

# Representing God at the Statehouse

---

## Religion and Politics in the American States

Edited by Edward L. Cleary  
and Allen D. Hertzke

ROWMAN & LITTLEFIELD PUBLISHERS, INC.  
*Lanham • Boulder • New York • Toronto • Oxford*

## 7

---

## Religious Advocacy in the Wisconsin Statehouse

*David Yamane*

John Huebscher's day begins early at his eleventh floor office on Wilson Street, three blocks from the state capitol building in Madison, Wisconsin. Like many of his fellow legislative advocates—typically called, whether descriptively or derisively, “lobbyists”—he first checks for important faxes and e-mail (“action alerts”) that may have come in overnight from Washington, D.C., or Milwaukee. Finding nothing pressing, he scans the *New York Times*, pausing to enjoy a few escapist minutes with the crossword puzzle. He confers with his administrative assistant and two associates and then, on this particular morning, walks—efficiently and orderly, as befits his Swiss heritage—to his monthly breakfast meeting with four other advocates who share some of his legislative concerns. They generously share ideas, information, and strategies over coffee and bagels at one of Madison's many coffee shops. As the most experienced member of the group, Huebscher has more than his share of opportunities to offer commentary on the current legislative situation and prospects for the initiatives they favor. His colleagues listen intently as he makes predictions about the outcome of three of four bills currently pending—predictions that are born out more often than not. They also discuss the advisability of issuing a joint statement on a bill that would adversely affect the organizations they represent.

When he returns to his office, Huebscher spends an increasing amount of time at his computer. For better or worse, the key written materials he relies on are now offered electronically. The *Wheeler Report*—a digest of the activities of the Wisconsin legislature that has been published since 1972—is available as an e-newsletter, which Huebscher reads. The many documents produced for the legislature each day that were once printed and distributed

through a document room are now posted on the legislature's website. Huebscher mouses and scrolls his way through a score of newly introduced bills, committee hearing and floor session schedules, and the like. Although he has seen many of the bills before—some of them inevitably return, like bellbottom pants—the cost of missing an important piece of legislation is high. So he carefully scans the seemingly endless stream of words on his computer monitor to see what kind of trouble the legislature is getting into. In any given legislative session, Huebscher and his staff will flag one hundred or so bills for monitoring. Of those, they will take a public position on a third and give serious consideration to ten. A large part of the morning staff meeting is dedicated to vetting the bills, assessing their likely future, and planning a strategy for engagement.

That strategy almost always entails explaining their position to the legislative or executive branch via letters and public testimony. So, later in the day, Huebscher and his associate, Kathy Markeland, head to the north wing of the capitol building. In an ornate hearing room, Huebscher appears before the Assembly Committee on Labor to offer testimony on a bill that would permit an employer “to refuse to employ, or to bar or terminate from employment, an individual who has been convicted of a felony.” It is at this moment that we begin to see how he differs from the other lobbyists whose days in the capitol otherwise resemble his quite closely. Huebscher begins his testimony by declaring, “On behalf of the Wisconsin Catholic Conference, I am offering this testimony in opposition to Assembly Bill 353.” He then outlines the basis for his opposition:

Our stance on criminal justice issues is guided by the social teaching of the Catholic Church and insights gained from long experience ministering to prisoners, ex-offenders, crime victims and their families. This experience guided development of the WCC's 1999 statement, *Public Safety, the Common Good, and the Church: A Statement on Crime and Punishment in Wisconsin*.

The statement identifies several principles for evaluating public policies in the criminal justice area. Three of these principles that speak directly to issues raised in AB 353 are (1) that criminal justice policies serve the common good, (2) that they foster restoring victims and offenders to the community, and (3) that they exercise an option for the poor and marginalized. On this latter point, policies must be assessed in light of their impact on racial minorities.

Of course, Huebscher was not the only lobbyist to appear before the assembly committee in opposition to this “felon bias” bill. But he was unique in grounding his opposition in a *religious* authority, principally “the social teaching of the Catholic Church” manifested in a statement issued by Wisconsin's Roman Catholic bishops.

Huebscher—like his breakfast companions—is a *religious lobbyist*. Indeed, he is considered by many to be the dean of religious lobbyists in Madison. Huebscher has worked for the Wisconsin Catholic Conference since 1987 and served as its executive director since 1992. The Catholic Conference was founded in 1968 by the Roman Catholic bishops of the state's five dioceses to fulfill the mandate of the Second Vatican Council that the Church be more involved in the world. As its literature states, "With the message of the Gospel and the social teachings of the Church as its foundation, the WCC offers a specifically Catholic contribution to state and federal public policy debates."

Although it is, by all accounts, the leading religious advocacy organization in Wisconsin, the Catholic Conference is also typical of religious advocates in the state in its organization, motivation, practices, and understanding of success. After a brief consideration of Wisconsin as a context, this chapter will look at faith-based political advocacy in terms of these four issues.

## CONTEXT

A brief consideration of the history, culture, and political organization of the state of Wisconsin is necessary to understand the context within which religious advocates work. As we will see, a number of these factors make Wisconsin a relatively conducive environment for religious advocacy.

Wisconsin was originally settled by seventeenth-century French explorers, Jesuits, and fur traders. When the American colonies won the War of Independence from Britain in 1783, they took formal control over all the land east of the Mississippi River, including what is now Wisconsin. At that time, Wisconsin was part of the Northwest Territory and later the Indiana Territory (beginning in 1800), though the British still effectively controlled the area until after the War of 1812, when the U.S. government took active control of the Great Lakes region from Britain. Wisconsin was then part of the Illinois Territory and later the Michigan Territory (in 1818) before Congress created the Wisconsin Territory in 1836. Wisconsin was admitted to the Union as the thirtieth state on May 29, 1848, with Madison as the capital city.<sup>1</sup>

Wisconsin's self-characterization as "The Dairy State" suggests one of the state's major economic emphases. Although the number of people working in agriculture continues to decline, as it has nationally, the proportion of the population working on farms continues to exceed the national average (3.0 to 1.9 percent). At the same time, a higher-than-average percentage of workers in Wisconsin work in manufacturing (22 vs. 14 percent). This combination is reflective of the fact that "the state's economy is that of a borderland between

the more industrial East and the more agricultural prairie West.”<sup>2</sup> Among industrial workers, Wisconsin has a strong history of labor union activity. As historian Robert Nesbit has observed, “In 1939, Wisconsin ranked third among the states in the extent of union organization of its non-farm workers; Milwaukee at one time was probably the most completely unionized major city in the United States.” Nesbit attributes this to inheriting “a European tradition of labor organizations, particularly from the skilled German and British workmen in the metal fabricating, machinery, and brewing industries.”<sup>3</sup> Wisconsin’s economy, like others in the northern industrial rust belt, has struggled at times. Still, the median household income in Wisconsin (\$43,791) is higher than the national average (\$41,994), while the rates of poverty (8.7 percent) and unemployment (5.5 percent) trail the national averages (12.4 and 5.8 percent, respectively).<sup>4</sup>

The 2000 U.S. Census count of 5,363,675 makes Wisconsin the eighteenth most populous state. This figure represents a 9.6 percent increase over 1990. Still, Wisconsin’s share of the U.S. population shrank to 1.9 percent, continuing a decline first seen in the 1910 Census, when the state’s share dropped from 2.7 to 2.5 percent. In 2000, Wisconsin was one of ten primarily rust belt states to lose a congressional seat to the faster-growing states of the sun belt.

