

**AP AMERICAN GOVERNMENT**

**Unit Three**

**Political Parties, Congress, and Special Interests**




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**Unit 3 Learning Objectives**  
**Part 1 Political Parties**

**What are Political Parties?**

- 3.1 Identify the functions and characteristics of political parties.

**A Brief History of American Political Parties**

- 3.2 Trace changes in American political parties and electoral identification

**American Parties Today**

- 3.3 Explain the purpose, organization, and regulation of political parties

**Are Political Parties Dying?**

- 3.4 Assess the long-term prospects for the current party system.

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**What are Political Parties?**

3.1 Describe the basic functions and characteristics of U.S. political parties.

**Definition**

- Political Parties**  
A group of activists who organize to win elections, operate the government, and determine public policy.

**Kinds of Parties**

- Political machine:** a party organization that recruits using tangible incentives
- Ideological party:** principle is more important than winning
- Single Issue groups:** members are motivated by a single dominant issue
- Catch-All Party:** a political group combining many diverse issues into a single organization
- Personal following:** requires an appealing personality, an extensive network, name recognition, and money

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LO 7.1

### What Parties Do

3.1 Describe the basic functions and characteristics of U.S. political parties.

#### What Parties Do

- Recruit Candidates
- Organize Elections
  - Money
  - People
  - ideas
- Debate Issues
- Run the Government
- Provide Alternatives

**LINKAGE INSTITUTIONS**

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### Political Parties in America



#### Party Systems

- The US is a two-party system; most other democracies have a multiparty system.
- Although the United States has many minor parties, only the two major parties have much of a chance to win elections.
- Multiparty systems are almost always found in countries that have a proportional system of election, in contrast to our plurality system.

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### Plurality (Winner-Take-All) vs Proportional Electoral Systems (PR)

<p><b>In Plurality systems,</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The candidate with the <b>most</b> votes wins the seat.</li> <li>• Plurality systems create two-party systems with 'CATCH-ALL' or UMBRELLA parties</li> <li>• Parties form coalitions <i>in conventions before the election in order to win a majority in the legislature.</i></li> </ul>	<p><b>In PR systems</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Seats in the legislature are based on the percentage of vote</li> <li>• PR encourages IDEOLOGICAL parties</li> <li>• Parties form <i>COALITIONS after the election to create a majority in the legislature</i></li> </ul>
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### Brief History of American Political Parties

3.2 Trace changes in American political parties and identify four realigning elections.

- Political parties emerged as citizens debated the ratification of the U.S. Constitution.

Anti-Federalists



Federalists




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### Party Realignment

- **Critical or realigning periods:** periods when a sharp, lasting shift occurs in the popular coalition supporting one or both parties
- Two kinds of realignments
  - A major party disappears and a new party emerges
  - Existing parties continue but voters shift loyalty from one to another



•1824: Andrew Jackson and the Spoils System

- Democrats and Whigs: Ideological parties become Political Machines



•1860: Lincoln and the Rise of the Republicans

- Democrats and Republicans: the creation of Catch-All Parties



•1932: Franklin Roosevelt and the New Deal

- Democrats become coalition of minorities, working class, women; embrace big government



•1980: Ronald Reagan and New Federalism

- Republicans embrace social conservatism, state's rights; solid south becomes Republican base

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### Reasons for the Two Party System in America

- **Electoral system** — winner-take-all/plurality system limits the number of parties
- **State laws** – signature requirement makes it difficult for third parties to get on the ballot
- **Party Organization** — two broad coalitions work
- **Media Coverage** – bias toward likely 'winners'
- **Tradition** – Americans are familiar with two alternatives




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**Minor Parties**



- Minor parties are sometimes called *third parties*.
- Minor parties organized around an ideology usually last longer than those built around an individual leader or issue.
- Conventional wisdom holds that minor parties develop ideas that the major parties adopt.

