

Interest Group Strategies

Key Questions

- How are interests represented in Washington?
 - How do interest groups interact with government?
 - What strategies do interest groups pursue to secure preferred legislation?
 - How do new ideas enter into the political system?

How Interest Groups Work with Government

- Elevate Issues on the Agenda
- Highlight electoral incentives
- Reduce information costs in policy-making
 - Provide expert testimony
 - Provide sample legislation
 - Conduct research and provide information

How Interest Groups Work with Government

Functions of Interest Groups	Description of Functions
inside lobbying direct contact with policy makers	⇒ legislative testimony ⇒ assistance in bill writing ⇒ direct contact of executive agencies
outside lobbying indirect methods to influence decisions	⇒ educate members on key issues ⇒ increase general public awareness on key issues through media efforts ⇒ organize and coordinate 'grassroots lobbying' efforts to contact policy makers to influence decision making ⇒ engage in political process to elect supportive candidates; donate
monitor government programs	⇒ evaluate effectiveness ⇒ suggest changes

Lobbying Strategies: Insider strategies

- Lobbying: Trafficking Information and Cultivating Access
 - Provide Technical Information
 - Provide Political Information
 - Financial Assistance

Outsider Strategies

- Going public and pressuring officials
 - Media Campaigns
 - Pressure campaigns
 - Grassroots lobbying
 - Astroturf lobbying
 - Protests and direct mobilization
 - Litigation

Policy Entrepreneurs

- Interest groups advocate for new idea and policies.
- Work to shift policy in desired direction.
- Engage in venue shopping— looking for jurisdiction at national, state or local government that will be receptive to their policy proposals.
 - Congress, bureaucracies, the courts, state legislatures, city halls.
 - Goal is to legitimize policy proposals and advance your cause in receptive venues.
 - Example: Marijuana reform legislation.

Takeaways

- Interest groups allow coordination of lobbying efforts.
- Can lead to bias in the political system.
- Interest groups also play a valuable role in providing information and supporting government actors.
- Interest groups work to apply pressure through insider and outsider lobbying.
- Act as policy entrepreneurs, shopping policies and bringing new ideas into the political system.
