

AP U.S. Government & Politics

Slide 1



At the top, members of the NAACP plan a voter targeting campaign during the 1960 presidential election. Below, television host Stephen Colbert and members of Colbert Nation celebrate the creation of a Super PAC for the 2012 election cycle.

Slide 2

Learning Objectives

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What do political scientists say is the cause of interest groups and why does it happen? Pages 424-425

What are four different types of interest groups and how does each wish to influence Congress? Pages 429-433

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Learning Objectives

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In what ways do interest groups allow citizens to participate in government? Pages 433-438

What is lobbying and in what different ways does lobbying occur? Pages 434-437

What do interest groups do? Pages 433-439

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What Causes Interest Groups? 15.1

- Pluralist theory
 - Political power distributed among groups
- Disturbance theory
 - Groups form in response to change
- Transactions theory
 - Public policy results from transactions among political players.

the BIG BANG THEORY

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There is no shortage of theories to explain how interest groups form and influence public policy. The pluralist theory, for example, argues that political power is divided among a wide range of competing interest groups.

Taken one step further, this becomes disturbance theory, which claims that interest groups form in response to changes in the political system.

In turn, groups that are opposed to the first group's interests will form as well, thus ensuring that a wide range of voices are active in the political system. Ironically, this is evident in the establishment of transactions theory, which arose out of criticism of the pluralist and disturbance approaches.

Transactions theorists suggest that policies are actually the result of narrowly defined exchanges or transactions among political actors. The transactions are narrow because the elite classes have more time and money available to mobilize into interest groups. Therefore, according to transactions theorists, the voices heard most often in the political system belong to the elites.

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Kinds of Organized Interests 15.1

- Public interest groups
 - Seek a collective good
- Economic interest groups
 - Promote the economic interests of their members
- Governmental units
 - State and local governments lobby, too
- Political action committees
 - Officially registered fundraising organizations that represent interest groups



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Interest groups can take many forms, as we've already said. Public interest groups, for example, seek a collective good for a larger group of people. Both the Civil Rights movement and the Progressive Era's push for better working and living conditions for immigrants fall under this category.

Economic interest groups, on the other hand, exist to promote the economic interests of their members. These include trade and professional organizations such as the American Medical Association and labor groups such as the AFL-CIO.

Next we have governmental units. In the increasingly complex world of federal policy and bureaucracy, state and local governments have found themselves needing to lobby for their interests as well.

Finally, we have Political Action Committees, which are officially registered fundraising organizations that represent interest groups in the political process.

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TABLE 15.1 What are the Characteristics of Selected Interest Groups? 15.1

Name (Founded)	Membership	PAC?	Fundraising—2014 Election Cycle*
AARP (1958)	40 million	N	n/a
AFSCME (1988)	11.5 million	Y	\$433,007
MoveOn.org (1998)	6 million	Y	\$6,236,298
U.S. Chamber of Commerce (1912)	2 million businesses	Y	\$390,276
Sierra Club (1892)	1.4 million	Y	\$1,167,762
National Rights Campaign (1989)	700,000	Y	\$1,327,612
Planned Parenthood Federation of America (1916)	700,000	Y	\$1,042,967
Christian Coalition (1989)	600,000	N	n/a
National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) (1909)	600,000	N	n/a
League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC) (1906)	110,000	N	n/a
Public Citizen, Inc. (1971)	80,000	N	n/a

*Fundraising data based on money raised through October 15, 2014.
SOURCE: Center for Responsive Politics, www.opensecrets.org (accessed November 10, 2014).

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Let's take a quick look at Table 15.1, which shows us the membership levels and fundraising characteristics of some of the major interest groups. As you can see, the AARP tops the membership list with 40 million members, followed by the AFL-CIO, which we mentioned in the last slide, with 11.5 million members, and MoveOn.org, which has 5 million members.

Source: www.opensecrets.org (November 10, 2012).

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National Groups Emerge (1830–1889) 15.2

- American Anti-Slavery Society
 - One of the first national groups
- Women's Christian Temperance Union
 - Sought Prohibition
- The Grange
 - Educated farmers sought legislation
- Business Interests
 - Standard Oil
 - Railroad



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All kinds of local interest groups existed in America since the days of the colonies and early states. But it was not until the 1830s, when communication networks improved, that national groups began to form.