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**Types of Elections**

**National and State Level**

- **Primary:** elect nominees for party
  - Open Primary: open to vote by any registered voter
  - Closed Primary: only registered voters from the party
- **General:** elect candidates to office

**State Only**

- **Referendum:** Voters asked to approve legislation
- **Recall:** Voters asked to retain/remove official from office

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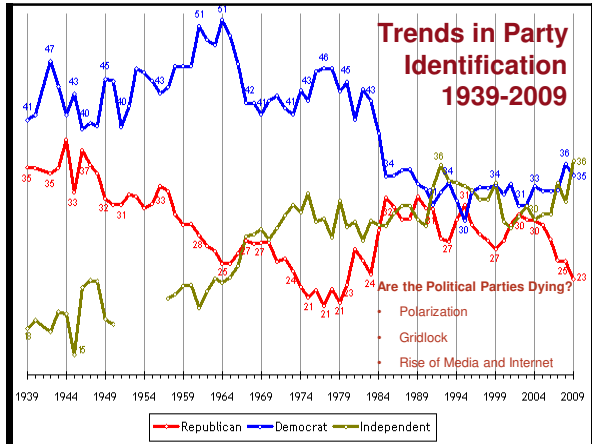
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## Unit 3 Learning Objectives Part 2 Congress

**The Structure and Powers of Congress**

- 3.5 Differentiate the powers of Congress, and compare and contrast the structure and powers of the House and the Senate

**Congressional Elections**

- 3.6 Describe the congressional election process and the incumbent advantage

**The Job of the Legislator**

- 3.7 Characterize the ways legislators represent their constituencies.

**Congressional Leadership and Committees**

- 3.8 Compare and contrast the leadership systems in the House and the Senate, and explain the committee system.

**How a Bill Becomes a Law**

- 3.9 Identify the steps by which a bill becomes a law

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## The Structure and Powers of Congress

3.5 Differentiate the powers of Congress, and compare and contrast the structure and powers of the House and Senate.

- **The intent of the Framers:**
  - To oppose the concentration of power in a single institution; separation of powers
  - To balance large and small states
    - Bicameralism
    - House of Representatives and Senate
  - To avoid the tyranny of the majority, or populism
  - To encourage compromise
- They expected Congress to be the dominant institution in the government

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**Article I, Section 8**  
**The Powers of Congress**

- Tax, Print, Borrow Money
- Establish Post Office
- Regulate Interstate and International Commerce
- Prepare for and Declare War
- Create the Federal Judiciary
- "Necessary and Proper"

**Article I, Section 9**  
**Powers denied to Congress**

- Suspend Habeas Corpus—except during rebellion
- No Bill of Attainder or Ex Post Facto Laws
- No Direct Taxation
- No Interstate Tariffs
- No Preference to any state
- No Spending Money without a vote; strict accounts
- No title of nobility

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**Differences between Parliament and Congress**

<b>Parliament</b>	<b>Congress</b>
•Candidates selected by Party	•Vote is for candidate, not party
•Voters choose between Parties, not candidates	•Members represent districts or states, not parties.
•Members of Parliament select Chief Executive	•Party discipline is limited
•Party Loyalty: members always vote together	•Members do not choose the chief executive
•Most Debate is National Issues	•Members' principal work is <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Representation</li> <li>• Negotiation</li> <li>• Passing laws</li> </ul>
•Individual Members have very little power	•Members have a great deal of power, high pay and significant staff resources

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**Congressional Elections**  
**3.6 Describe the congressional election process.**

- **House of Representatives**
  - Requirement: 25-years old, 7 years a citizen
  - Elections: Everyone every 2 years
  - Elected by District; Districts reapportioned every 10 years based on census
- **Senate**
  - Requirement: 30-years old, 9 years a citizen
  - Elections: 6 years terms, but 1/3 stand for election every 2 years
  - Originally selected by State Legislature; **17<sup>th</sup> amendment** made senators directly elected by citizens of state

