

Warm Up: 2/9

WARM UP ACTIVITY

- What factors make interest groups more successful than others?
 - How does this relate to contemporary democratic theory?
- Explain the ways that Lobbyists attempt to affect policy.

LESSON ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

1. What is mass media and how does it influence politics?
2. Where do most people get their news?
3. How has media changed over time?
4. How are media and interest groups interrelated?

February 9th, 2018

Interest Groups

Intro. To Mass Media & Interest Groups

TODAY'S OBJECTIVE

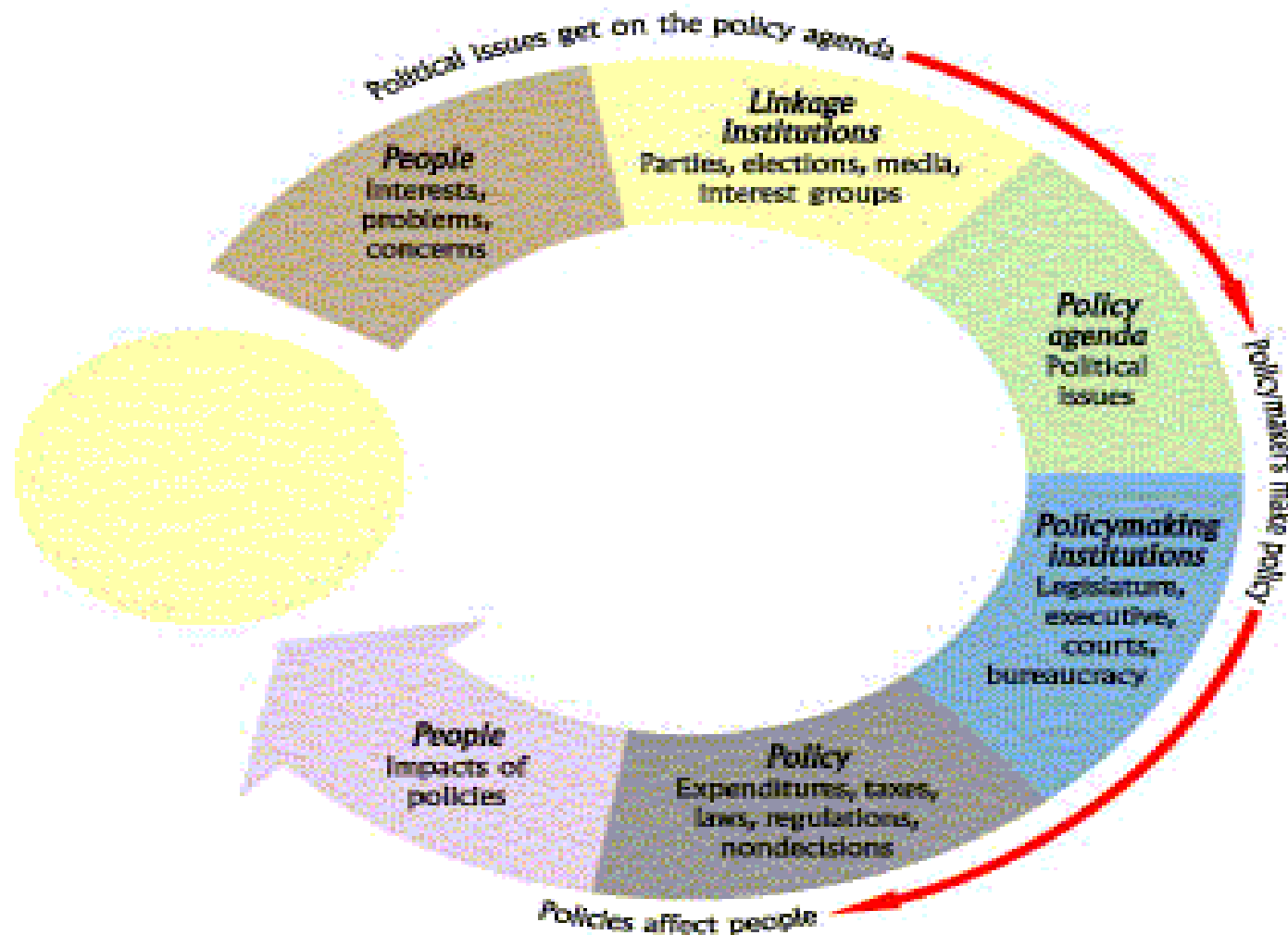
- Political scientists will, verbally and in writing, ***evaluate*** the role of media in politics and ***analyze*** the influences of interest groups on policy making.

