

APGoPo Unit 4

THE INFLUENCE OF LOBBYISTS

WHAT IS LOBBYING?

- Attempting to influence the decisions of policymakers
 - Interest group lobbying is generally most effective on narrow technical issues that are not well publicized (nobody has expertise on the issue except for the lobbyist)
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WHO ARE LOBBYISTS AND WHAT DO THEY DO?

- A person who is employed by and acts for an organized interest group or corporation to try to influence policy decisions and positions in the executive branch (bureaucratic agency) and legislative branch (congressional committee)
 - Influence governmental decisions, especially legislation
 - Provide information to government (lobbyist = policy specialist, congressman = policy generalist)
 - Testify at hearings
 - Help write legislation
 - Revolving door – the employment cycle from government to interest group
 - Government employee to lobby the agency they came from is illegal – conflict of interest
 - Congress to lobbyist is legal (with a “cooling off” period)
 - Iron triangles (issue networks) are mutually supporting relationships among
 - Interest groups
 - Congressional committees and subcommittees
 - Government agencies
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LOBBYISTS ARE GOOD FOR AMERICA?

- They provide useful information to government
- They provide a means of participation for people
- They provide a means of representation on the basis of interest rather than geography. A “third house of Congress.”
- 1st Amendment protection
- Lobbyists have always spent money. It’s more out in the open.
- As Madison points out in *Federalist* #10, the “remedy” of curing the evils of faction by eliminating their causes is worse than the disease. Potential loss of liberty is worse than the abuses of lobbyists.

LOBBYISTS ARE BAD FOR AMERICA?

- Rich and powerful interests are over represented
- Average and poor people are underrepresented
- By safeguarding liberty, equality is sacrificed
- Single-issue lobbies, especially, contribute to political polarization
- Lobbyists contribute even further to diffusion of power, making it even more difficult for government to get things done