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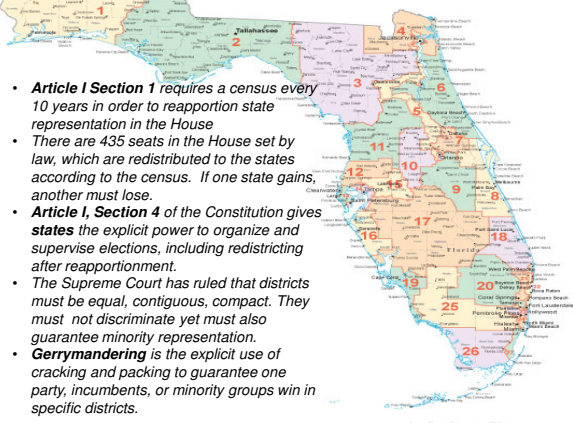
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- **Article I Section 1** requires a census every 10 years in order to reapportion state representation in the House
- There are 435 seats in the House set by law, which are redistributed to the states according to the census. If one state gains, another must lose.
- **Article I, Section 4** of the Constitution gives states the explicit power to organize and supervise elections, including redistricting after reapportionment.
- The Supreme Court has ruled that districts must be equal, contiguous, compact. They must not discriminate yet must also guarantee minority representation.
- **Gerrymandering** is the explicit use of cracking and packing to guarantee one party, incumbents, or minority groups win in specific districts.

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Relationship of "Deserves Re-Election" Measures to Incumbent Re-Election Rates, 1992-2012 Elections for House of Representatives

Year	% Most members deserve re-election	% Own member deserves re-election	% of House members who sought and won re-election
2012	36	59	90
2010	33	51	85
2008	36	59	94
2006	38	54	94
2004	51	63	93
2002	57	67	96
2000	54	66	98
1998	58	69	98
1994	38	54	90
1992	29	48	88

**Percentage of Incumbents Reelected to Congress**

Harold W. Stanley and Richard G. Niemi, *Vital Statistics on American Politics, 1999-2010* (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Quarterly Press, 2011), table 1-18; 2012 updated by Marc Siegel.

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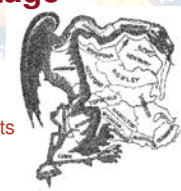
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## The Incumbency Advantage



- **Gerrymandering** to protect incumbents
- **Media coverage** is higher for incumbents
- **Name recognition**
- **Travel Allowance, Franking Privilege**
- **Earmarks:** Members secure policies and programs for voters
- **Casework:** Work on behalf of individual constituents

**Safe Seat**

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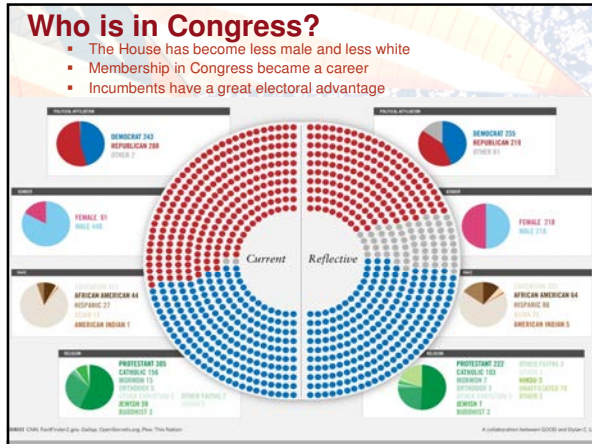
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### The Job of the Legislator

3.7 Describe the ways legislators represent their constituencies and identify the various influences on their votes.

- Representational view:** members vote to please their constituents in order to get re-elected
- Organizational view:** members respond to pressure from their party
- Attitudinal view:** the member's individual beliefs determines her/his vote

Ideology has become increasingly important recently as congress has become **polarized**.