Relevance: While people have the ultimate say in a democracy, media and interest groups have significant influence over who gets elected, what gets passed and how public opinion forms.

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

1. What is mass media and how does it influence politics?
2. Where do most people get their news?
3. How has media changed over time?
4. How are media and interest groups interrelated?

Where are we on the policy wheel?



Interest Groups (Chapter 10)



Interest Groups

- Organization of people with shared policy goals entering policy process at one of several points.
- Political Parties run candidates for office

WHILE

- Interest groups are policy specialists attempt to establish alliances with candidates
 - Independent Exp.- 501(c)

Theories of Interest Group Politics

- Pluralism and Group Theory
 - Groups provide a key link between the people and the government.
 - Groups compete and no one group will become too dominant.
 - Groups play by the “rules of the game.”
 - Groups weak in one resource may use another.
 - Lobbying is open to all so is not a problem.

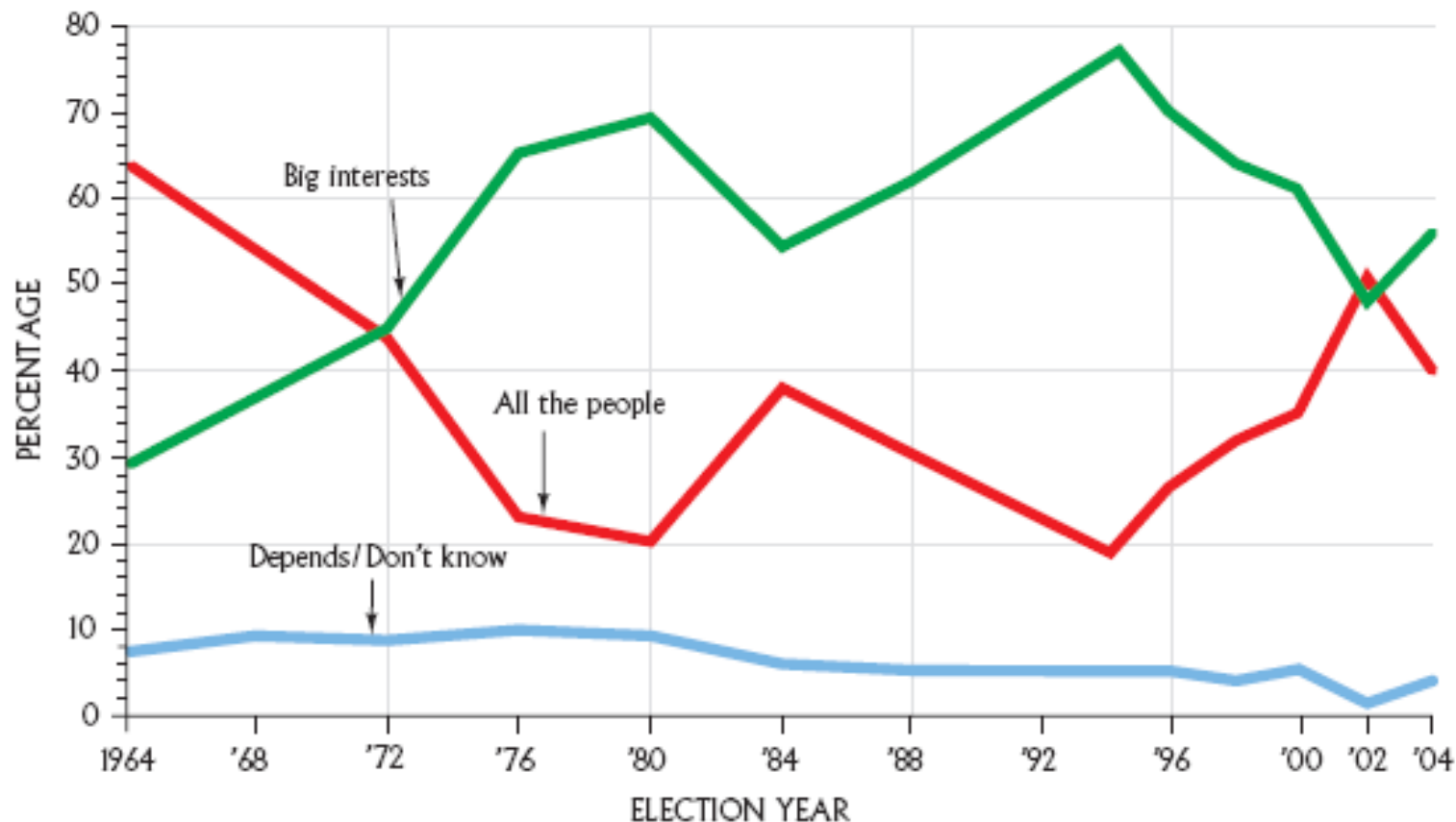
Theories of Interest Group Politics: Pluralism

