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**MARKETPLACE**

**SHOW: Marketplace (6:30 PM ET) - SYND**

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**HEADLINE:** Martin Kaplan of the Annenbeg School for Communication on the intersection of lobbying and politics

**ANCHORS:** DAVID BRANCACCIO

**BODY:**

DAVID BRANCACCIO, anchor:

This is MARKETPLACE. I'm David Brancaccio.

One of the longest-serving lobbyists in Washington is said to be moving toward the exit. Jack Valenti has represented the motion picture industry for 37 years. Published reports suggest that the studios are far from consensus on a possible replacement for Valenti, a former senior aide to President Lyndon Johnson. The Washington Post has been reporting that lobby groups, like the Motion Picture Association of America, are under pressure organized by Republicans to ensure that when major lobbying jobs come open in Washington, the positions go to Republicans. It's called the K Street Project. Martin Kaplan, associate dean of the Annenberg School for Communication at the University of Southern California, is an expert on the intersection of money and politics.

Mr. MARTIN KAPLAN (Associate Dean, Annenberg School of Communication, University of Southern California): K Street is the part of Washington where the big lobbies have their headquarters. Washington started as a swamp; some people would say it still is when you look at what goes on on K Street, which is basically a simple transaction: money for access.

BRANCACCIO: It's a fourth branch of government, but it's one that we don't spend quite enough time on in civics class.

Mr. KAPLAN: No, and that's a shame because, in many ways, what's done on K Street is the most revealing of the pathology of government now. In some ways it's the animus toward K Street and toward Washington business-as-usual that made for the Ross Perot, John McCain and now Howard Dean boomlets. Members of Congress go to lobbyists and say, 'Give me money, and then I'll let you come to my office and tell me about what's on your mind.' Members of

Congress want to be lobbyists because, after all, Congress is just two years at a time; lobbyists, as in the case of Jack Valenti, for example, can be a lifelong career.

BRANCACCIO: Jack Valenti represents the Motion Picture Association.

Mr. KAPLAN: Yes and has recently said that he's thinking about stepping down. And so the various firms that make up the MPAA are talking about successors, but as they do so it's under the shadow of the so-called K Street Project, which is a naked effort to make sure that every big lobbyist is a Republican. It used to be if you were a lobbying firm, you had a Republican and a Democrat at the top. Now the K Street Project, which is run by Tom "The Hammer" DeLay from the House, Rick Santorum from the Senate and Grover Norquist, a conservative advocate--what they want to do is ensure that every single new hire, and these are real plum jobs, is vetted the way the right wing would vet justice appointments.

BRANCACCIO: To what end, though, really? For the purposes of coordinating policy, you think?

Mr. KAPLAN: To make sure, first, that all the good, plum jobs go to their cronies and not the cronies of the other party and, second, because they don't want to have to deal with somebody who is not on their team. Their point is that they have the House, they have the Senate, they have the White House; they should also have K Street. The iron lock on policy includes the source of big money in Washington.

BRANCACCIO: But lobbyist is a--is a plum job? I mean, clearly they get the nice suits and the nice loafers and so forth. But, I mean, lobbyist isn't something you want to admit in public that you do, is it?

Mr. KAPLAN: It didn't used to be a glamorous profession, but I think now being a top lobbyist is considered so attractive that members of Congress who chair powerful committees are happy to have their names bruited about as being potential members of this new kind of Washington royalty. In fact, what they do as lobbyists is participate in shakedown and extortion schemes, which is notable not only for the amount of money spent but also for the fact that it's perfectly legal and will remain so as long as people on both sides, both on K Street and the Hill, are able to scratch each other's backs doing it.

BRANCACCIO: Martin Kaplan is also director of the Norman Lear Center at USC.