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### Congressional Caucuses

**Caucus:** an informal association of members of Congress created to advocate a political ideology or a regional or economic interest

- Party caucuses:** members share a similar ideology
- Personal Interest caucuses:** members share an interest in an issue
- Constituency caucuses:** established to represent groups, regions or both

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### Congressional Staff

- **Casework:** Constituency service is a major task of members' staff
- **Legislative functions:** devising proposals, negotiating agreements, organizing hearings, and meeting with lobbyists and administrators
- Members' staff consider themselves advocates of their employers
- Growth in staff allowance and employees:  
\$1.4 million for House Reps with 18 staff members; \$3 - \$4 Million for Senators with 36 staff members

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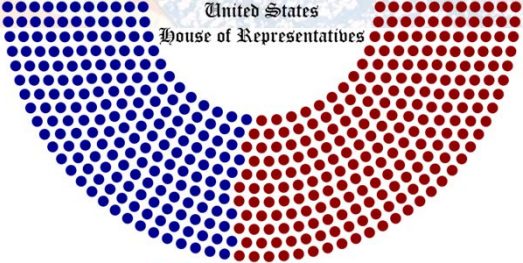
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### The House of Representatives 113<sup>th</sup> Congress



435 Representatives:  
Democratic Party: 201 members.  
Republican Party: 234 members.

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### Structure of the House



- **Speaker of the House** is leader of majority party and presides over House
- **Majority leader** and **minority leader:** leaders on the floor
- **Party whips** keep leaders informed, round up votes, and ensure a **quorum**
  - 100 Reps for debate
  - 217 for vote
  - 2/3ds to choose President or Vice President

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### Speaker of the House



- Leader of majority party
- Assigns office space
- Disciplines House members
- Decides who may speak during debates
- Runs **Steering Committee**
  - assigns representatives to committees and selects Chairmen
- Runs **Policy Committee**
  - controls introduction of bills and determines where they are sent
- Runs the **Rules Committee**
  - sets the legislative agenda and the rules on debate and voting
- 3<sup>rd</sup> in line of succession for the Presidency

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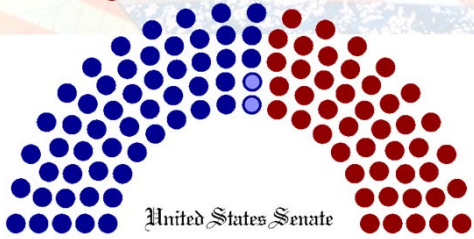
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### The Senate 113<sup>th</sup> Congress



United States Senate  
 Party standings in the Senate  
**53 Democratic Senators**  
 2 Independent Senators, caucusing with Democrats  
 45 Republican Senators

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### Structure of the Senate

- **Vice President** presides over Senate and casts vote in event of tie
- **President pro tempore** presides in VP's absence; this is the member with most seniority in majority party (a largely honorific office)

#### Party Structure in the Senate

- **Majority leader** and **Minority leader**, elected by their respective party members
- **Party whips**: keep leaders informed, round up votes for **quorum** (minimum number of senators necessary to have a legitimate vote)
- **Policy committee**: schedules Senate business
- Committee assignments are handled by each party usually based on seniority

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TABLE 11-1 Differences Between the House of Representatives and the Senate	
House	Senate
<b>SIZE</b> 435 members	<b>SIZE</b> 100 Members
<b>ELECTIONS</b> Two-year term All seats are open for election Elected in districts	<b>ELECTIONS</b> Six-year term One-third of seats are open for each election Elected in states
<b>LEADERSHIP</b> Strong leadership controls action by individual members More powerful committee leaders	<b>LEADERSHIP</b> Weaker leadership provides more freedom to individual members More equal distribution of power among committee members
<b>LEGISLATION</b> Decision to consider legislation made by majority Responsible for moving first on raising revenues All amendments to legislation must be approved for consideration in advance of legislative action	<b>LEGISLATION</b> Decision to consider legislation made by unanimous consent of all members; one senator can stop action Responsible for giving advice and consent on presidential appointees and treaties Amendments are generally allowed
<b>DEBATE</b> Strict limits on debate Single member or group of members cannot stop debate once the bill is approved for action by the Rules Committee	<b>DEBATE</b> Flexible limits on debate approved by unanimous consent Single member can stop action through the filibuster

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### How a Bill Becomes a Law

3.9 Identify the steps by which a bill becomes a law

- Bill must be introduced by a member of Congress
  - All Revenue bills must originate in the House
- Bill is referred to a committee for consideration by either Speaker or presiding officer of the Senate.