Although there are pockets of diversity, Wisconsin is still largely a racially homogeneous midwestern state, with 87 percent of the population identifying themselves as non-Hispanic whites in the 2000 Census. Indeed, people of German ancestry alone constitute almost 43 percent of the population. Irish, Poles, and Norwegians together make up another 29 percent. These four ethnic groups, therefore, make up nearly three-quarters of Wisconsin’s population. The balance of the population breaks down as follows: 5.6 percent African American, 3.6 percent Latino, 1.7 percent Asian, 0.8 percent Native American, and 1.2 percent other (including multiracial).

Sociologist Stephen Tordella’s observation a quarter century ago remains true today: “The religious and ethnic composition of modern Wisconsin is almost a direct reflection of that composition at the turn of the century.”<sup>5</sup> As is to be expected in a state dominated ethnically by Germans, Irish, Poles, and Scandinavians, Catholics and Lutherans are overrepresented in Wisconsin’s population. Nearly half the population (48.6 percent) is claimed by the Roman Catholic Church, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, and Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Church. At the same time, membership in some mainline denominations (United Methodist Church, United Church of Christ, Presbyterian Church USA) as well as evangelical Protestant churches is lower than that seen nationally.<sup>6</sup>

The prominence of German and Norwegian Lutherans and German, Irish, and Polish Catholics in Wisconsin has resulted in a state culture with strains

of both moral conservatism and progressivism. In Elazar's typology of political cultures, Wisconsin is classified as *moralistic*, and Schroedel has recently found Wisconsin to be strongly pro-life in terms of the restrictiveness of its abortion laws. At the same time, it ranks sixth out of fifty states in terms of policy liberalism, according to Erickson and his colleagues.<sup>7</sup> This configuration provides ample opportunities for a broad spectrum of religious group involvement, as these groups focus the bulk of their attention on "conservative" life and family issues and "liberal" social justice issues.

Although the residents of Jackson, Michigan, would surely dispute the title, Ripon, Wisconsin, claims to be the birthplace of the antislavery Republican Party in 1854. Thus, it is not surprising that for its first century, Republicans dominated Wisconsin politics. This included a period of ascendancy of a sect calling itself the "Progressive Republicans," led by Robert M. ("Fighting Bob") LaFollette, who served as governor from 1900 to 1906 and U.S. senator from 1906 to 1925. (LaFollette also won 17 percent of the vote running as a Progressive in the 1924 presidential election.) Under the influence of the Progressive movement, Wisconsin lived up to its motto ("Forward") in passing pioneering laws on workers' compensation, child labor, unemployment compensation, and women's rights. From the 1960s forward, party competition in Wisconsin has been more robust, with party control of both houses of the legislature and the governor's mansion alternating with some frequency. In 2002, Democrat Jim Doyle was elected governor, but Republicans widened their majority in the assembly (58 to 41) and regained control of the senate (18 to 15). Unlike in California, for example, where one party dominates state government, the political situation in Wisconsin creates opportunities for religious groups across the theological spectrum to make inroads in the political process.

Finally, the Wisconsin legislature is highly professionalized, ranking twelfth out of fifty states in level of professionalization, as measured by member's salary, staff, and time spent in session. This professionalism has a long history in Wisconsin. The state's Legislative Reference Bureau was created in 1901 to provide a nonpartisan source of policy research and expertise, and a Legislative Council was created in 1947 to study issues, make recommendations, and provide continuity between legislative sessions. Also, in their comprehensive analysis of the overall impact of interest groups on public policy in the American states, Thomas and Hrebenar classified interest groups in Wisconsin as "complementary" (as opposed to dominant or subordinate). Wisconsin is one of eighteen states that fall in this middle category. That organized interests do not dominate is due in part to Wisconsin's very restrictive lobbying regulations. Opheim ranks Wisconsin (along with New Jersey and Washington) as having the nation's strictest regulations. Finally, in Gray

and Lowery's population ecology of interest representation in the states, no state is more "average" than Wisconsin in terms of the "density" (the number of interest organizations) and the "diversity" of the lobbying community (the percentage of not-for-profit interests in the overall population).<sup>8</sup> All this creates a fairly level playing field for religious advocacy organizations in Wisconsin compared to other states.

## ORGANIZATION

Religious advocacy organizations have been growing in number, both nationally (as Hertzke demonstrated in his landmark study *Representing God in Washington*) and in the states. When the Wisconsin Catholic Conference was founded in 1968, it joined the Christian Science Committee on Publication for Wisconsin and the Wisconsin Council of Churches as one of the three religious advocacy organizations in the state. By the time I undertook my dissertation research in the mid-1990s, I was able to identify no fewer than sixteen organizations. A decade later, the number of religious advocacy organizations has truncated some, to about a dozen. This decrease is attributable to the disappearance of the state affiliates of such conservative organizations as Morality in Media and the Christian Coalition and to reorganization in the Catholic Church that eliminated the lobbyists for the Archdiocese of Milwaukee and the Catholic Health Association of Wisconsin. Presently, religious groups from across the denominational landscape are represented in Wisconsin. This includes, of course, numerically predominant groups like Catholics and Lutherans but also religious minorities such as Christian Scientists and Jews. There are also three paradenominational groups that are issue oriented: the Family Research Institute, Pro-Life Wisconsin, and Wisconsin Capitol Watch.

As table 7.1 indicates, these religious advocacy organizations are modest in size, averaging just two full-time equivalent staff members. This is particularly true in comparison to their secular peers. As interest groups, religious advocates are part of the same organizational environment as teacher's unions, chambers of commerce, bankers' associations, manufacturers' associations, organized labor, utility companies and associations, state bar and trial lawyers' associations, municipal leagues and counties' associations, and state farm bureaus. Studies of interest groups consistently rank these organized interests as the most effective in lobbying state government.<sup>9</sup> Examining the most effective advocacy organizations reveals certain characteristics that are simply beyond the reach of religious advocates.

