

Interview Questions

To gain deeper insights into religious advocacy, Visiting Senior Research Fellow Allen D. Hertzke interviewed the leaders of 36 organizations included in this study. The interviews were conducted between early May 2009 and late July 2009. Each interview lasted about an hour and was recorded. Hertzke asked a standardized set of questions of all 36 leaders, but also posed questions specific to each organization. (See Methodology for more details.) The list below shows the standardized set of questions asked during each interview.

What is the central mission of your organization in the nation's capital? Year established?

How long have you worked as a leader here? What's changed since then?

Who or what do you represent?

What proportion of your organization's effort is public policy advocacy?

What have been your top issue concerns in the past few years? What are your priority issues this coming year? Do you have a No. 1 priority?

How do you determine issue priorities? What role does faith play in deciding?

What are the key strategies that you employ to advance policy concerns?

Roughly what proportion of your effort do you devote to grassroots advocacy, reaching out to your constituents, as compared to advocacy in Washington? How often do you meet with government officials? How do you raise public awareness of your concerns?

What role does new technology play in your work? Do you have key contact networks?

Do you make special efforts to approach public officials of your own faith tradition? Are there particular congressional offices or executive officials that you have good access to? Is one party more open to your group's issues than another?

How often do you employ religious language or arguments in talks with public officials?

Is there tension between witnessing to your faith and making strategic calculations for policy impact? Can you give me an example? How do you resolve it?

What has been the most effective lobbying campaign your organization has engaged in?

What makes religious advocacy distinctive from secular lobbying -- are there special advantages or disadvantages of religious advocacy?

Who are typically your coalition partners? How does that change from issue to issue?

Who are typically adversaries? "Strange Bedfellows"?

How will the new Obama administration and Democratic Congress affect your work?

Have you engaged in any advocacy in international forums?

What other groups should I contact? Who are the substantial players?