#### Committees

- Committees are the most important organizational feature of Congress
- Consider bills or legislative proposals
- Maintain oversight of executive agencies
- Conduct investigations
- Majority party has majority of seats on the committees and names the chair
- Most bill DIE in committee; they are TABLED indefinitely




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### Types of Committees

- **Standing committees:** permanent with specified legislative responsibilities
- **Select committees:** appointed for a limited purpose and duration
- **Joint committees:** have both representatives and senators
- **Conference committee:** a joint select committee appointed to resolve differences in Senate and House versions of the same piece of legislation

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TABLE 11-2 Congressional Standing Committees, 2010-2011	
House	Senate
<b>RULES COMMITTEES</b>	<b>RULES COMMITTEE</b>
House Administration	Rules and Administration
Rules	
Standards of Official Conduct	
<b>BUDGET COMMITTEE</b>	<b>BUDGET COMMITTEE</b>
Budget	Budget
<b>AUTHORIZING COMMITTEES</b>	<b>AUTHORIZING COMMITTEES</b>
Agriculture	Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry
Armed Services	Armed Services
Education and Labor	Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs
Energy and Commerce	Commerce, Science, and Transportation
Financial Services	Energy and Natural Resources
Foreign Affairs	Environment and Public Works
Homeland Security	Foreign Affairs
Judiciary	Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions
Natural Resources	Judiciary
Science and Technology	Small Business and Entrepreneurship
Small Business	Veterans Affairs
Transportation and Infrastructure	
Veterans Affairs	
<b>APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE</b>	<b>APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE</b>
Appropriations	Appropriations
<b>REVENUE COMMITTEES</b>	<b>REVENUE COMMITTEES</b>
Budget	Budget
Ways and Means (Revenue and Budget)	Finance
<b>OVERSIGHT COMMITTEES</b>	<b>OVERSIGHT COMMITTEES</b>
Oversight and Government Reform	Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs

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### How a Bill Becomes a Law in the House

- **Steering Committee** (run by the Speaker) assigns congressmen to committee; chooses Chairman
- **Policy Committee** (run by Speaker) assigns bill to a committee
- After **hearings** and **mark-up sessions**, the committee **reports out** bill to the House
  - *Most bills are not reported out and die in committee*
- Bill are placed on a calendar by the **House Rules Committee** (run by the Speaker) to come to the floor for debate and a vote
- Speaker sets rules for debate, **amendments**, and voting

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### How a Bill Becomes a Law in the Senate

- Bill are placed on calendar by the **Majority and Minority Leaders**
- Bills may be sent to committee for **hearings** for **mark-up** **OR**
- Bills may be directly introduced
  - House bills are automatically sent to floor
- No restrictions on debate: the *filibuster*
  - **Supermajority** needed for cloture, 60 votes

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### How a Bill Becomes a Law

- Bills are debated on the floor of the House or Senate; then voted on when there is a quorum present
- If there are major differences in the bill as passed by the House and Senate, a **conference committee** is appointed
- The bill goes to the President
- President can sign or veto
- If the President does NOT sign the bill within 10 days, the bill automatically becomes LAW.
- If President vetoes bill, congress can override his veto with a 2/3ds vote of BOTH houses.

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### Unit 3 Learning Objectives Part 3 Interest Groups

#### What are Interest Groups?

3.9 Explain the role of interest groups and social movements in American politics.

#### Types of Interest Groups

3.10 Categorize American interest groups into types.

#### The Influence of Interest Groups

3.11 Describe lobbyists and their influence on policy.

#### How Much Do Interest Groups Influence Elections and Legislation?

3.12 Evaluate the effectiveness of interest groups in influencing elections and legislation.

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#### What are Interest Groups?