First of all, the most effective lobbying organizations spend far more time and money lobbying than other interest groups. Consider the data from the Wisconsin legislature given in table 7.2. In the first year of the 2003–2004 biennium,

**Table 7.1. Overview of Religious Lobbying Organizations in Wisconsin (2004)**

Organization	Year Founded	Staff Full-Time Employees	% Public Affairs	Who Is Represented?
Christian Science Committee on Publication for Wisconsin	1900	1.5	100	Christian Science churches and practitioners in Wisconsin
Milwaukee Jewish Council for Community Relations	1938	3.5	5	28 member organizations, agencies, and synagogues in the greater Milwaukee metro area
Wisconsin Council of Churches	1946	3.0	25	22 judicatory units of 12 mainline Protestant denominations in Wisconsin
Wisconsin Catholic Conference	1968	4.0	100	Roman Catholic bishops of the five dioceses of Wisconsin
Interfaith Conference of Greater Milwaukee	1970	3.5	30	Catholic, Protestant, Jewish, and Islamic judicatories
Lutheran Office for Public Policy in Wisconsin	1983	1.0	100	Six Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) synods in Wisconsin
Family Research Institute of Wisconsin	1986	2.0	100	Contributions come from public at-large (no membership)
Wisconsin Jewish Conference	1987	0.5	100	Jewish communities across Wisconsin
Pro-Life Wisconsin	1992	4.0	100	Membership
Lutheran Social Services of Wisconsin and Upper Michigan Government Relations Office	1994	1.25	100	Lutheran Social Services and its sponsoring congregations
Wisconsin Capitol Watch	2000	1.0	100	Membership (formerly affiliated with the Family Research Institute)
Wisconsin Interfaith IMPACT	2001	0.3	100	Individual members, denominations, and other religious organizations in Wisconsin. (formerly a committee within the Wisconsin Council of Churches)

Note: "Public Affairs" here refers to direct and indirect political advocacy as well as attempts to educate member organizations/individuals and the broader public. Sources: State of Wisconsin Ethics Board (<http://ethics.state.wi.us>) and interviews with organizational representatives.

651 organizations registered 758 lobbyists with the Wisconsin State Ethics Board.<sup>10</sup> But the top ten organized interests—from the Wisconsin Education Association Council (the teachers' union) to Aurora Health Care—accounted for some 20 percent of all lobbying expenditures. Although four religious advocacy organizations—Pro-Life Wisconsin, the Lutheran Office for Public Policy, Wisconsin Catholic Conference, and Lutheran Social Services—spent more time and money lobbying than the average organization in Wisconsin, they spent far less than the biggest spending and most influential groups. Moreover, the majority of religious advocacy organizations spent far less time and money than the state average for lobbying organizations.

In addition, the most effective lobbies typically establish political action committees (PACs) to make campaign donations to candidates, parties, or other PACs, and they often endorse candidates for public office as well. In his survey of interest group politics in Wisconsin, Ronald Hedlund writes, "The Wisconsin Education Association Council (WEAC) is generally reputed to be one of the most effective special interest groups, if not the most effective, in the state." Not surprisingly, in addition to the million-plus dollars it spent on lobbying annually, WEAC PAC also spent \$156,000 on state elections in the 2002 election cycle, making it one of the top campaign contributors in the state.<sup>11</sup> As organizations exempt from federal income tax under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, churches are prohibited from engaging in this sort of political campaign activity. Consequently, as a Catholic lobbyist in another state told me, "We lobby with one arm tied behind our backs."

Of the dozen or so organizations in this study, only Pro-Life Wisconsin has established a PAC, the Pro-Life Wisconsin Victory Fund. According to the Wisconsin Democracy Campaign, in the 2001–2002 election cycle, the Victory Fund made direct contributions of \$4,600 to candidates for governor, lieutenant governor, attorney general, and/or the legislature. In that same period, Planned Parenthood Advocates of Wisconsin made contributions of \$8,338. Of course, the contributions of both these PACs were dwarfed by those of PACs representing the teachers' union (\$156,000) and realtors (\$126,500). According to Matt Sande of Pro-Life Wisconsin, the potential votes garnered by the Victory Fund's *endorsements* are more important to candidates than the small amount of money provided, as the Republicans who Pro-Life Wisconsin tends to endorse get plenty of money through business and other PACs.

Other religious groups have considered forming PACs, but the Victory Fund to date remains the only one in active in Wisconsin. Marvin Munyon, founder of the Family Research Institute and now director of and lobbyist for Wisconsin Capitol Watch, recently attempted to organize a pro-family PAC, but ideological differences and economic difficulties with the funders prevented it.

**Table 7.2. Top Ten Lobbying Organizations in Wisconsin and Religious Lobbying Organizations Compared, January 2003–December 2003**

Organization	Total Lobbying Expenditures	No. Registered Lobbyists	No. Hours Communicating
Wisconsin Education Association Council	\$1,083,487	17	1,914
Wisconsin Manufacturers and Commerce	639,925	11	1,178
Wisconsin Independent Businesses	512,692	2	474
Wisconsin Merchants Federation	465,314	3	171
Wisconsin Counties Association	462,814	9	1,856
Wisconsin Hospital Association	424,664	12	596
Wisconsin Energy Corporation	393,438	18	572
Forest County Potawatomi Community	374,276	8	137
Wisconsin Farm Bureau Federation	337,025	3	905
Aurora Health Care	315,957	8	466
Pro-Life Wisconsin	91,771	2	263
Lutheran Office for Public Policy	71,019	1	162
Wisconsin Catholic Conference	63,762	3	113
Lutheran Social Services	47,569	3	131
State average	Mean: \$40,000	—	Median: 141
Wisconsin Jewish Conference	9,605	1	7
Christian Science Committee on Publication	4,616	1	31
Wisconsin Council of Churches	4,568	1	17
Interfaith Conference of Greater Milwaukee	3,188	2	22
Milwaukee Jewish Council for Community Relations	2,834	2	24
Wisconsin Capitol Watch	1,633	1	30
Archdiocese of Milwaukee	1,213	1	3
Family Research Institute of Wisconsin	634	1	13
Total (651 organizations)	\$26.2 million	758	248,000

Source: State of Wisconsin Ethics Board (<http://ethics.state.wi.us>).

Michael Blumenfeld of the Wisconsin Jewish Conference recalls a conversation among his board some years ago about the possibility of forming a PAC, but the idea was quickly dismissed. Indeed, most denominationally based religious groups assiduously avoid the partisanship inherent in electoral politics.

A final political resource that religious advocacy organizations have at their disposal is grassroots mobilization. In the mid-1990s, there was considerable grassroots mobilization around two key issues: welfare reform and same-sex marriage. Religious individuals and groups that were not previously mobilized at the state level became activated during this time. Groups such as the Milwaukee Innercity Congregations Allied for Hope, the Coming Out/Coming Together Coalition, and Wisconsin Christians United regularly participated in the public policy process on these issues. However, as welfare reform became a fait accompli and same-sex marriage receded from the scene (for the time being), these groups returned to their local roots and activities. Established religious lobbies like the Wisconsin Catholic Conference and Wisconsin Council of Churches would like to be able to activate the grassroots when necessary to help influence legislators, but this is difficult in practice. Not only are individuals busy and not familiar with the issues, but appeals to the grassroots also highlight the *diversity* of opinion among individuals who claim a particular religious affiliation. More than once I have heard the refrain from legislators in Wisconsin, “The Catholics in my district don’t [fill in the blank: oppose capital punishment, oppose abortion, favor increasing the minimum wage, and so on].” One could substitute Lutheran, Presbyterian, Methodist, or other traditions for Catholic to the same effect. In the end, all religious lobbies would like to have grassroots support as part of their political capital, but none has completely succeeded in realizing this aspiration.