Often, these groups formed around a single issue. For example, the American Anti-Slavery Society, founded by William Lloyd Garrison, was one of the first national groups. The Women's Christian Temperance Union, which sought prohibition, is another example of an early national group. Following the Civil War, the Grange formed to help teach farmers about the

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latest agricultural developments and seek legislation to help them.

Business interests grew active during this time as well. In 1861 the Central Pacific Railroad sent its own lobbyist to Washington D.C. In turn, it received vast land grants and subsidized loans.

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The Progressive Era (1890–1920) 15.2

- Organized Labor
 - American Federation of Labor
 - Clayton Act allowed unions to strike.
- Business Groups and Trade Associations
 - National Association of Manufacturers
 - Chamber of Commerce



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The Progressive movement rose in response to rapid industrialization and the poor working and living conditions that followed. Progressive Era interest groups called for everything from public libraries to unions to an end to racial discrimination. Out of this was born the organized labor movement.

The American Federation of Labor was the first national labor union of skilled workers and it had to push back hard when business interests sought to outlaw unions. Ultimately, the AFL was able to get the Clayton Act passed in 1914. This allowed unions to organize and even to strike.

In response to the growing strength of unions, the trade association National Association

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of Manufacturers was formed in 1895. It became very active politically in 1913.

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Lobbying 15.3

- Lobbying Congress
- Lobbying the executive branch
- Lobbying the courts
- Grassroots lobbying
- Protests and radical activism

A cartoon illustration showing a man in a suit pointing at a group of people. One person says, "NUCLEAR POWER IS CLEAN AND GREEN, YES?" and another responds, "DON'T TAKE MY WORD FOR IT, ASK THE LOBBYISTS!"

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Lobbying lobbying is defined as the activities of a group or organization that seeks to persuade political leaders to support the group's position.

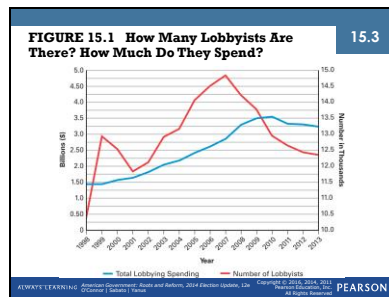
Almost all interest groups lobby by testifying at hearings and contacting legislators. They may provide information to lawmakers and encourage their members to rally around the cause. Interest groups lobby by testifying, sending letters or emails and, of course, giving campaign contributions.

Interests groups also lobby the executive branch, which has become more involved in recent years with shaping legislation, and the courts. Interest groups lobby the courts by filing lawsuits or "friend of the court" briefs in cases they are interested in.

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Grassroots lobbying is where group members turn up the heat in some way on lawmakers. Radical activism uses highly visible tactics to change policy. The most famous example of this type of protest came early in our history with the Boston Tea Party.

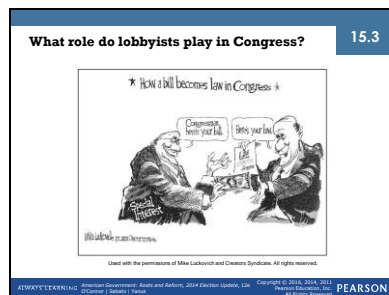
Slide 10



Each year, more than 10,000 lobbyists attempt to influence public policy in Congress and the federal agencies. This large-scale lobbying effort is an expensive industry, costing billions of dollars each year.

Source: *Center for Responsive Politics*,
<http://www.opensecrets.org/lobby/index.php>.

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This cartoon presents one popular view of how legislation gets enacted on Capitol Hill. While interest groups do not literally "buy" members' votes. They do reward loyal supporters in Congress with campaign contributions and other incentives.

