Today, I will be discussing lobbying and how it is being abused by powerful companies to gain more influence over the government. Have you ever wondered why the government seems to be working against the people instead of serving them? As you can probably guess, The answer is lobbying.

So what is this lobbying? its when a group or individual seeks to influence a politician or public official on an issue. While this seems like an innocent practice, it has become an outlet for exploitation.

The first and most crucial aspect of lobbying is money. In the United States, bribery is illegal, so businesses need to work around this to give money to politicians.

$70,000,000; this is the amount of money that gets spent on public interest bills through lobbying

34 times that amount, 2.6 billion dollars, is the amount that companies spend on private, profit driven bills

Even more staggering than that, is the return they get on their investments

An insane 76 thousand percent

760 times

A colossal 2 trillion dollars

To put that in perspective the average return on the stock market is only around 10%, and more than double the amount the us government spends on education

Unfortunately, this goes about just as well as one would expect. Ultra-wealthy people and businesses, through this version of lobbying, hold more power over the government than the average voter.

For example, TurboTax has been lobbying to keep people doing taxes themselves so they can profit. As a result, all those hours spent doing taxes, and all the stress caused by not wanting to get in trouble with the IRS, is solely an American experience. In other countries, the manual, archaic system is long gone.

Another offender that may not seem obvious at first is private prisons. Private, for-profit companies run these prisons and lobby for policies that increase the number of people in private prisons by nearly 800% and increased taxpayer spending on prisons by 2x, all since 2000. It has even been made so the government is incentivized to make more arrests, encouraging wrongful incarceration. As a result of this, we have an incarceration rate that is so insane that 25% of the earth's prisoners are all in America while only having 4% of the Earth’s population.

While there are downsides to lobbying, such as letting there be an outlet for companies to basically bribe our politicians, it is essential to note that not all uses of lobbying are for personal gain. Companies like Mary Kay, which is unfortunately notorious for being a pyramid scheme, has actually used their influence and lobbied for human rights acts, such as the push to renew the Violence Against Women Act. It also provides an outlet for direct communication with our politicians

With lobbying being such an easy policy to exploit, there must be a solution. Changes have been proposed include stopping congress members from receiving money from people and businesses that they have jurisdiction over, stopping lobbyists from fundraising so they cannot “raise” money to influence the politician, preventing politicians from becoming lobbyists in the future, and making the definition of lobbying more robust.

To implement these, we must emulate what we have done before just like with legalizing marijuana and gay marriage, if we pressure our local politicians to make state laws, the federal level must follow along.

In conclusion, lobbying in its current form is an easily exploited outlet for bribery, but if we tackle this problem with small but important steps, we can make the government work for the people again.