

Utah Requires Foreign Agents to Register as Lobbyists

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On March 22, Utah Governor Spencer Cox signed H.B. 90 into law, which notably amended the state's lobbying law to now require "foreign agents" to register as lobbyists. A "foreign agent" means an individual who engages in lobbying under contract with a foreign government, but does not include duly accredited diplomatic and consular officers. Individuals that register under this new provision are required to wear a name tag that includes the phrase "Registered Foreign Lobbyist" and, before making a lobbying communication, to inform the public official of the foreign government on whose behalf the lobbyist is lobbying.

Utah is the first state to explicitly require lobbyist registration of foreign agents. Other states, such as Texas, require lobbying registrants to indicate whether they are registered under the federal Foreign Agents Registration Act (FARA). As public interest in illuminating foreign governmental influence on U.S. governmental processes continues, more states may follow Utah's suit.

Wiley's Election Law & Government Ethics Practice frequently counsels clients on federal, state, and local lobbying compliance.

Authors

D. Mark Renaud
Partner
202.719.7405
mrenaud@wiley.law

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