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Election Activities 15.3

- Candidate recruitment and endorsements
- Getting out the vote
- Rating the candidates or office holders
- Campaign contributions



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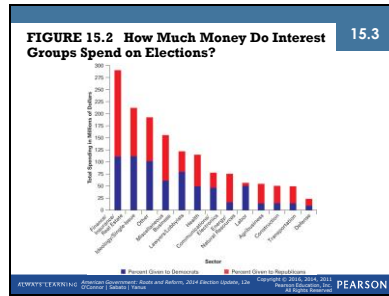
Interest groups try to influence what legislation gets passed and who passes the legislation by becoming involved in the electoral process. Some groups recruit, endorse and may even provide financial assistance to political candidates they want to see in office.

The next step is, of course, getting those candidates elected. Many interest groups have impressive "Get out the vote" programs. They identify voters who are likely to support the group's position and actually drive them to the polls. Groups that don't have the resources to drive voters publish guides that rate candidates based on how closely they align to the group's positions and goals.

Interest groups also raise and distribute money to candidates in several ways. Their members can give directly to candidates, or the organization can create a Political Action Committee to coordinate giving to candidates.

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Political action committees play an important role in national elections. The amount of money they spend and how it is allocated between Democrats and Republicans varies widely over interest group sectors.

Source: *Data from the Center for Responsive Politics,*
<http://www.opensecrets.org/industries/index.php>, accessed November 10, 2012.

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All interest groups want to influence public policy, though they may go about it differently. Interest groups succeed when they win legislation or court cases, or when they get the person they want elected or defeat the person they don't like.

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Slide 15

Funding and Patrons 15.4

- Revenue to cover costs
 - Membership dues
 - Direct-mail solicitations
 - Special events
 - Patrons



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Influencing public policy is not cheap. To help cover costs, interest groups must rely on a variety of ways to raise money, from membership dues to direct-mail solicitations. Interest groups may also rely on special events to raise money and on the generous donations of wealthy patrons.

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Members 15.4

- Levels of membership
 - Leadership
 - Working members
 - Dues-paying members
 - "Free-riders"
- Variety of benefits
 - AAA roadside assistance
 - AARP discounts for individuals over age 50



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As you can imagine, not all members of interest groups participate equally. At the top are the leaders, who plan and direct the activities of the organization. Next are the workers of the organization. They attend meetings, pay dues and chair committees to make sure things get done. Finally there is the last level of membership, the rank-and-file members who may pay dues but do little more.


So-called "free-riders" may benefit from a group's activities without joining at all. The bigger the group, the greater the chances of free-riders. To encourage people to formally join an organization, some groups will offer additional, tangible benefits only to members. For example, AAA offers roadside assistance to members, while AARP offers discounts.

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Regulating Congressional Lobbyists 15.5

- Federal Regulation of Lobbying Act (1946)
 - Required registration of lobbyists
- Lobbying Disclosure Act (1995)
 - Stricter definition of lobbying
 - Tougher registration requirements
 - Report clients and issues
 - Estimate amount paid by clients



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It took a while, but in 1946 Congress began regulating the activities of the people who are paid to lobby. In 1946 Congress passed the Federal Regulation of Lobbying Act, which required some registration of lobbyists.

Congress passed the Lobbying Disclosure Act in 1995. This one was tougher: there was a stricter definition of lobbying and stricter registration requirements. Lobbyists had to report their clients and issues and estimate how much they were getting paid.

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Regulating Congressional Lobbyists 15.5

- Honest Leadership and Open Government Act of 2007
 - Bans on gifts
 - Longer waiting periods



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After lobbyist Jack Abramoff pleaded guilty to corruption charges in 2006, Congress passed the Honest Leadership and Open Government Act of 2007. This act banned gifts and public speaking fees and put longer waiting periods in place before a person could move from a job with the federal government to a lobbying position in the private sector.

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Regulating Judicial Branch Lobbyists 15.5

- Few formal regulations
- *Amicus curiae* is chief tool



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As for the judicial branch, its lobbying activities have few formal regulations. Parties must ask permission to file *amicus curiae* briefs, but this is usually granted. Some people have called for restrictions on so-called "legal education" seminars, which judges attend at fancy resort hotels and which are paid for by lobbyists. So far, however, these regulations have not passed.


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Further Review 12

Complete your study guide questions.

Answer test prep questions on Naviance.

Study with table group members.



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