



What is an interest group?

What makes Interest Groups powerful?

Size- Power of AARP – 25% of the population 50 and over

Intensity – drive or effort put forth (single issue groups fall into this category)

Money- form a PAC (Political Action Committee) – donate money to campaigns and advertising

Lobbying:

Lobby – influence government policy

Ex - call/email officials, meet and socialize, go to lunch, testify at committee hearings, ask for political favors

Electioneering:

Electioneering – keep people in office who are sympathetic to group wants and needs

Ex. - GIVE MONEY TO CAMPAIGNS

Litigation:

Litigation – (aka *amicus curiae* – “friends of the court”) (1) File briefs that consist of a written argument for their side OR... (2) groups sue business or gov for action

Appealing to the Public:

Appealing to the public – make the group's own public image look good

The “Ratings Game” – interest groups rate politicians based on voting records

Revolving Door:

- A criticism of interest groups
- Government officials quit their jobs or don't get reelected
- Then take government jobs for a certain lobbying agency
- Fear that private interests by business have an unfair influence on gov decisions
- Ex- official does favor in return for later job



Go to Navigate to PACs in the Influence & Lobbying tab:

1. Pick an industry from the list that interests you & jump to it. My industry: _____
2. How much did this industry contribute to campaigns during the 2012 election cycle? _____
3. How does this industry rank in terms of its total contributions for the 2012 cycle? _____
4. Did this industry give more to Democrats or Republicans in 2012? What was the percent given to each?
5. What is the general trend of contributions from 1990-2012? _____
6. Is there a pattern in the total contributions when you compare presidential election years to mid-term election years in terms of total contributions? Why do you think that is?

Move to the **Lobbying** tab. Identify a trend in the amount spent on lobbying between 1998-2012. Lobbying is a different technique used by interest groups.



7. What exactly is lobbying?
8. Click on the **Top Spenders** link. Identify the three top spenders during the 2012 cycle and the amount they spent.
9. Click on the **Ranked Sectors** link. Search for the #1 sector during the 2012 cycle. Who was it and why do you think almost half a BILLION dollars was spent lobbying on this one area?
10. Click the **Agencies** link. You'll see a list of the government agencies that lobbyists target. Besides the House and Senate, what are the top three government targets of lobbyists during the 2012 cycle?
11. Click on the **Bills** link. Find the bill that has the most lobbying attention **THIS YEAR**. What are the lobbyists trying to do for their clients on this bill?