3.9 Explain the role of interest groups and social movements in American politics.

- **Interest group:** any organization that seeks to influence public policy without running anyone for political office.

#### Why Interest Groups are Common

- Many **cleavages** (ethnic, class, ideology, gender, profession) many different interests demanding access and change
- **Pluralism:** the Constitution provides many access points: voting, testifying, personal meetings, protesting, letter writing, campaigning .
- **Catch-All parties** rely on many interest groups for elections
- **Committee system** requires a great deal of specialized information.

#### Incentives to Join Interest Groups

- **Solidarity** incentives—pleasure, companionship
- **Material** incentives—money, things, services
- **Purposive** incentives—goal/purpose of the organization itself

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**Types of Interest Groups**

- Single Instance Groups
- Public interest groups (Single-issue oriented)
- Social Movements (specific groups):
- Economic interest groups
- Government interest groups

**Techniques for Exerting Influence**

- Information
  - Testimony, Direct Contact with Government, Lobbyists
- Mobilization
  - Protest, Mass Media, Litigation, and Voting
- Money
  - Campaign Support

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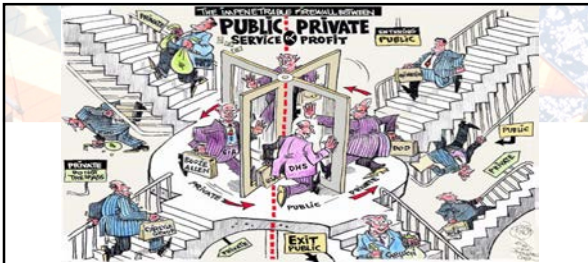
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**The "Revolving Door"**

- Congressmen leave office to become lobbyists
- Lobbyists run for congress

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**Activities of Interest Groups: Money**

- "Professional" Campaigns
  - More expertise
    - media consultants
    - pollsters
    - strategists

**More expensive**




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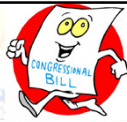
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**1974 Federal Election Campaign Act**

- Created Federal Election Commission
- Required candidates to report donations
- Made "Hard Money" illegal
- Required Political Action Committees (PACs) to handle money

**Loopholes in FECA**

- No limits on Soft Money (party donations—cause more organizational voting behavior)
- No limits on 512 spending (Issue advertising--actual candidate may not be mentioned in these ads.)

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**2002 Bipartisan Campaign Reform Act (BCRA)**



- Closed soft money and 512 loopholes
- Banned "issue" ads 30 days prior to a primary and 60 days prior to general election

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**Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission (2010)**



- Upheld PAC and public disclosure requirements of FECA

**BUT...**

- Money = Speech
- Corporations = People
- The First Amendment prohibits the government from restricting independent political expenditures by corporations and unions

**RESULTED in SUPERPACs**

- Pool PAC resources into one enormous fund to direct resources wherever it is needed
- They can spend their money on politics so long as they do not coordinate with a candidate or lobby directly for that person

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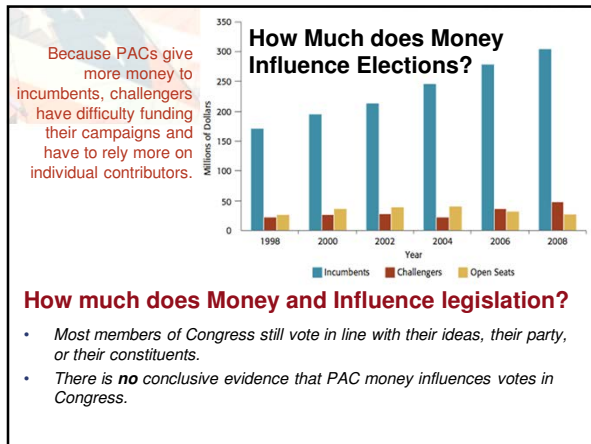
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