

Issues for Canadians

Welcome to our Issues for Canadians Panel. I am here today with a person from a lobby group, a news reporter, and a Member of Parliament to discuss how they influence government decisions. Let me first direct this question to the news reporter from Aboriginal Peoples Television Network.



I understand what issues and events are currently facing the government. I receive press releases regularly that provide our news service with a place and time so that I can meet with Members of Parliament to ask them questions about current legislation. This may occur in the press gallery on Parliament Hill.

I am always asking how they are being accountable to Canadians. It is the interest of Canadians that is paramount for me. Just as Canadians have many points of view, media may also have various points of view. A news reporter in Port Alberni, BC, may report about a law affecting the fishing industry much differently than a reporter from Halifax, NS.

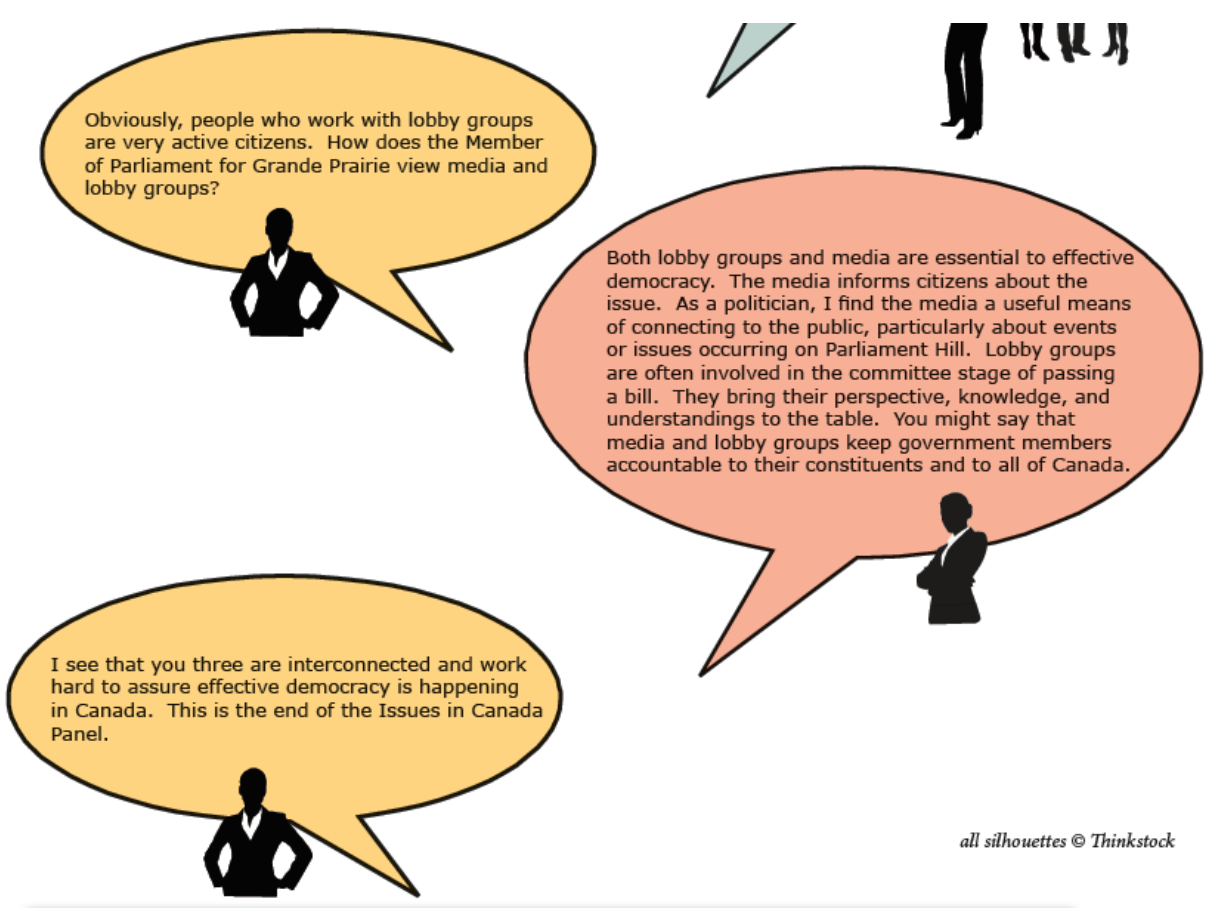


Thank you for your candid point of view. The representative for the lobby group now has an opportunity to share her thoughts.



As a member of a lobby group, I represent concerned citizens of Canada. As a group, we have a larger voice than a single citizen to pressure government. As well, we work with the media to help us pass our message to Canadians. It is important that we are able to make improvements for all citizens. We provide different perspectives and in-depth expertise on specific topics. This might be as a lobby group for environmental changes or a group for large oil refineries. Both lobby groups will have strong perspectives on the issue even though the perspectives may be very different.





Obviously, people who work with lobby groups are very active citizens. How does the Member of Parliament for Grande Prairie view media and lobby groups?

Both lobby groups and media are essential to effective democracy. The media informs citizens about the issue. As a politician, I find the media a useful means of connecting to the public, particularly about events or issues occurring on Parliament Hill. Lobby groups are often involved in the committee stage of passing a bill. They bring their perspective, knowledge, and understandings to the table. You might say that media and lobby groups keep government members accountable to their constituents and to all of Canada.

I see that you three are interconnected and work hard to assure effective democracy is happening in Canada. This is the end of the Issues in Canada Panel.