

New York State Common Cause; Records

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M.E. Grenander Department of Special Collections & Archives

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Summary Information

Repository: M.E. Grenander Department of Special Collections & Archives

Title: New York State Common Cause Records

ID: apap059

Date [inclusive]: 1972-1987

Physical Description: 7 cubic ft.

Physical Location: The materials are located onsite in the department.

Language of the

Material:

English.

Abstract: The records of New York State Common Cause document campaigns

against political action committees, election reform, civil service

reform, and accountability issues.

Preferred Citation

Preferred citation for this material is as follows:

Identification of specific item, series, box, folder, New York State Common Cause (NYSCC) Records, 1972-1987. M.E. Grenander Department of Special Collections and Archives, University Libraries, University at Albany, State University of New York (hereafter referred to as the NYSCC Records).

Administrative History

New York State Common Cause (NYSCC), a state chapter of Common Cause, was founded in 1973 as a grassroots organization to promote an open and accountable legislative process. NYSCC advocates the participation of all members of society in the government process as a means to ensure that lawmakers will be responsible for their legislative decisions. To achieve its goals, NYSCC actively lobbies for and against legislation at the state level.

The function of the Executive Committee is to develop policy, but the Governing Board must approve these recommendations before these become the actual policy of NYSCC. The Executive Director, who is the public representative of NYSCC, is accountable to the Governing Board and implements

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policies approved by the Board. The Chairman of the Board, an unpaid member elected to this post, is the chief officer of NYSCC. With the exception of the director and some office help, NYSCC is staffed by volunteers whose major duties are to lobby legislators. NYSCC also manages an internship program which uses volunteers to generate reports, perform surveys, carry on a dialogue with lawmakers, and generally to perform the duties of a staff member.

In 1988, after having maintained two offices, one in New York City and a head office in Albany, NYSCC closed its Albany office and moved all operations to New York City, the center of its financial and volunteer support.

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Scope and Contents

The records of New York State Common Cause span the years 1972 through 1987. Since NYSCC is an organization that campaigns for accountability in government, its records would be of interest to researchers of campaigns against political action committees (PACs), 1980-86; election reform, 1977-83; civil service reform, 1978-80; and accountability issues such as Sunset Law reform, 1976-78.

A major issue of concern to NYSCC has been the contribution political action committees make to election campaigns. Studies conducted by NYSCC determined the amount of money donated to individual candidates by PACs. Another important issue documented in the records of NYSCC are several reports on the inequality of the electoral campaign system, specifically on the advantage that incumbent candidates hold in most elections.

As an early advocate and, later, as a prominent member of the New York Temporary State Commission on Lobbying, NYSCC retained ample documentation of that body, including minutes, correspondence and the records of legal challenges to the commission such as "Hobday, et al., v. the New York Temporary State Commission on Regulation of Lobbying." Other records relating to lobbying in New York State include an analysis of how agencies retained agency logs (registers of lobbyists who have approached state agencies), lobbying registration forms that NYSCCC filed with the state, and studies by NYSCC on the money spent on lobbying by business interests.

Of particular note for researchers should be the interviews with politicians contained in the OUTS (Open Up the System) surveys that NYSCC conducted from 1976 to 1980 on such issues as legislative reform, PAC regulation, lobbying reform, conflict of interest in the legislature, and the public financing of campaigns. Politicians surveyed include such prominent individuals as Senator Warren Anderson. The OUTS Surveys reveal the positions of senators and assembly persons on specific bills before the legislature as well as their attitudes toward the wider issues concerning the access to and structure of government.

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Arrangement of the Collection

- 1 Series 1 Subject Files. 1976-1987. 3 cubic feet. Arranged alphabetically.
- 2 Series 2: Issues Files. 1976-87. 3 cubic feet. Arranged alphabetically.
- 3 Series 3: Lobbying Files. 1976-87. 0.5 cubic feet. Arranged alphabetically.
- 4 Series 4: OUTS (Open Up The System). 1976-80. 0.5 cubic feet. Arranged alphabetically.

