

Charities to Get Lobbying Exemption

Edmonton – Alberta’s not-for-profit organizations are set to win a major political battle this week when the government introduces an amendment to exempt them from the new lobbyist act.

Health Minister Dave Hancock will introduce the so-called “public good exemption” in the legislature today or Wednesday. It will exempt charitable or not-for-profit groups from registering as lobbyists as long as they don’t represent corporate or union interests.

The proposed amendment won immediate praise from voluntary organizations around the province.

“We were extremely pleased the government heard the message we were sending, heard the problems it would have created for the sector and decided to act,” said Bob Wyatt, the executive director of the Muttart Foundation, an Edmonton-based charitable foundation.

Katherine van Kooy, the president and CEO of the Calgary Chamber of Voluntary Organizations, agreed.

“I think the government has made a very wise decision,” she said.

The lobbyist registry was the first bill Premier Ed Stelmach introduced as premier. Its intent was to allow Albertans to see who is influencing government and on whose behalf.

It was criticized for allowing an exemption for anyone contacted by a cabinet minister.

Source: Edmonton Journal