Thus, if political advocacy is conceptualized as a “three-legged stool”—(1) direct advocacy, (2) engagement in civil society (public education and cultivating grassroots activism), and (3) electioneering—religious organizations are confined largely to the first two legs. Especially when the legislature is in session, the majority of the work of religious advocacy organizations is dedicated to direct advocacy. Thus, without minimizing the importance of the others, this chapter focuses its attention on this particular leg.

## MOTIVATION

Political scientist Daniel Hofrenning contends that a prophetic vision of religious lobbyists in Washington, D.C., affects everything they do, from defining goals to choosing tactics to measuring effectiveness. Religious lobbyists, according to Hofrenning, “offer a principled and moralistic vision. Unlike

most other lobbyists, they seek nothing less than the transformation of American politics to a higher moral plane.” Obviously, religious lobbyists in contemporary America are not themselves prophets, but they share with the Old Testament prophets a proclivity for moral exhortations critiquing the status quo and advancing a vision of a new society.<sup>12</sup>

Without question, most religious advocates with whom I spoke conform to Hofrenning’s model of the prophetic politics of religious lobbyists. Religious advocacy doesn’t exist solely to achieve political victories, narrowly understood (for example, the passage of a particular piece of legislation), nor do religious advocates represent special interests, narrowly understood. The comments of the following two religious advocates, representing different religious traditions, are typical of this:

*Michael Blumenfeld, executive director, Wisconsin Jewish Conference:* In my view it’s not only appropriate, it’s a responsibility for some [religious] organizations to be involved in political discourse and be involved in advocacy. [In the Jewish tradition] there is the concept of *tikkun olam*. The idea of responsibility, literally some people say perfecting the world, repairing the world. It’s an obligation to make it a better place for everybody. That sounds corny, but I think that’s a driving factor in a lot of this.

*Rev. Dr. Jerry Folk, former executive director, Wisconsin Council of Churches:* The goal that we have is to contribute to the renewal of society, to the renewal of democratic society, to contribute to the well being of all the members of society, and to contribute to a healthy relationship between the human species and the rest of the environment on which human well-being is dependent. There is a saying by a 2nd century Bishop by the name of Irenaeus of Lyons. He said that the glory of God is a human being fully alive. And so our purpose in working in what many people call politics—that is, broadly speaking, on an agenda to try to make the world a better place—is to help create the conditions that enable every human being to be fully alive. I don’t think that when you are starving you can be full alive as God wants you to be. Or when you are suffering from ignorance and disease, and don’t have access to healing or knowledge, you can’t be as fully alive as God wants you to be. So our whole goal is to say, if you’re going to change this, change it in a way that allows more people to be fully alive.

One interviewee, Jonalu Johnstone, the minister at James Reeb Unitarian-Universalist congregation in Madison who was active in the Coming Out/Coming Together Coalition in the late-1990s, even volunteered the word “prophetic” without prompting in the following exchange:

*Yamane:* Do you feel like you were a political person from the start?

*Johnstone:* Well, yeah, that’s probably true. And I don’t know if I’d use the word political. I think I would probably tend more toward using the word *prophetic*.

I think that the prophetic part of the mystery is a very important one. I think the prophetic voice is an important one. I think that when we have a strong sense of what is right and wrong, it needs to be said and it needs to be said publicly and strongly.

Hofrenning's characterization of the outlook of religious lobbyists in the nation's capital as "prophetic" applies to religious advocates in Wisconsin as well.

Beyond this ultimate motivation for political involvement, religious advocacy organizations most resemble public interest groups. According to Jeffrey Berry, "A public interest group is one that seeks a collective good, the achievement of which will not selectively and materially benefit the members or activists of the organization."<sup>13</sup> To be sure, some lobbying effort by religious advocates is directed at protecting both material and ideal self-interest. Clearly, Lutheran Social Services hires lobbyists to defend the material interests of its human services institutions. The mission of the Christian Science Committee on Publication "is to correct impositions on the public with regard to Christian Science" and ensure that Christian Scientists' "sincerely held religious beliefs" are not compromised by any legislation or administrative rule in the state. In 2003, the Wisconsin Catholic Conference, Wisconsin Jewish Conference, and Wisconsin Council of Churches were intimately involved in the crafting of legislation to add clergy to the list of mandatory reporters of child sexual abuse. In doing so, they had to act to protect both the material and the ideal interests of the judicatories (and, by extension, congregations) they represent.

Still, much of the work of these organizations is aimed at promoting basic (if often contested) values concerning religious freedom, human rights, social justice, and the common good. This can be seen in an examination of their organizational goals. For example, according to the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, state advocacy offices like the Lutheran Office for Public Policy in Wisconsin "represent the church in advocating at the state government level with and on behalf of those without economic or political power." And the Wisconsin Council of Churches "engages in conversation with policy makers and governmental agencies with the purpose of furthering the Common Good of the human community."

Given the publicly spirited approach of these religious advocacy organizations, to characterize their representatives as "lobbyists" could be seen as an insult (given popular perceptions of political influence peddlers). But if lobbyists are those who "deliberate[ly] attempt to influence political decisions through various forms of public advocacy," then the description fits. They are lobbyists, then, but not in the basest sense of the term. One reason people dis-

like lobbyists is that they are seen as willing to represent any interest on any issue as long as they get paid. As one lobbyist commented in a book on the ethics of lobbying, "The lobbyist is simply a hired gun. Lobbyists have no principles. Lobbyists have no positions. You ask someone what do you think about this and he'll say I don't know, I don't have a client. We're sort of agnostics here. A client retains us and that's fine, but if someone who didn't like that client retained us, well, that would be fine too."<sup>14</sup> Those who represent religious organizations in the legislative arena are emphatically not hired guns. Like other advocates for the public interest, they represent values that they as individuals hold deeply. This is especially apparent among those who purposely moved from representing secular to religious interests. Says Kathy Markeland, reflecting on the difference between lobbying for the Wisconsin Counties Association and the Wisconsin Catholic Conference, "What's fundamentally different for me is being able to feel more connected to the things I'm advocating for. This is more than a job for me. The positions that I'm taking on the issues that we're working on are things that are closer to my heart, and that's been an important and very big change." Matthew Sande left the Wisconsin Hospital Association to become legislative affairs director for Pro-Life Wisconsin because he thought, "What will I say when I meet my maker and he asks, 'What did you do to help protect the unborn? How did you use your knowledge and expertise?'"