- Elites and the Denial of Pluralism
 - Real power is held by the relatively few.
 - The largest corporations hold the most power.
 - Elite power is fortified by a system of interlocking directorates of these corporations and other institutions.
 - Other groups may win many minor policy battles, but elites prevail when it comes to big policy decisions.
 - Lobbying is a problem because it benefits the few at the expense of the many.

Theories of Interest Group Politics: Elitism

FIGURE 11.1

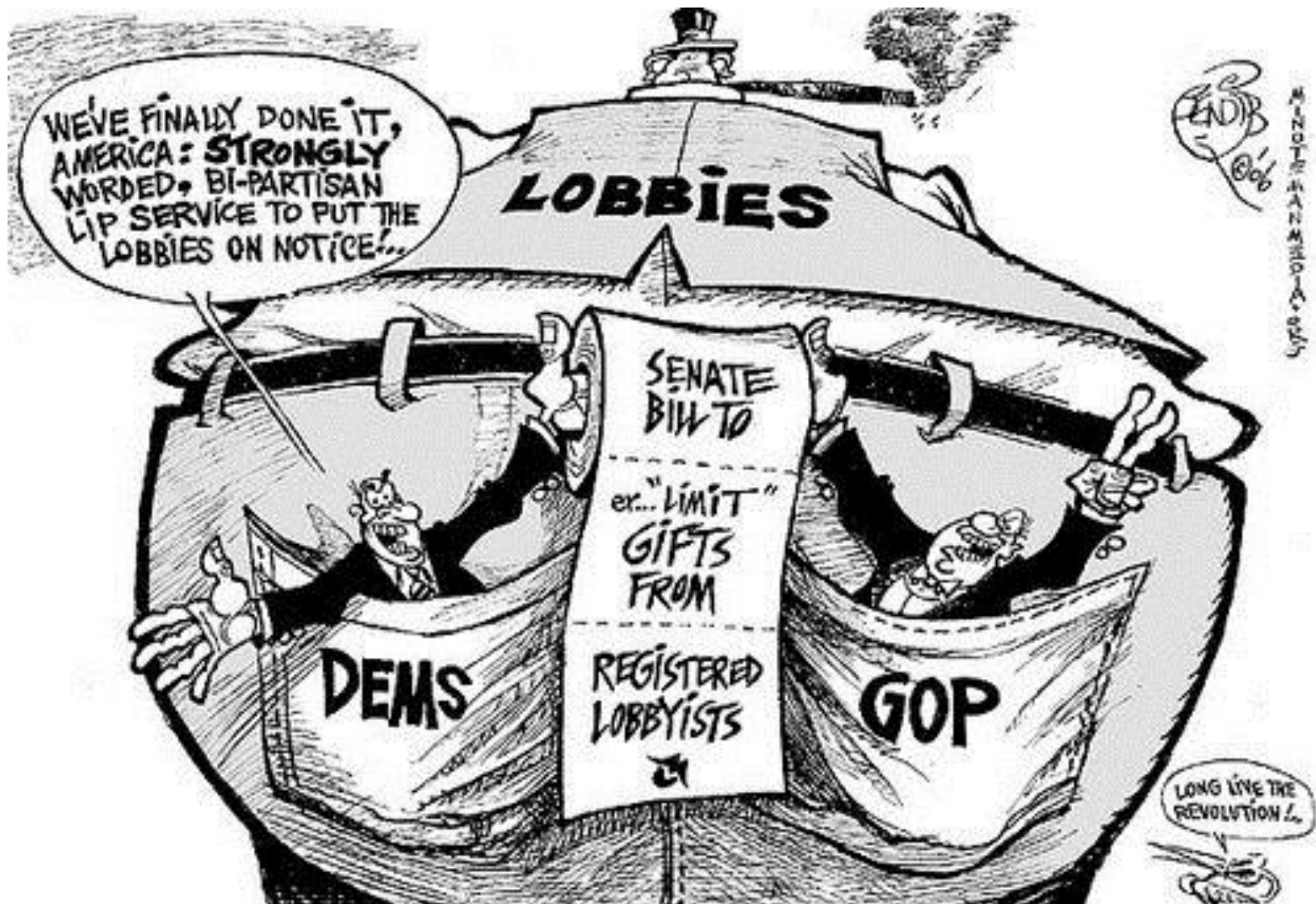
Perceptions of the Dominance of Big Interests



