

al background.) Write a brief report summarizing the voting trends you discover. Discuss your findings with the class.

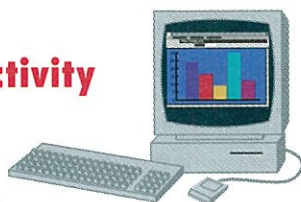
Reinforcing Citizenship Skills

Find out about the last national election for President and/or Congress and state governors. Look for an election map that shows national results in a newspaper or newsmagazine from that time. Determine from the map how many states the two major political parties dominated, depending on who was elected. Look for information on which states, if any, may have switched. Report your findings to the class.

Technology Activity

Using a Spreadsheet

The United States has one of the lowest voter participation rates of any democratic nation. Some experts believe other nations have more participation because they assess penalties on citizens who do not vote. Find information about voter participation rates in other nations and create a spreadsheet with the following headings: Country, Voting Age, Voter Participation Rate, Penalties for Not Voting.



Focusing on Your Community

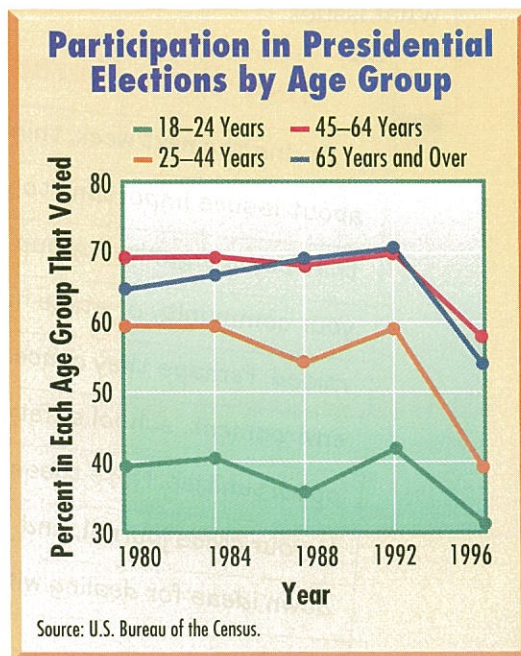
Laws about voter registration vary from place to place. Contact the local election board to find out what the requirements for registration are in your

community. Then design a brochure encouraging people to register. It should include the following information: local residency requirements, when and where people can register for an election, the procedure for registering, and the types of identification needed.

Analyzing Visuals

The graph below shows the percentage of eligible voters of different age groups that voted in recent elections. Study the graph and answer the questions.

1. Which age group remained the most stable in voting participation during this period?
2. Which age group showed the smallest decrease in participation between 1980 and 1996? What factors might explain this decrease?
3. Describe the general trend in voter participation since 1980.



Public Opinion and Interest Groups

CIVIC PARTICIPATION

America is a diverse nation in which many different groups of people hold many different viewpoints. The members of some groups form organizations to try to persuade government officials to support their views. Contact an organization involved in local issues in your area, such as the Sierra Club or the local parent-teacher organization. Find out what issues

are most important to this group and how it tries to influence government officials.

Working in Your Community

Interview people in your neighborhood to find out their opinions on the issues that were raised. If their opinions are similar to those of the group you contacted, encourage them to learn more about the group and perhaps become active in it. ■

Your Civics Journal

During the next week, think about issues important to you that some organized group in your community or state has raised. Perhaps they concern the environment, school safety, or job opportunities. Note these issues in your civics journal, and jot down ideas for dealing with them.







Public Opinion

FOCUS

TERMS TO KNOW

public opinion, mass media, interest group, pollster

OBJECTIVES

- Identify and discuss several **factors affecting public opinion.**
- Explain different methods of **measuring public opinion.**

What is public opinion? **Public opinion** is a term that refers to the attitudes or opinions of a large group of people about a particular issue or person. Our elected representatives, at all levels of government, care a great deal about public opinion. It is the way these leaders learn what the people want.