Of course, a prophetic motivation does not translate simply or directly into a particular legislative program. The issues that religious advocacy organizations in Wisconsin address span the entire political spectrum. Groups based in mainline Protestant religious traditions, like the Lutheran Office for Public Policy and Wisconsin Council of Churches, focus largely on issues of "social justice." For example, the Lutheran Office for Public Policy describes its lobbying interest as "advocating justice for disempowered people and responsible care of creation." It lists the following specific issues as its specific interests: "hunger, nutrition programs; health care (mental health parity, drug costs, coverage for all uninsured); corrections (terms, treatment, education, after-care); low income concerns; welfare reform; environmental stewardship, death penalty, gambling expansion, rights of immigrants, rural-farm issues, economic justice for low income people, and fair taxation." Groups based more in evangelical Protestant religious traditions, like Wisconsin Capitol Watch and the Family Research Institute, tend to focus more on "social regulatory" issues. For example, the Family Research Institute declares an interest in "any legislation or rules that will impact Wisconsin families, including but not necessarily limited to education, taxes/spending, social services/child-protection agencies, marriage, abortion, physician-assisted suicide, human embryonic stem cell research, cloning and gambling." Finally, as

suggested by the late Joseph Cardinal Bernardin's "seamless garment," the Wisconsin Catholic Conference's advocacy engages issues that span the political spectrum. It lobbies with "conservative" organizations on education, family, and lifestyle issues and with "liberal" organizations on economic and social welfare issues.

This configuration of groups that differ by religious tradition results in a division of labor of sorts among religious advocacy organizations. There is a religiously based pro-life movement, but there is no religiously based pro-choice movement (for example, there is no Wisconsin chapter of the Religious Coalition for Abortion Rights). On the other hand, there is a religiously based anti-death penalty movement, but there is no religiously based pro-death penalty movement. The Family Research Institute has come out strongly against same-sex marriage, but no religious lobby has come out in favor of it. The Catholic Conference and other organizations favor an increase in the minimum wage, but there is no religiously based opposition to that. Rarely do two religious lobbies directly square off in the legislative arena in Wisconsin. In fact, they often work in coalition with one another, even to the extent of issuing joint letters. When there is a divergence of opinion on an issue, they typically either agree to disagree or keep the disagreement "backstage."

Although they have forward-looking legislative agendas, like many groups, religious advocacy organizations are driven in their day-to-day work by the "tyranny of the in-box." This was never more evident than in the 2003–2004 legislative session, when legislation was introduced to add clergy to the list of mandatory reporters of child sexual abuse and extend the statute of limitations for bringing criminal charges or seeking civil damages for abuse. As this sort of legislation began spreading across the country in the wake of the sexual abuse scandal in the Catholic Church that broke early in 2002, it was not totally unexpected.<sup>15</sup> But neither was it part of any group's legislative agenda. Still, seven of the twelve established religious lobbies in Wisconsin spent some time on this legislation. For six of them, it was either the first (Christian Science Committee, Council of Churches, Catholic Conference, Jewish Conference) or the second (Milwaukee Jewish Council for Community Relations, Wisconsin Capitol Watch) most time-consuming issue they lobbied between January 2003 and July 2004.<sup>16</sup> Only Wisconsin Capitol Watch opposed the legislation, seeing it as an undue impingement on the religious freedom of churches. In the end, Scott Anderson of the Council of Churches, Michael Blumenfeld of the Jewish Conference, and John Hueb-scher of the Catholic Conference issued a joint letter to members of the legislature supporting the legislation that eventually passed in the senate by 33 to 0 and the assembly by 99 to 0 and was signed by the governor at a public

ceremony. Other issues—like legislation that would allow the carrying of concealed weapons (possibly even in churches) and a “Taxpayer Bill of Rights”—were similarly irritating to religious groups, even though the outcomes on these bills were favorable. So, religious advocacy organizations continue to form and pursue their proactive agendas even while recognizing, with Robert Burns, that “the best-laid schemes o’ mice an’ men gang aft agley” (go often awry).

Beyond engaging particular issues, the question of how to translate their prophetic motivation into concrete political *practices* is one of the greatest challenges religious advocates face. For example, the prophetic desire for the radical transformation of the world to a higher plane runs up against the slow, incremental process of legislative “sausage making.” The prophetic temptation to advance positions as nonnegotiable confronts the imperative to compromise in policymaking. The prophetic belief in the ultimate truth of the faith defies the religious and cultural pluralism characteristic of American society and reflected in our secular liberal political institutions. And so on. The next section, then, takes up the question of religious advocacy organizations’ political practices.

## PRACTICES

In his pioneering work, Allen Hertzke observes that religious lobbying organizations in Washington, D.C., often are reluctant or ill equipped to engage in the “detail work,” the “microprocess,” which is central to the legislative process. He distinguishes between advocacy, which consists for the most part of “*witnessing*”—that is, groups “making known their positions without really engaging the legislative process in a specific way”—and “*classic insider lobbying*”—that is, “activities designed to affect precise policy outcomes, including: drafting bill language, offering amendments, forging coalitions behind the scenes, negotiating with opponents over compromise provisions, and providing useful facts and arguments to members during legislative debates.” Hertzke finds that, “with a few exceptions, there is an overall weakness at the detail level” in the work of the Washington religious lobbyists. Hofrenning, too, cites as a weakness of religious lobbying the fact that “religious lobbyists spend much of their time articulating broad moral principles; they usually leave the details to others.” The “prophetic temptation,” then, a pull toward purity and away from strategy and mundanity in the legislative arena, serves to undermine the effectiveness of religious advocacy.<sup>17</sup>

At least in Wisconsin, these statements do not ring true. Most religious advocates effectively channel their prophetic motivation into the legislative

sausage-making process. Again, the experiences of those who have lobbied for both secular and religious organizations are instructive. According to Kathy Markeland of the Catholic Conference, “In terms of the day-to-day need to follow, understand, and analyze legislation, put together testimony and appear at hearings, it’s the same as at the Counties Association.” Matt Sande relates a similar sentiment in comparing his work for the Wisconsin Hospital Association to Pro-Life Wisconsin: “What I do across the street [at the capitol] is no different. I call on legislators to explain our positions and try to address concerns they may have. I try to advance the good legislation and stop the bad legislation. It’s no different in that respect.” Michael Blumenfeld is the director of the Wisconsin Jewish Conference, but he is also a contract lobbyist with his own firm, Michael Blumenfeld and Associates, LLC, which represents interests such as Adoption Resources of Wisconsin, Elder Care of Dane County, United Cerebral Palsy of Wisconsin, and others. According to Blumenfeld, “I basically go about my work the same way,” whether he is representing the Jewish Conference or his other clients. Although there are times when religious advocacy organizations will get involved in an issue because they feel compelled to give “witness” to some position they think will otherwise not be heard, this does not come at the expense of “classic insider lobbying.”

