections into the federal government that we don't have," Lemnios acknowledged in an interview. "We're hoping he can open doors at the federal level that we could never open."

Naturally, the former congressman's advocacy has sprouted legal and ethical discussions, according to some legal experts, mainly due to regulations on the use of federal money for lobbying purposes. In fact, some experts who study federal earmarking — the practice of channeling federal money to a specific project — asserted that Delahunt's shifty political behavior, in this incidence, is one of the worst cases they've observed in the history of earmark lobbying.

Government watchdog organizations have already offered their ruling.

"It may not be illegal, it may not be unethical, but it's certainly another reason why taxpayers hold Congress and its members in such low esteem right now," [contended](#) Tom Schatz, president of Citizens Against Government Waste, a Washington-based government watchdog group. "It just adds to the perception that members are out to help themselves and not the taxpayers."

Schatz, whose organization publishes a "[Congressional Pig Book](#)" targeting federal earmarks, mentioned that congressional members had to sign a certification assuring that they would not benefit



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from an earmark they themselves request. "This is the first I have heard about a member benefiting after the fact from an earmark." However, Schatz added, the certification "does not say, 'In the future they won't see a benefit,' but maybe it should be changed so it does."

Mary Boyle, spokeswoman for the advocacy group [Common Cause](#), added, "This looks like a self-made golden parachute. He appears to be another in a long line of people who leave Congress to cash in. It obviously raises the question of whether he had this in mind when he left Congress and who[m] was he advocating for: his constituents, or himself?"

While Delahunt declined several interview requests, he said in a statement last Friday, "I want to be clear — I have no federal lobbying relationship with any past or current client. I have not lobbied anyone in Washington since leaving Congress. Further, while in Congress, I had no conversations with anybody regarding any future consulting contract, and I am extremely proud of our work and the assistance we were able to bring to many communities throughout our district."

Lemnios rushed to Delahunt's aid, countering that the city declined to offer the contract as a public bid because municipal light departments are immune from the state's procurement laws. "[Delahunt] didn't lobby for it; he didn't come in and inform the town that he was looking for this work," Lemnios said. "I was aware that he had formed a group, and as I thought about how to move the project forward, I thought about him and brought him to the [light plant] board."

But apparently, Hull is not Delahunt's only political lobbying project, as he also capitalized on a relationship with the Mashpee Wampanoag tribe, when it paid the Delahunt Group about \$40,000 to advocate the approval of a casino. The former congressman had strapped down \$400,000 in earmarks for the tribe for a substance abuse program and other projects.

Further, the *New York Times* reported:

The city of Quincy, Mass., meanwhile, brought on Mr. Delahunt last year to help deal with federal officials on a downtown redevelopment program. In 2008, Mr. Delahunt secured nearly \$2.4 million in earmarks for the city on a separate tidal restoration project.

And a fishermen's group on the elbow of Cape Cod hired Mr. Delahunt to navigate regulatory issues; he had helped the group get a low-interest, \$500,000 federal loan in 2010, records show. The group, which thanked Mr. Delahunt, then a congressman, for his help getting the loan, used the money to renovate a historic coastal home as its headquarters.

If that's not enough evidence to explicitly define Delahunt's crony actions, noted Tim Carney of the [Washington Examiner](#), then maybe this will be:

In 2005 Rep. Bill Delahunt, a Democrat who represents Cape Cod, addressed the Washington Summit of the Travel Business Roundtable, and urged it to lobby more. Fed News reported, "The Congressman called on the industry to wage a more aggressive, bipartisan campaign."

...The Travel Business Roundtable registered as a lobbying organization in 2006, changed its name to the Discover America Partnership, and hired Steven Schwadron, Delahunt's longtime chief of staff, as its K Street lobbyist.

"And then," Carney concluded, "Delahunt introduced a bill to subsidize the travel industry."



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