This collection is arranged into four series.

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Administrative Information

Publication Statement

M.E. Grenander Department of Special Collections & Archives

Revision Description

Encoded in EAD by Jake Widrick 2013

Processing Information

Processed in 1989 by Barbara Snow and Geoffrey Huth.

Access

Access to this record group is unrestricted.

Copyright

The researcher assumes full responsibility for conforming with the laws of copyright. Whenever possible, the M.E. Grenander Department of Special Collections and Archives will provide information about copyright owners and other restrictions, but the legal determination ultimately rests with the researcher. Requests for permission to publish material from this collection should be discussed with the Head of Special Collections and Archives.

Acquisition Information

All items in this manuscript group were donated to the University Libraries, M.E. Grenander Department of Special Collections and Archives, by New York State Common Cause on 29 April 1988.

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Controlled Access Headings

- Social Activists and Public Advocates
- Lobbying--Law and legislation
- Political action committees--Law and legislation
- Political action committees--United States
- Elections--New York (State)
- Elections--New York (State)--New York
- Albany (N.Y.)
- New York (State)
- Newsletters
- Correspondence
- Administrative records
- Minutes
- Programs (documents)
- New York State Common Cause

Collection Inventory

Administrative, 1976-1987

Physical Description: 3 cubic ft.

Arrangement

Arranged alphabetically.

Scope and Contents

This series includes correspondence, general administrative files, reports from the director to the Executive Board, General Board minutes, memoranda and agendas, executive board agendas, budgets, news releases and clippings on specific topics such as political action committees (PACs) (1980-86), election reform (1977-83), civil service reform

(1978-80), and the Sunset Law (1976-78). The series also includes correspondence with the national Common Cause regarding issues the local chapters should address.

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Correspondence, 1983 January-May	Box 1 (1- Administrative)	Folder 21
Correspondence, 1984 January-December	Box 1 (1- Administrative)	Folder 22
Correspondence, 1985	Box 1 (1- Administrative)	Folder 23
CorrespondenceCommercial Mailing, 1984-1985	Box 1 (1- Administrative)	Folder 24
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Governing Board ;amp Executive Committee Meeting Minutes, 1979	Box 2 (1- Administrative)	Folder 7
Governing Board ;amp Executive Committee Meeting Minutes, 1980	Box 2 (1- Administrative)	Folder 8
Governing Board ;amp Executive Committee Meeting Minutes, 1981	Box 2 (1- Administrative)	Folder 9
Governing Board ;amp Executive Committee Meeting Minutes, 1982	Box 2 (1- Administrative)	Folder 10

Governing Board ;amp Executive Committee Meeting Minutes, 1983

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Governing Board ;amp Executive Committee Meeting Minutes, 1984 July-December	Box 2 (1- Administrative)	Folder 13
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Issues Committee, 1984	Box 2 (1- Administrative)	Folder 25
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Lobbying Kits for Public Financing, 1979-1980	Box 2 (1- Administrative)	Folder 29
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National Program Activities, 1983-1984

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Issues, 1976-1987

Physical Description: 3 cubic ft.

Arrangement

Arranged alphabetically.

Scope and Contents

This series includes clippings and background files on topics and issues addressed by Common Cause. Some of the issues included are bottle bill legislation (1978-84), civil service reform (1977-80), PAC regulation (1980-86), campaign financing (1977-83), legislative reform (1977-83), and milk deregulation (1981-83). Also included are reports and studies generated to support specific issues.

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Bottle Bill, 1981	Box 4 (2- Issues)	Folder 7
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Bottle BillBackground Information, 1978-1982	Box 4 (2- Issues)	Folder 10
Bottle BillCampaign Gifts by Opponents to Bill, 1981	Box 4 (2- Issues)	Folder 11
Bottle BillNewspaper Clippings, 1984	Box 4 (2- Issues)	Folder 12
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Campaign FinancingLarge Contributions in New York's 1978 Race for Governor, 1980	Box 4 (2- Issues)	Folder 23

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Lobbying Files, 1976-1987

Physical Description: 0.5 cubic ft.