Theories of Interest Group Politics: Hyperpluralism

- Subgovernments
 - Networks of groups that exercise a great deal of control over specific policy areas.
 - Consist of interest groups, government agency, and congressional committees that handle particular policies
 - Also known as iron triangles
- The hyperpluralist critique
 - Groups have become too powerful as the government tries to appease every interest.
 - Many subgovernments (iron triangles) aggravate the process.
 - Trying to please every group results in contradictory policies.

Lobbying



What Makes an Interest Group Successful?

TABLE 11.1

The Power 25

1. National Rifle Association	14. National Education Association
2. American Association of Retired Persons	15. American Farm Bureau Federation
3. National Federation of Independent Business	16. Motion Picture Association of America
4. American Israel Public Affairs Committee	17. National Association of Broadcasters
5. Association of Trial Lawyers of America	18. National Right to Life Committee
6. AFL-CIO	19. Health Insurance Association of America
7. Chamber of Commerce	20. National Restaurant Association
8. National Beer Wholesalers Association	21. National Governors' Association
9. National Association of Realtors	22. Recording Industry
10. National Association of Manufacturers	23. American Bankers Association
11. National Association of Homebuilders	24. Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America
12. American Medical Association	25. International Brotherhood of Teamsters
13. American Hospital Association	

What Makes an Interest Group Successful?

- The Surprising Ineffectiveness of Large Groups
 - Potential group: all the people who might be interest group members because they share a common interest
 - Actual group: the part of the potential group consisting of members who actually join
 - Collective good: something of value that cannot be withheld from a group member

What Makes an Interest Group Successful?

■ Free-Rider Problem

- Some people don't join interest groups because they benefit from the group's activities without officially joining.
- Bigger the group, larger the problem
- Large groups are difficult to organize

■ Olson's law of large groups:

- "The larger the group, the further it will fall short of providing an optimal amount of a collective good."
 - Overcome Olson's law by providing selective benefits: Goods that a group can restrict to those who pay their annual dues

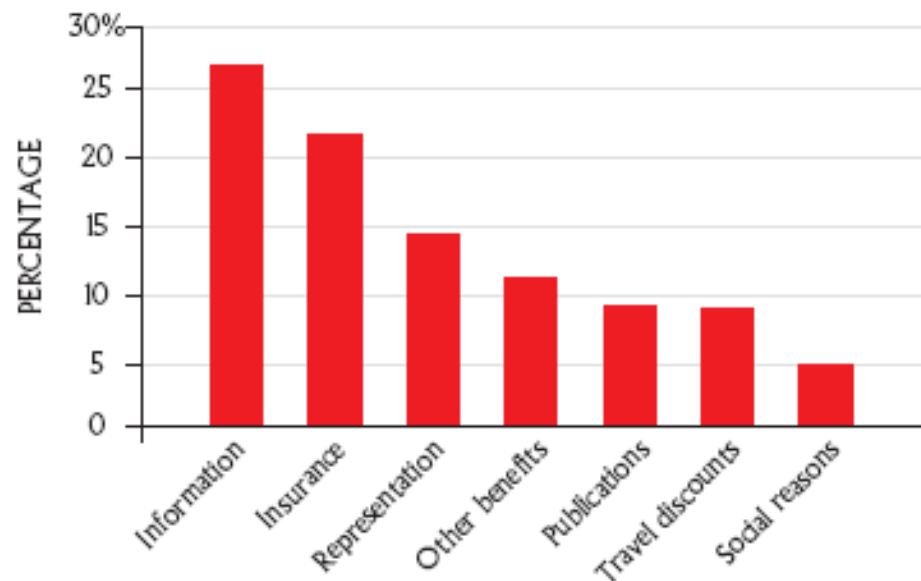
What Makes an Interest Group Successful?