It is widely recognized among political scientists studying lobbying that, next to money, *information* is the great resource of interest groups. As Lester Milbrath explained in his 1959 book *The Washington Lobbyists*, “Communication is the only means of influencing or changing a perception; the lobbying process, therefore, is totally a communicative process.” As society has grown more complex and state legislatures more professionalized, the importance of interest groups in supplying legislators with *technical expertise* in the policymaking process—especially providing *information* about the consequences of legislative decisions—has also grown. Two political scientists who directed a study of interest group activity in all fifty state legislatures have concluded that, as “a consequence of the increasing complexity of issues and the movement towards a more technological society,” the “new breed [of lobbyist] is a purveyor of technical information.”<sup>18</sup> Especially in Wisconsin, with its extraordinarily strict lobbying laws, “the major currency lobbyists pedal today is information.”<sup>19</sup>

Thus, the type and quality of information lobbyists provide is central to their credibility and hence effectiveness. As much as any religious group active in the Wisconsin statehouse, the Wisconsin Catholic Conference recognizes this. Executive director Huebscher stresses, “I think there is a temptation or tendency to view religious groups as idealistic do-gooders who don’t understand the ‘real world.’ Which is why being thoughtful and informed and

being able to come in with data and analysis is so important to me. To quickly disabuse them of the fact that we don't know what we're talking about." Providing quality information to legislators is a vehicle for the Catholic Conference to achieve its ends by solidifying its legitimacy as a political actor in the eyes of legislators. This can be seen clearly in the Conference's testimony before the legislature. For example, on a bill that would require certain employers receiving state grants to pay their employees a "living wage," the Catholic Conference testimony begins by explaining the position of the Catholic Church on a living wage, mentioning in turn Pope John Paul II's encyclical letter on work and the U.S. Catholic Bishops' long-standing support of a living wage. It then invokes data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics that point to the large number of Wisconsinites who make less than a living wage and would not benefit from the legislation. Similarly, on a proposal to expand the ability of employers to discriminate in hiring a worker on the basis of the worker's conviction record, the Catholic Conference testimony begins by noting the rootedness of its opposition to the legislation in Catholic social teaching. Then the testimony presents data from the Department of Corrections and the Uniform Crime Reporting Program documenting the potentially adverse impact of the legislation. In both cases, it was not sufficient for the Catholic Conference to argue its position solely on the basis of Catholic social teaching. Some analysis of the impact of the legislation needed to be presented as well. This pattern is not limited to the Catholic Conference. According to the former director of communication for Pro-Life Wisconsin, Greg Chesmore, when testifying before the legislature, "obviously you want to make sure that you have good sources, that you have documentation of the things that you say, specifics. When you're dealing with public policy you can't just look at it from a faith perspective."

Conservative Christians have often been criticized for pursuing an uncompromising approach to politics and for an alleged tendency toward "Bible thumping" in public. Marvin Munyon—a born-again Christian, former head of the evangelical-dominated Family Research Institute, and currently director of Wisconsin Capitol Watch—is painfully aware not only of this stereotype but also of the ineffectiveness of forceful invocations of biblical authority before the legislature. As he put it when asked why his materials on same-sex marriage included definitions of marriage from dictionaries and state statutes but not from religious sources,

I'm not ashamed of anything in the Bible. I come from a very strong Christian background, but I find that in the public policy arena, that isn't always the argument that is most effective. I think we need to be factual. I try not to be highly emotional and that type of thing, but put things out there that are clear

that people can understand and I think those things [dictionary definitions of marriage] are pretty easy for people to understand regardless of where they are on the issue.

Despite the fact that the overwhelming majority of legislators profess to be Christian, Munyon recognizes that the presentation of issues in public before the legislature is different than the way an issue might be treated in a more private setting, such as a church. The failure of some of his colleagues and constituents in the evangelical Christian community to recognize this is a source of some frustration to Munyon, as he expresses in the following passage:

Well, unfortunately the religious community has a difficult time, I believe, of expressing themselves in the public arena. For instance, at these hearings, you know legislators are not there to have somebody come in and open the Bible and start reading Bible verses to them. They're dealing with a specific issue and they want to know something about that issue. I try to tell people that a public hearing is not the podium of your church, it's not a place to preach to these people. We need to approach them, and certainly you can use your Christian background to [ground] where you're coming from, but it's not a Sunday morning church service. And I've heard people, sad to say, tell legislators if you vote for this bill you're going to go to hell or whatever. That is unfortunate because that's counterproductive in my way of thinking.

The need to refrain from confronting legislators with excessively strong invocations of religious authority (for example, in the form of scripture) is felt not only by religious "conservatives." Religious "liberals," like Marcus White, associate director of the Interfaith Conference of Greater Milwaukee, also tread lightly when bringing religion into the public arena. "Preaching," in the negative sense commonly associated with the term in our secularized society, is to be avoided regardless of your position on the theological continuum. According to White, "When you talk with legislators and when you represent a religious institution, you want to be careful about throwing around God. You don't want to seem heavy handed and I think there are legislators who can get turned off by that because they feel like you're preaching to them. And so we would be careful about that, just how it's heard by some folks."

Despite their best efforts, in the same way that they can't compete in the political money game, religious advocacy organizations also find themselves at a deficit with respect to information as political currency. Especially on complex issues such as welfare reform, biotechnology, and health care, religious advocates struggle to put out policy analysis in the same breadth, depth, and volume as more narrowly focused outfits like the Wisconsin Council on

Children and Families or more well-heeled groups like Wisconsin Manufacturers and Commerce. This fact makes work in coalitions that combine religious and secular interest groups—seen especially on the death penalty, health care, and welfare reform—all the more important. The major religious advocacy organizations in Wisconsin welcome these coalitions, even if they are not always formalized because of differences between the groups on other issues.

In the end, at the same time they want to be taken seriously as a source of “useful information,” there is also a recognition that some issues are so complex that they can be engaged only on the level of principle. The Catholic Conference’s Huebscher explains,

When you get into the issue, for example, of access to health insurance, there’s some people who don’t want to talk about anything but a single payer system. Whereas I think that the Church would say, there’s a universal human right to health care, yet we respect the complexities of the issue enough *not* to prescribe a specific means of doing that. We know we don’t have the expertise to do it, but we do know that we have a Gospel mandate to do it, and the resources exist for us to do it.

Groups the size of religious advocacy organizations must be aware of their limited resources and expend their political capital wisely. Doing so allows them a modicum of success—their understanding of which I treat in the final section.

## SUCCESS

In order to be effective in securing legislative outcomes, religious groups must engage in the practical affairs of insider lobbying; however, few religious advocates I had contact with would be satisfied only with securing discrete legislative victories. The temptation for lobbying to become an end in itself is one that many religious lobbyists feel a constant need to resist. For example, one Wisconsin lobbyist looked at her organizational counterparts in Washington, D.C., as a cautionary example against becoming too concerned with being a “player” in the political game. Thus, although discrete legislative outcomes are a concern of religious advocacy organizations, they are not always the primary concern. In fact, three measures of success are operative for religious advocates: 1) having credibility in the eyes of legislators, 2) securing discrete political and legislative victories, and, most important, 3) being faithful to their calling as religious organizations.