Arrangement

Arranged alphabetically.

Scope and Contents

The series consists mainly of correspondence and meeting minutes of the New York Temporary State Lobbying Commission regarding lobbying regulations and documentation on two court cases involving the commission, the most prominent being "Hobday, et al., v. the New York Temporary State Commission on Regulation of Lobbying." As an early advocate of the creation of the Lobbying Commission, NYSCC was represented on the commission by its director. The series also contains an analysis of New York State government agency logs, NYSCC lobbying registration forms, lobbying reports and studies on the amount of money spent on lobbying by business interests. New York State Common Cause

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Lobbying Registration and Periodic Reports for NYSCC, 1977-1978	Box 7 (3- Lobbying Files)	Folder 8
Lobbying Registration and Periodic Reports for NYSCC, 1978	Box 7 (3- Lobbying Files)	Folder 9
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Lobbying Registration and Periodic Reports for NYSCC, 1981	Box 7 (3- Lobbying Files)	Folder 11
Lobbying Registration and Periodic Reports for NYSCC, 1982	Box 7 (3- Lobbying Files)	Folder 12
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Lobbying Registration and Periodic Reports for NYSCC, 1984-1986	Box 7 (3- Lobbying Files)	Folder 14
Lobbying Registration and Periodic Reports for NYSCC, 1985	Box 7 (3- Lobbying Files)	Folder 15

New York Temporary State Commission on Lobbying--1983 Annual Report, 1984

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New York Temporary State Commission on Lobbying Correspondence, 1984	Box 7 (3- Lobbying Files)	Folder 17	
New York Temporary State Commission on Lobbying Meeting Minutes, Annual Report and Correspondence, 1980-1983	Box 7 (3- Lobbying Files)	Folder 18	
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OUTS Files (Open Up The System), 1976-1980

Physical Description: 0.5 cubic ft.

Arrangement

Arranged alphabetically

Scope and Contents

This series includes questionnaires used to survey state senators and assemblypersons as well as defeated candidates to ascertain their views on issues such as campaign funding, tax reform, broadcasting regulations, the bottle bill, the cost of education, legislative reform, PAC regulation, lobbying reform, conflict of interest in the legislature, and the public financing of campaigns. These files also include tabulations of these surveys which NYSCC used to map out strategy.

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	(Open Up The System))	
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Legislative Survey (Folder 1), 1977-1978	Box 7 (4- OUTS Files (Open Up The System))	Folder 27
Legislative Survey (Folder 2), 1977-1978	Box 7 (4- OUTS Files (Open Up The System))	Folder 28
Questionnaires for Candidates for U.S. House of Representatives, 1980	Box 7 (4- OUTS Files (Open Up The System))	Folder 29
Results for 1980, 1980	Box 7 (4- OUTS Files (Open Up The System))	Folder 30
Sample Questionnaires for 1978, 1978	Box 7 (4- OUTS Files (Open Up The System))	Folder 31
Sample Questionnaires and Results for 1972, 1974 and 1976, 197219741976	Box 7 (4- OUTS Files (Open Up The System))	Folder 32
Sample Questionnaires and Results for 1974, 1974	Box 7 (4- OUTS Files (Open Up The System))	Folder 33
Sample Questionnaires and Results for 1976 and 1978, 19761978	Box 7 (4- OUTS Files (Open Up The System))	Folder 34
Sample Questionnaires and Results for 1978 (Folder 1), 1977-1978	Box 7 (4- OUTS Files (Open Up The System))	Folder 35
Sample Questionnaires and Results for 1978 (Folder 2),	Box 7 (4-	Folder 36

(Open Up The System))

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