

MONEY AND POLITICS

EXPLOSIVE GROWTH OF PACS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interest groups use PACs to raise and spend money on election campaigns • A PAC is a registered organization that donates money to campaigns and causes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ In 1974, only 600 PACs existed. Now: more than 4600. ○ Reason: Congressional legislation that had the intent of preventing a few wealthy campaign contributors from helping candidates "buy" elections. Instead, Cong. wanted to "open up" campaign contributions to the masses, as represented by PACs. ○ PACs even donate to candidates facing no opposition. Why? ○ Important to keep things in perspective: most congressional campaign money comes from <u>individual contributions</u>.
THE ROLE OF PACS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PACs link two techniques of influence <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Giving money and other political aid to politicians ○ Persuading officeholders to act or vote "the right way" on issues
THE GROWTH OF PACS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The 1970s brought a near revolution in the role and influence of PACs, as the result of post-Watergate reforms, increasing the number of PACs from 150 to more than 4,000 today • Corporations make up the majority of all PACs
HOW PACS INVEST THEIR MONEY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Campaign Contributions – Factors influencing who gets PAC money: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <u>Incumbents</u> (Political party affiliation is of little importance.) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Incumbents win ▪ Incumbents have shown to support the PAC's positions ▪ Incumbents hold committee seats = more power ○ Winners ○ Those who share a similar philosophy ○ Those who are likely to grant access ○ Tightness of a race, and the likelihood that the money will help make a difference in the outcome ○ Whether or not a candidate holds a committee seat of special importance to the PAC ○ PAC money makes up a higher % of congressional campaign funds than presidential campaign funds • Voter education projects (mailings, fliers, commercials) • Independent expenditures • Through "bundling" contributions, PACs increase their clout with elected officials
DANGERS OF PACS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ethical concerns: does a contribution "buy" anything? • Special access of PACs that the average person lacks • Drives up the cost of campaigning • Over representation of those wealthy enough to have PAC representation • Under representation of those who lack such representation • Further incumbency advantage in elections
IN DEFENSE OF PACS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PACs provide a means of participation and representation for the average person • Without PACs, only the wealthy could afford to run for office • 1st Amendment's right to petition the government • Contributions are nonpartisan • No conclusive evidence that PACs change congressional votes. Contributions likely to make a difference in arcane, obscure issues with little public awareness more than in issues of major importance with much public awareness. • PACs provide political education • PACs diversify political funding. W/over 4600 PACs, many interests are represented.
THE VALUE OF PACS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Depends on the context in which money is given and received • Significant relationship exists between PACs giving money and receiving favorable treatment in congressional committees; still debatable on impact of contributions upon election outcomes • PACs can help friendly incumbents with soft money contributions (unlimited contributions that presumably go for "party-building" activities)