### Credibility

Political legitimacy can be defined roughly as the right to speak, be heard, and be taken seriously in the political process. Political advocates themselves prefer the term *credibility*. Credibility in the legislative process is built up slowly over time. As Huebscher puts it, “When I meet with a legislator, [the strategic objective] is to either establish or continue to cement their view of the Conference as an agency that provides thoughtful, useful information. So that even if they’re disinclined to go with us on the issue of the moment that they will see in us someone that they would want to hear from again. And that they would find it useful to hear from again because what we say would be thoughtful, informed, and helpful to them as they make a decision on an issue.” In fact, as religious lobbying in Madison has expanded and matured, legislators have come to take these groups seriously, some quite so.

This can be seen in the results of a survey of Wisconsin state legislators I conducted in the mid-1990s. When legislators were asked, “As a general principle, which one of the following four statements best approximates your view of the proper role of religious groups and organizations in the legislative process?” 83.9 percent responded that it is *proper* for religious groups and organizations to be involved, though they should be treated the same as other groups and organizations. The second most common response (12.9 percent) was not only that it is proper for religious groups and organizations to be involved but also that, on certain issues, the legislative process should not proceed without their input. Only 1.6 percent of respondents answered that it is *improper* for religious groups and organizations to be involved in the legislative process, the same proportion that indicated that the legislative process should *never* proceed without input from religious groups and organizations. Clearly, legislators generally have no principled objection to the involvement of religious advocacy organizations in the political process, and a number welcome it.

To move beyond the level of principle and better understand the concrete relationships between legislators and religious advocates, legislators were also asked to “name up to five of the most important groups or organizations which *you find it useful to consult with* in your capacity as a legislator on three important issues considered in the 1995–1996 biennium: abortion, capital punishment, and welfare reform.”<sup>20</sup> Groups were then assigned points, depending on the position in which they were named by legislators. For example, the first group named for each issue was assigned five points, the second group named was assigned four points, and so on, until the fifth group named was assigned one point. These points were then totaled for each group on each issue to yield a ranking of the groups most important in being consulted by legislators. This ranking is given in table 7.3.

**Table 7.3. Top Ten Groups Consulted by Legislators, by Issue (Shaded Cell = Religious Organization)**

Rank	Abortion		Capital Punishment		Welfare Reform	
	Group (Points)	Consulted (Points)	Group (Points)	Consulted (Points)	Group (Points)	Consulted (Points)
1	Planned Parenthood (122)	State Bar of Wisconsin (44)	Wisconsin Counties Association (38)		Wisconsin Council on Children and Families (35)	
2	Wisconsin Right to Life (98)	Wisconsin Association of Trial Lawyers (14)	Department of Health and Human Services (31)		Wisconsin Catholic Conference (19)	
3	State Medical Society (40)	Wisconsin Right to Life (13)	AFSCME Council 40 (13)		University of Wisconsin Institute for Research on Poverty (12)	
4	Pro-Life Wisconsin (24)	League of Women Voters (9)	Lutheran Office for Public Policy (8)		NAACP (10)	
5	Wisconsin Catholic Conference (21)	Wisconsin District Attorneys Association (8)			AFT-Technical Colleges (9)	
6	National Abortion Rights Action League (12)	NAACP (5)			Legal Action of Wisconsin (9)	
7	League of Women Voters (9)	Wisconsin Chiefs of Police (5)			AFL-CIO (8)	
8	Wisconsin Citizens Concerned for Life (5)	Wisconsin Coalition Against the Death Penalty (5)			Wisconsin Conference of Churches (8)	
9	Legislative Reference Bureau (4)	Wisconsin Professional Police Association (5)				
10	National Organization of Women (4)					
	National Women's Political Caucus (4)					
	Pro-Choice Wisconsin (4)					
	State Bar of Wisconsin (4)					

Source: Wisconsin State Legislator Survey, 1996.

Table 7.3 demonstrates very clearly that, although they rank below secular interest groups on each issue, some religious groups are taken very seriously in the public policy process in the Wisconsin statehouse. The Wisconsin Catholic Conference is clearly the most widely consulted religious advocacy organization, the only one to rank in the top ten on all three issues. Pro-Life Wisconsin, an issue-specific organization and the only religious organization to sponsor a PAC, is the highest ranked on abortion. The Lutheran Office for Public Policy ranked sixth on capital punishment, and the Wisconsin Council of Churches tied for tenth on welfare reform.

A seat at the table is a mark of success in itself. But it is also a prerequisite for concrete legislative success. Most of the religious advocacy organizations active in Wisconsin want a seat at the table but aren't satisfied with that as an end in itself.

### Victory

Groups differ in how much they embrace political influence as a measure of success, though all mention legislative victory as an important indicator. The longer a group has been involved in public advocacy and the more professionalized it becomes, the most important legislative victory seems to be.

In hiring Scott Anderson in March 2003, the Wisconsin Council of Churches' board wanted to raise its profile in the public policy arena. Unlike his predecessor, Jerry Folk, Anderson comes with major public policy experience, having served as associate and executive director of the California Council of Churches for twelve years. He has a master's degree in public policy and administration and was a registered lobbyist in California. By May 2003, he had registered as a lobbyist for the Council of Churches in Wisconsin, something Folk had purposely avoided during his tenure. In the press release announcing his hiring, Anderson echoed Folk's prophetic vision (quoted earlier in this chapter) for the Council of Churches' involvement in public life: "As a life-long Christian and Presbyterian, the counter-cultural character of God challenges me. God's justice, which in scripture is focused on the marginalized in society, is rarely embraced by the world. From poverty to economic inequality, from environmental degradation to the growing specter of violence both at home and around the world, the prophetic call 'to do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with our God' (Micah 6:8) gives shape to the church's missional imperative in the 21st century."<sup>21</sup> But when it comes to assessing "success" in his advocacy work, Anderson states clearly, "The bottom line is, does a bill pass or fail? That's the ultimate measure of success. In this business, given the kinds of issues we take positions on, we fail a lot more than we succeed. That's just part of the

landscape. But [in the 2003–2004 biennium] we succeeded on clergy sexual misconduct. We succeeded on killing the concealed carry bill. We succeeded on killing TABOR last week. We were part of a coalition, it wasn't our doing alone. But I feel pretty good about that."

### **Faithfulness**

Perhaps all interest groups expect to "win some, lose some." But the prophetic vision of religious advocacy organizations relativizes both the wins and the losses. It puts their political advocacy and understanding of success in a broader—indeed, an ultimate—context. As William Beckman put it before the demise of the Wisconsin Christian Coalition,

I read the last chapter. I know who wins. Meanwhile, back at the ranch, we have been advised to be diligent and continue in His ways. We are going to have victories, we are going to have losses. I kid the wife all the time that when I get the grass cut and it's looking good, I have a feeling of accomplishment. Whereas this [work for the Christian Coalition] is an ongoing effort. So you can't have that sense of completion per se. We know what we are trying to accomplish, but as far as having some feeling of accomplishment, I am not so much worried about that. As a Christian, my relationship to my Lord is more important than whether I feel I have accomplished anything in the eyes of my fellow man.