- Small groups are better organized and more focused on the group's goals.
 - Multinational corporations are successful because there are few of them and, therefore, have an easier time organizing for political action.
 - Consumer groups have a difficult time getting significant policy gains because the benefits are spread over the entire population.
 - Public interest lobbies seek “a collective good, the achievement of which will not selectively and materially benefit the membership activities of the organization.”

What Makes an Interest Group Successful?

FIGURE 11.2

The Benefits of Membership in the American Association of Retired Persons



This chart illustrates the answers given by a sample of members of the American Association of Retired Persons when they were asked why they had joined the organization.

Source: American Association for Retired Persons.

What Makes an Interest Group Successful?

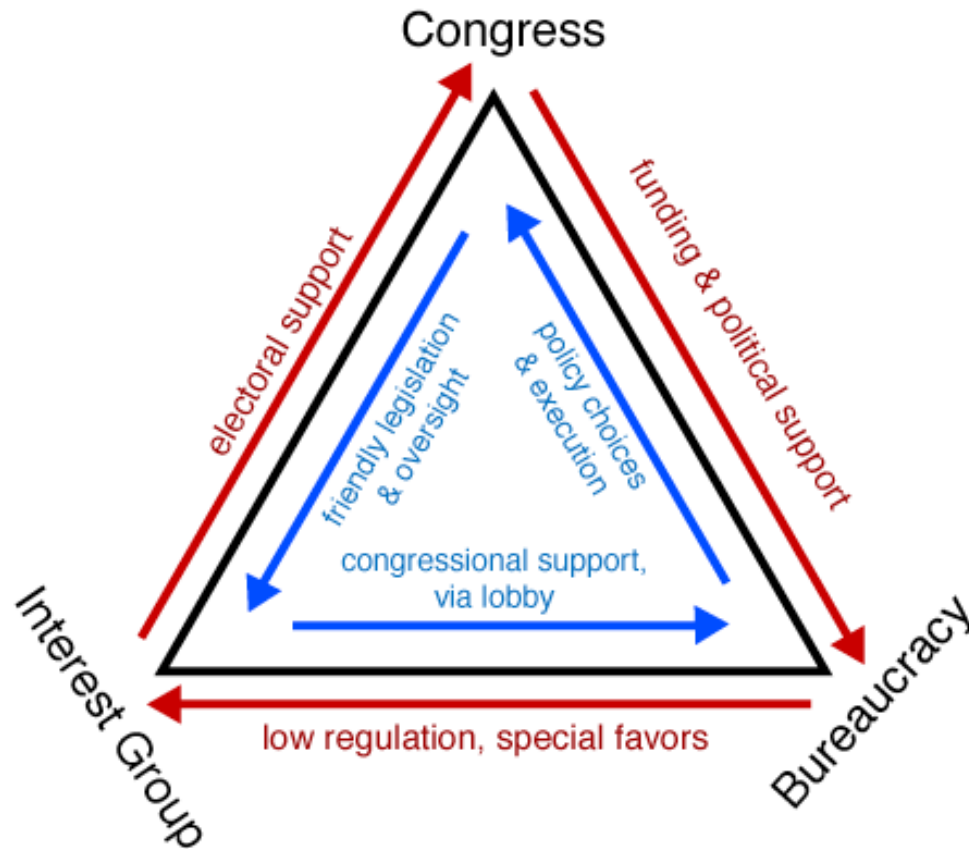
- Intensity
 - Single-Issue groups: groups that focus on a narrow interest, dislike compromise, and often draw membership from people new to politics
 - Groups may focus on an emotional issue, providing them with a psychological advantage.
 - Intensity encourages non-conventional means of participation, i.e.—protests

What Makes an Interest Group Successful?

