2018 LOBBYING DISCLOSURE

Observations on Lobbyists' Compliance with Disclosure Requirements

What GAO Found

For the 2018 reporting period, most lobbyists provided documentation for key elements of their disclosure reports to demonstrate compliance with the Lobbying Disclosure Act of 1995, as amended (LDA). For lobbying disclosure (LD-2) reports and political contributions (LD-203) reports filed during the third and fourth quarter of 2017 and the first and second quarter of 2018, GAO estimates that

- 92 percent of lobbyists who filed new registrations also filed LD-2 reports as required for the quarter in which they first registered (the figure below describes the filing process and enforcement);
- 97 percent of all lobbyists who filed could provide documentation for lobbying income and expenses. However, an estimated 20 percent of these LD-2 reports were not properly rounded to the nearest $10,000; and
- 19 percent of all LD-2 reports did not properly disclose one or more previously held covered positions as required.

Except as noted above, these findings are generally consistent with prior reports GAO issued from 2010 through 2017.

Disclosure Process for Lobbying Firms

![Image of the disclosure process]


GAO continues to find that most lobbyists in the sample reported some level of ease in complying with disclosure requirements and in understanding the definitions of terms used in the reporting. However, some disclosure reports demonstrate compliance difficulties, such as failure to disclose covered positions or misreporting of income or expenses.

The U.S. Attorney’s Office for the District of Columbia (USAO) stated it has sufficient resources to enforce compliance. USAO continued its efforts to resolve noncompliance through filing reports or terminating registrations, as well as imposing civil and criminal penalties.

View GAO-19-357. For more information, contact Yvonne D. Jones, at (202) 512-2717 or jonesy@gao.gov.