


Interest Groups

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- + ■ **Today** Describe the importance of the roles **interest groups** play in influencing the actions and policies of government.

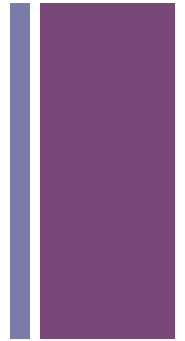
- **Warm Up:**

You are a Hempfield High School student who is unhappy with lunches in your school.

What might some of your options be as far as influencing the existing person or group in charge of changing those hours according to your preference?

+ Ask Questions...

- What are interest groups and what do they have to do with government?
- How is participation in interest groups an effective way of influencing government?



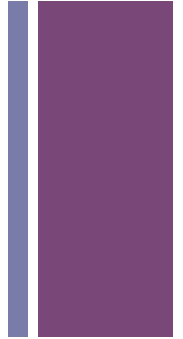
+ Interest Groups



- An interest group is a group of people who share common goals and organize to influence government.
- Protected under the First Amendment
- Which part?
 - The right to assemble

+ Interest Groups

- These groups spend a great deal of money to persuade and influence
- Persuading government officials to support bills or policies the group feels will be beneficial.



+ Interest Groups are NOT Political Parties

- ...They do not nominate candidates.
 - ...They are only concerned with a few specific issues and do not try to gain members with different opinions.
 - ...Organized on the basis of common values
- LETS LOOK CLOSER...

+
Interest Groups are

NOT Political Parties

- Parties nominate candidates, contest elections, and seek to gain control over government.
- *In contrast, interest groups seek to support public officials and influence government policies...NOT nominate candidates*

+ Interest Groups are NOT Political Parties

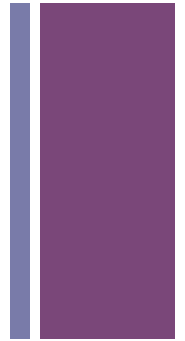
- • Parties have positions on a wide range of public issues.
- *In contrast, interest groups focus only on specific issues that directly affect their members.*

+ Interest Groups are NOT Political Parties

- Political parties are public organizations that are accountable to the voters.
- *In contrast, interest groups are private organizations that are accountable to their members*

+ GOALS OF INTEREST GROUPS

1. To influence public policy (change laws)
 - o Get legislation passed to benefit their members
2. Gain access and talk with policymakers (lawmakers)
3. Support like minded policymakers



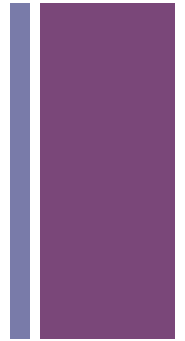
Types of Interest Groups

- Public Interest Groups
- Economic Interest Groups
- Professional Groups
- Ideological Groups
- Single-Issue Groups

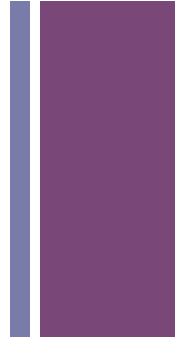


+ Major Special Interest Groups

- National Association for the Advancement of Colored People <http://www.naacp.org>
- American Federation of Labor-Congress of Industrial Organization
<http://www.aflcio.org>
- American Medical Association
<http://www.ama-assn.org/>
- National Education Association
<http://www.nea.org/>

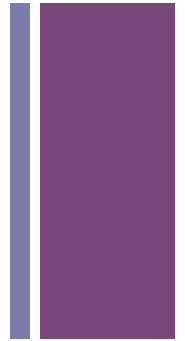


+ Purpose of Interest Groups



- Provide Americans with additional representation
- Seek to Inform the Public and Officials of **Issues**
 - Letter Writing Campaigns
 - Media Campaigns

+ TACTICS of Interest Groups



1. Mass mailing (computerized and targeted)
2. Litigation – groups often take an issue to court if they are unsuccessful in gaining the support of Congress (used by NAACP, ACLU, NOW, etc.)

+TACTICS of Interest Groups



3. Use of mass media

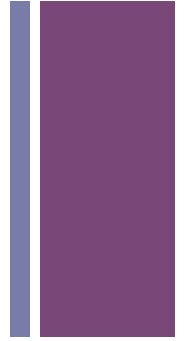
- o Independent expenditures
- o Issue advocacy

4. Boycotting

5. Electioneering – working for the success of a particular candidate, party, ticket, etc., in an election

- o Funneling volunteers to campaigns
- o Encouraging members to vote
- o Campaign contributions
- o Endorsement of candidates
- o “Targeting” of unfriendly candidates
- o Issuing “report cards” to rate candidates

+ 6. Lobbying/Lobbyist



- **Lobbying** is the process of making direct contact with government leaders in attempt to influence policy.
- **Lobbyists** are the representatives of interest groups who conduct such work.



HOW DOES IT WORK?

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9Ua_rfZfRTM

LEARNING ABOUT GROUPS

http://www.learner.org/courses/democracyinamerica/dia_14/dia_14_ct.html