Marvin Munyon, the dean of the evangelical advocates, says, "Because I do come from a strong Christian background, I feel that it's not my place to always win. And I think that many times my calling has been to be faithful, to stand and proclaim the truth. And if I do that, I don't always have to win to be the winner." This view is reflected in the official literature of the Family Research Institute, which Munyon founded in 1986: "Although not a perfect correlation, FRI sees itself as similar to the Old Testament prophets—declaring the truth to the culture. However, unlike many political organizations, FRI's primary purpose is not to win every battle. It believes the battle belongs to the Lord. This allows FRI to pursue integrity and character first, setting an example to those who are watching. FRI does try to influence the culture, but not at the price of its integrity and character. So, sometimes it wins and sometimes it loses, just like the Old Testament prophets. By maintaining this philosophy, FRI believes it will always win in the long run."<sup>22</sup>

Still, for those whose daily lives are consumed by public policy work, there is a temptation to view political ends as being the bottom line. Sharon Schmeling served as associate director of the Wisconsin Catholic Conference in the 1990s. She commented at the time, "I think it's very easy in the political process to get so focused on trying to get money for programs, trying to

get vouchers for parents, or trying to create a welfare system that is better than the one most policymakers want to create. It's really easy to forget that we're trying to spread the gospel of love and redemption and forgiveness. And if you don't keep your mind focused on that primary purpose of the church, you can just become a lobbyist who happened to work for a nonprofit organization that happened to be religious that wanted to get things or change structures—just like the business lobby or the teacher's union.” Speaking also from a Catholic perspective, Greg Chesmore of Pro-Life Wisconsin invokes Mother Teresa, who “said once that God does not call us to be successful. He calls us to be faithful. It's not about winning all kinds of victories or having a seat at the table. Ultimately, it comes down to, are we being faithful to what we know in our heart is true: that God is the author of human life. You know, Christ did not call us to be politically popular. He called us to remain faithful to the truth that He gave us. That's our driving force here. If we can do that, then regardless of our political record, we believe we're successful.”

## CONCLUSION

No one, least of all religious lobbyists themselves, would characterize religious advocacy organizations in Wisconsin as major players in the political game. In Wisconsin, as in every state, the teachers' union and manufacturers' association (and similar organized interests) are the 800-pound gorillas of the legislative process. Still, the heavily Catholic and Lutheran culture of the state, the Progressive political heritage associated with it, and the professionalization of state government allows religious advocacy organizations to occupy a significant niche in the lobbying community at the Wisconsin statehouse.

## NOTES

1. Robert C. Nesbit, *Wisconsin: A History*, 2nd ed. (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1989).
2. Leon Epstein, *Politics in Wisconsin* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1958), 20.
3. Nesbit, *Wisconsin*, 539.
4. This and the following demographic data are from Paul Voss, Daniel Veroff, and David Long, “Wisconsin's People: A Portrait of Wisconsin's Population on the Threshold of the 21st Century,” in *State of Wisconsin 2003–2004 Blue Book* (Madison: Wisconsin Legislature Joint Committee on Legislative Organization, 2003), 101–74; Economic Research Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, [www.ers.usda](http://www.ers.usda)

.gov; Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor [www.bls.gov](http://www.bls.gov); U.S. Census Bureau, U.S. Department of Commerce, [www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov).

5. Stephen Tordella, "Religion in Wisconsin: Preferences, Practices and Ethnic Composition," University of Wisconsin-Madison Applied Population Laboratory Population Series Report 70-13 (1979), p. 1.

6. See *Religious Congregations and Membership in the United States 2000* (Nashville: Glenmary Research Center, 2002).

7. Daniel Elazar, *American Federalism: A View from the States*, 2nd ed. (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell, 1972); Jean Reith Schroedel, *Is the Fetus a Person? A Comparison of Policies across the Fifty States* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2000); Robert Erickson, Gerald Wright, and John McIver, *Statehouse Democracy: Public Opinion and Policy in the American States* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993).

8. Peverill Squire, "Legislative Professionalization and Membership Diversity in State Legislatures," *Legislative Studies Quarterly* 17 (1992): 69–72; Nesbit, *Wisconsin*, 553; Ronald Hrebenar and Clive Thomas, "Interest Group Activity in the States," in *Politics in the American States: A Comparative Analysis*, 7th ed., ed. Virginia Gray, Russell Hanson, and Herbert Jacob (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Quarterly Press, 1999), 113–43; Ronald Hedlund, "Wisconsin: Pressure Politics and a Lingering Progressive Tradition," in *Interest Group Politics in the Midwestern States*, ed. Ronald Hrebenar and Clive Thomas (Ames: Iowa State University Press, 1993), 305–44; Cynthia Opheim, "Explaining the Differences in State Lobbying Regulation," *Western Political Quarterly* 44 (June 1991): 409; Virginia Gray and David Lowery, *The Population Ecology of Interest Representation: Lobbying Communities in the American States* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1996), 212.

9. Hrebenar and Thomas, "Interest Group Activity in the States."

10. Wisconsin Ethics Board, "2003 Lobbying Report" (available online at <http://ethics.state.wi.us>).

11. Ronald Hedlund, "Wisconsin," 316. Contribution figure from Wisconsin Democracy Campaign, "2001–2002 Committee Contributions to Candidates and LCCs," [www.wisdc.org/WEB\\_PAC\\_Alpha2002.html](http://www.wisdc.org/WEB_PAC_Alpha2002.html).

12. Daniel Hofrenning, *In Washington but Not of It: The Prophetic Politics of Religious Lobbyists* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1995), 6, 93.

13. Jeffrey Berry, *Lobbying for the People* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1977), 7.

14. Woodstock Theological Center, *The Ethics of Lobbying: Organized Interests, Political Power, and the Common Good* (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 2002), 24, 7–8.

15. David Yamane, *The Catholic Church in State Politics* (Lanham, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield, 2005).

16. Thanks to Annika Brophy for her research assistance on this point.

17. Allen Hertzke, *Representing God in Washington* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1988), 70, 75–76; Hofrenning, *In Washington but Not of It*, 181.

18. Clive Thomas and Ronald Hrebenar, "Comparative Interest Group Politics in the American West," *Journal of State Government*, September/October 1986, 134.

19. Dennis Dresang and James Gosling, *Politics and Policy in American States and Communities* (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1996), 160.

20. Though it does not replicate their meticulous study, these survey questions were inspired by Edward O. Laumann and David Knoke's book *The Organizational State: Social Choice in National Policy Domains* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1987), which employs network analytic techniques to model interest group activity and influence in the U.S. Congress.

21. Wisconsin Council of Churches' website, [www.wichurches.org/introducing.html](http://www.wichurches.org/introducing.html).

22. From the FRI's website, [www.fri-wi.org/About FRI/FRI Information/FRI's Focus.htm](http://www.fri-wi.org/About_FRI/FRI_Information/FRI's_Focus.htm).