- Financial Resources

- Not all groups have equal amounts of money.
- Monetary donations usually translate into access to the politicians, such as a phone call, meeting, or support for policy.
- Wealthier groups have more resources—and presumably more access—but they do not always win on policy.

The Iron Triangle



- Concept (not an institution) where a number of institutions work together to develop and conserve their own power and influence over policy-making:
 - Committees in the House and Senate
 - Federal departments and agencies
 - Think tanks and interest groups

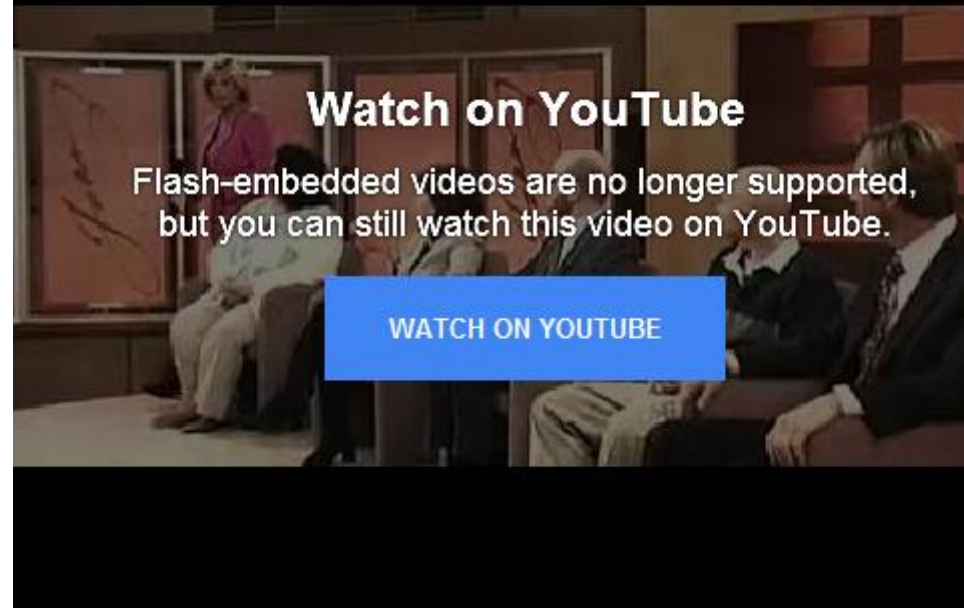
Lobbying

Lobbying

- “communication by someone other than a citizen acting on his or her own behalf, directed to a governmental decision-maker with the hope of influencing his decision”

Lobbyists serve many purposes:

- Source of info for politicians
- Help plan strategies
- Plan re-election campaigns
- Provide ideas/innovations for which politicians can take credit



Interest Group's Impacts on Policy

- **Working directly with politicians**
- **Electioneering**
 - Direct group involvement in election process with intent to influence outcome
 - PACs, 527s & 501(c), contributions & expenditures
- **Amicus curiae- “friend of the court”**
 - Sponsor and provides a brief for a Class Action lawsuit to get a court to rule in favor of their perspective on an issue
- **Going Public**
 - Groups attempt to cultivate good public image through marketing strategy & grassroots lobbying
 - Independent expenditures on media

P.I. Objective

Working with your group and acting under your recently new role:

Select an interest group from the [Top 50 Interests](#) and conduct research on a specific group within that category . Focus on their recent political involvement and activities.

Each role has a very specific task

Team Coordinator: In charge of writing thesis and abstract of overall group findings.

Political Scientists: Find and analyze statistical evidence regarding campaign finance, independent expenditures and membership

Political Theorist: Analyze the political ideologies and party relationships of the group. Explain where they fall on the political spectrum and why. Include terms, concepts & themes in text.

Civil Analyst: Analyze this interest group's impacts (positive/negative) on Americans.

You will be presenting your findings in 10 minute presentations on Wednesday, Feb. 15-16th .