The term *public opinion* is misleading, however. It suggests a uniformity of opinion that does not exist. In fact, most Americans agree on very few issues. On any given issue, different groups of the “public” often hold different viewpoints. For example, some may favor greatly increasing the nation’s military forces; others may urge the government to do everything possible to halt the arms race. Between these two positions, however, are many shades of opinion. On almost any public issue, there are two or more public opinions.

Factors Affecting Public Opinion

Many factors affect a person’s opinion on any public issue. Age, gender, income, hobbies, race, religion, occupation, and so on may play a role. The family of a government employee, for example, probably feels differently about the proposed government pay raise than the family of a factory worker. An African American woman may favor affirmative action employment laws, whereas a white man may not.

Other factors affect public opinion as well. The economic situation usually has an enormous impact on public opinion. If United States steel mills are booming and the nation’s steelworkers are fully employed, most people would probably not object to allowing some foreign steel to be imported into the country. In hard times, when the steel mills are laying off workers, public opinion would probably oppose importing steel.

Public Opinion The news media influence how people view candidates and issues. *How can photographs affect a candidate’s image?*



Mass Media

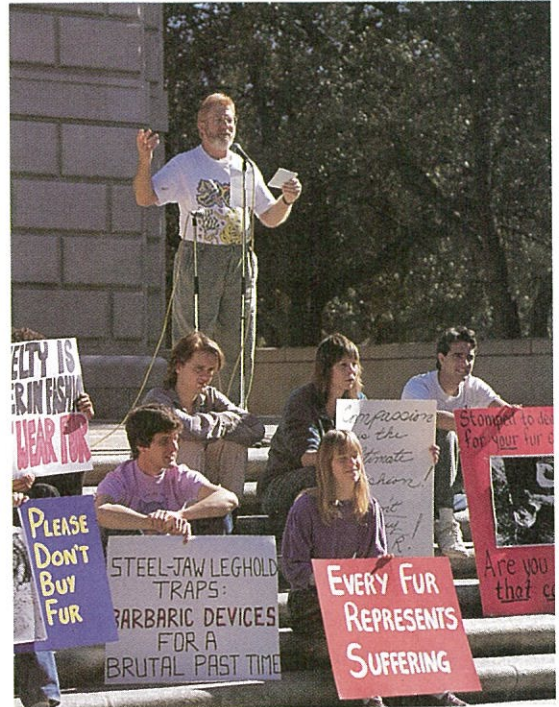
The **mass media**, news information sources that include television, radio, newspapers, and magazines, heavily influence public opinion. Every day, newspapers sell about 60 million copies nationwide, and more than one person may read each of these copies. Television news may reach another 60 million Americans each day, and some 10 million people subscribe to weekly news-magazines.

The media influence public opinion not only by the numbers of people they reach but also by how they cover issues and events. The media can emphasize certain issues and events and downplay others in ways that can influence people's opinions.

Public Officials

Political leaders and public officials can also exert a strong influence on public opinion. When the voters elect people to office, they put their trust in those officials and rely on their opinions. Public officials get opportunities to state their views in speeches, press conferences, television interviews, and in newspaper and magazine articles. In doing so, they hope to persuade people to support their positions on issues.

People who share a similar point of view about an issue sometimes work together to promote that point of view. Such a group is called an **interest group** or a special-interest group. Interest groups try to influence public opinion by making people aware of issues and changing their attitudes. A recent example involves the animal rights movement. Animal rights groups have worked to make people aware of the treatment of animals used for laboratory



Special-Interest Groups Special-interest groups use various tactics to make the public aware of their concerns. *How do you think interest groups influence public opinion?*

testing and for making fur coats. These groups hope to change people's attitudes about buying products that have been tested on animals. They also hope to persuade people not to buy fur coats.

