Citation

Use of LobbyView data for academic purposes (presentations, working and conference papers, theses and dissertations, journal articles, software packages) requires that you cite the following paper:

Kim, In Song (2018). "LobbyView: Firm-level Lobbying & Congressional Bills Database." Working paper available from http://web.mit.edu/insong/www/pdf/lobbyview.pdf

Report Data Export

This CSV export contains a complete copy of all LDA reports in our database. The underlying reports are taken from the U.S. Senate LDA office. We provide mappings to connect reports to specific clients and specific registrants. This data export also includes the `amount` field, which specifies expenses/income associated with lobbying.

The below table specifies the columns provided in this CSV export. The fourth column, "Linked Datasets", describes which of our other CSV datasets can be linked to this column.

Report Level Variables

Column Name	Description	Data Type	Linked Datasets
report_uuid	Unique identifier for each lobbying filing (report), officially provided by the U.S. Senate LDA Office. Can be used to link to any other metadata about the report and through the report to other data about the client, registrant, or lobbyist. This field can also be used to derive the `filing_url` described below.	TEXT	Issue Level Data, Issue Text Data
lob_id	Unique, lobbyview-constructed identifier for a lobbying client (a firm or entity that hires a registrant to lobby on their behalf). In the original LDA filings, clients are not uniquely identified or given an indicator. We disambiguate them using a novel method which produces a single ID for each entity. The disambiguation process is described here. Please refer to the Data Notes below and read more about `lob_id`.	TEXT UUID	Report Level Data, Network Level Data
registrant_id	An identifier for the registrant (lobbying firm) that files the report, can be used to link to other portions of the dataset and across reports by registrant. This field is taken directly from the LDA reports filed by the U.S. Senate LDA office.	INT	Lobbyist Level Data
registrant_name	The legal name of the registrant (lobbying firm) specified in the LDA report.	TEXT	–
filing_year	The calendar year covered by the filing. **NOTE**: This may be different than the date the filing was posted. Currently our data covers between 1999 and present.	INT	–
filing_period_code	The half or quarter of the year covered by the filing. See below for a table of possible values.	TEXT	–

LobbyView Data Export

Column Name	Description	Data Type	Linked Datasets
amount	Amount of lobbying expense in U.S. dollars. The meaning of this field varies significantly depending on the type of registrant-client relationship. For self-filers (see below), the registrant must report a good-faith estimate of the actual expenses of lobbying activities. For an external lobbying firm, the gross income of the firm from its activities (including reimbursable expenses, costs, and fees) is reportable. Amounts are rounded to the nearest ten thousand dollars ($10,000). The LDA specifies a threshold for minimum reporting amounts, which changes every few years, but is currently $3,000 per quarter for external filers and $14,000 per quarter for self-filers. Registrants below this threshold may still choose to report despite not being legally required.	INT	–
is_no_activity	Indicates that no lobbying activity by the client occurred in this period. Some filings simply reflect that a client is inactive, while others might reflect change-of-staffing (e.g. termination or registration of new lobbyists on the account). **NOTE:** Not all filings with amount equal to $0 are no-activity filings; amounts need not be reported below particular thresholds.	BOOL	–
is_self_filer	Indicates that the registrant (who files the report) is the same entity as the client (who requisitions the lobbying). If TRUE, the lobbyists on the report are in-house lobbyists rather than external firm employees. **NOTE:** The meaning of the amount field varies for self-filers versus external lobbyists according to the parameters of the Lobbying Disclosure Act; see above for further details.	BOOL	–
is_amendment	Indicates if the report amends a previously filed version of the same report. This data release includes only one version of each filing (the most recent), but we include this field so that researchers are aware that other versions of the filing may exist.	BOOL	–
filing_url	A URL pointing to the original PDF version of the lobbying report, hosted by the U.S. Senate LDA office. **NOTE:** These URLs have been stable in recent years, but we cannot warrant that they will remain available indefinitely. If the original PDF filing is important to your research, we recommend archiving it as soon as possible. We regret that we cannot assist researchers to locate original filings in cases where these URLs cease to function.	TEXT	–

Filing Period Codes

All filing codes reflect calendar years, not corporate financial years. Quarterly filing codes began use in 2008, and bi-annual filing codes were discontinued in 2011-2012.

Filing Period Code	Description
H1	Mid-Year (Jan 1 - Jun 30)
H2	Year-End (Jul 1 - Dec 31)
Q1	1st Quarter (Jan 1 - Mar 31)
Q2	2nd Quarter (Apr 1 - Jun 30)
Q3	3rd Quarter (Jul 1 - Sep 30)
Q4	4th Quarter (Oct 1 - Dec 31)

Data Notes and Versions

This data was generated on 2024-10-25. For detailed version history, please see the `version.pdf` file.

Versions of the data beginning with v2024.10.01 are strictly incompatible with previous versions of the data. We made improvements to the process we used to disambiguate and identify unique clients and connect clients to external datasets. The `lob_id` field contains the newest, most accurate identifier assigned to client entities. Prior versions of LobbyView data included a `client_uuid` field. This field is deprecated. We are investigating providing a mapping of `lob_id` to `client_uuid` fields, but have no ETA to report.

Reporting Data Issues

Our team has invested an enormous amount of effort to ensure that the LobbyView data is of the highest possible quality. If you detect an error in our data, we would love to hear from you. Please contact lobbydata@gmail.com and include as much information as possible so we can understand the error you are reporting.

Connecting LobbyView Data

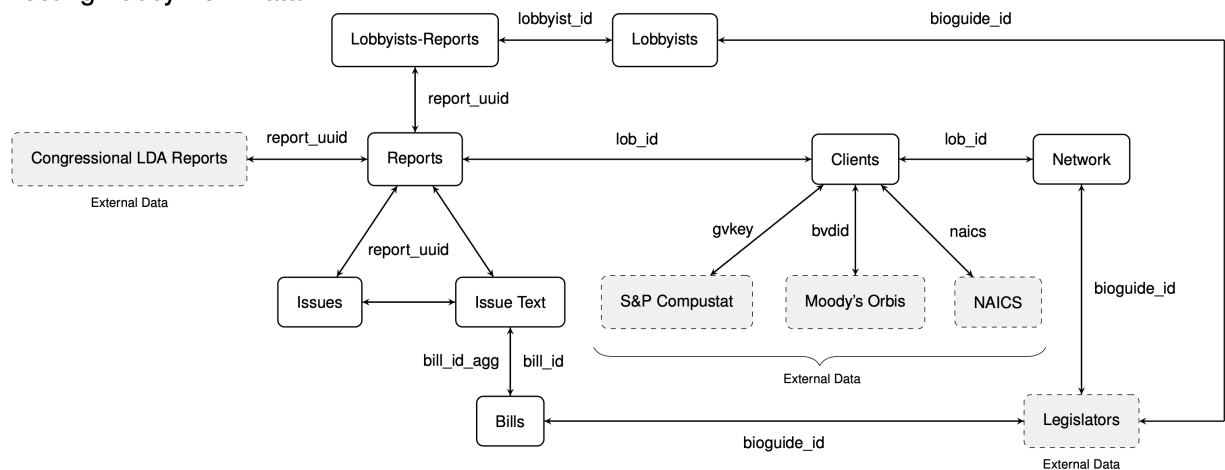The below diagram provides a quick guide explaining how to connect each LobbyView data download to each other, and to external datasets.

Figure 1: Connection Diagram