

What do Interest Groups Do?

✧ Direct Lobbying

Lobbying is the process of persuading public officials to take actions favorable to a given organized group. Lobbyists are usually paid employees or hired hands for an interest group. They have **access** to public officials and present the concerns, agenda, and needs of the interest group. Access is the most important advantage which lobbyists have over ordinary people. Lobbyists build up rapport with public officials over years, often decades. Having the elected official as a college buddy, former business associate, or family member certainly helps.

Having Congress take no action be a successful strategy for an interest group. Thus taking no action is in effect taking an action. It is to keep things as they are. Lobbying takes place with all branches of government.

Lobbying with the judicial branch of government is called lobbying by litigation.

✧ Indirect Lobbying

- ◆ **Electioneering** is the process of helping a public official get re-elected. Giving money to some campaign is the most effective way in which interest groups can reward politicians who have voted favorably on that interest group's policy agenda.
- ◆ **Propagandizing** is the effort by an interest group to persuade the general public that the interest group is protecting the general interest in its policy agenda. As long as a group, doctors for example, have a favorable image with the general public, it is difficult to pass legislation that seems to be harmful to that group.

Types of Organized Interest Groups

✧ Economic Groups

- ◆ Farm Groups
 - ◆ National Farm Bureau Federation
 - ◆ National Grange
 - ◆ National Farmers Union
 - ◆ National Cattlemen's Association
- ◆ Business Groups
 - ◆ National Chamber of Commerce
 - ◆ National Federation of Independent Business
 - ◆ National Association of Manufacturers
 - ◆ Business Roundtable
 - ◆ Committee on Economic Development
 - ◆ American Petroleum Institute
- ◆ Labor Groups

- ◆ American Federation of Labor-Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO)
- ◆ United Automobile Workers Union (UAW)
- ◆ American Federation of State and Municipal Employees (AFSME)
- ◆ American Federation of Teachers (AFT)
- ◆ National Education Association (NEA)
- ◆ Teamsters Union
- ◆ Professional Associations
 - ◆ American Medical Association
 - ◆ American Bar Association
 - ◆ Association of Trial Lawyers of America
 - ◆ National Association of Realtors
- ✦ Non-Economic Groups
 - ◆ Religious Groups
 - ◆ Ethnic and National Origin
 - ◆ Veterans
 - ◆ Women
 - ◆ Environmentalists
 - ◆ Fraternal
 - ◆ Single Issue Interest Groups
 - ◆ National Rifle Association
 - ◆ National Right to Life Committee

Fortune Magazine "Power 25 Survey for 2001"
The Top 25 Interest Groups

October 2, 2002

Fortune Magazine periodically produces a list of the most influential interest groups in Washington, D.C. This is called the *Fortune* Power 25 Survey. The top 25 interest groups on its Survey for 2001 is listed below. You can find that WEB page at: <http://www.fortune.com/lists/power25/index.html>

1. National Rifle Association
2. American Association of Retired People (AARP)
3. National Federation of Independent Business
4. American Israel Foreign Affairs Committee
5. Association of Trial Lawyers of America
6. AFL-CIO
7. Chamber of Commerce of the United States of America
8. National Beer Wholesalers of America
9. National Association of Realtors
10. National Association of Manufacturers
11. National Association of Homebuilders of the United States
12. American Medical Association

13. American Hospital Association
14. National Education Association of the United States
15. American Farm Bureau Federation
16. Motion Picture Association of America
17. National Association of Broadcasters
18. National Right to Life Committee
19. Health Insurance Association of America
20. National Restaurant Association
21. National Governors' Association
22. Recording Industry Association of America
23. American Bankers Association
24. Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America
25. International Brotherhood of Teamsters

ASSIGNMENT:

- * Choose 5 interest groups from list above
- * find the organizations' websites online
- * write a brief description of each one -who they are and what they seek to do (it is a good idea to look on the "About us" tab on most websites).
- *Tell me whether you think the group would donate more money and support to a Republican candidate or Democratic candidate.