Measuring Public Opinion

It is possible to get some idea of what the public's opinion is on any given issue. One way is to look at election results. If voters elect a particular candidate, presumably many of them agree with that candidate's ideas and programs. Elections are not a very reliable guide to public opinion, however. People vote for candidates for various reasons. Perhaps they liked a particular candidate's appearance or felt he or she was

capable. Perhaps they voted a straight party ticket. Election results can provide only a broad idea of public opinion, not an accurate assessment of opinions on specific issues. The election of a Republican President, for example, may reflect a desire for reduced government spending. It does not, however, indicate which specific programs the public would like to see cut.

Public Opinion Polls

The most accurate way to measure public opinion is through a public opinion poll. In Chapter 7, you learned that people who take polls collect information by questioning certain groups. Hundreds of organizations conduct public opinion polls. Two of the best known are the Gallup Poll and the Harris Survey. Although most organizations take polls about consumer products, some concentrate on public issues and political campaigns.

Polling organizations have made a science out of taking polls. **Pollsters**, the people who take polls, follow specific techniques to make sure their polls are accurate. By asking about 1,500 people their opinions on an issue, pollsters can get an accurate idea of how most Americans feel about that issue.

Random Samples

Pollsters usually question a group of people selected at random all over the United States. They have found that such a random sample will probably include people of nearly all races, incomes, genders, ages, and viewpoints. Because the sample reflects the characteristics of the entire population, it presents a reasonably accurate picture of public opinion.

To find out what people really think, pollsters must be careful how they word the questions in a poll. For example, the question, "Do you favor cutting taxes?" might get a different answer from the same person as the question, "Do you favor cutting taxes if it means letting poor people go hungry?" The second question is called a loaded question be-

DID YOU KNOW?

Environmental Interest Groups

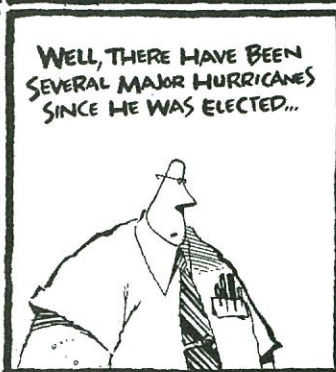
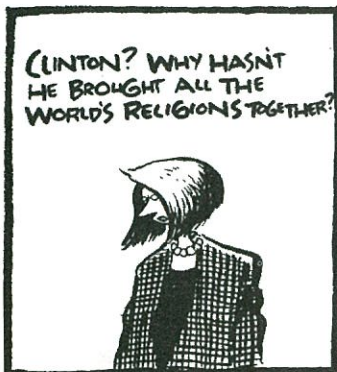
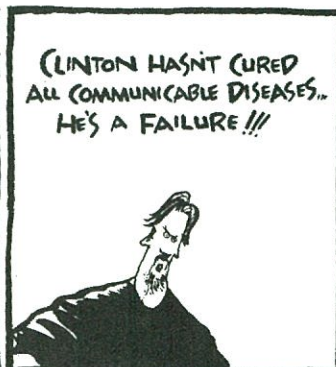
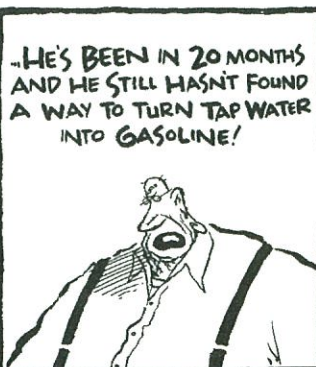
The Sierra Club. Greenpeace. The World Wildlife Fund. As concern for the environment has grown, these and other environmental interest groups have worked hard to protect the environment. The scope of these groups' concerns is very broad, from endangered species to ancient forests to the world's oceans.

As the influence of environmental groups has grown, many industries have formed their own interest groups to counter the criticism and activities of environmentalists. The names of some of these groups are misleading. They suggest that the primary goal is to preserve the environment. The Evergreen Foundation, for example, is backed by the timber industry. The Abundant Wildlife Society of North America consists mostly of hunters, ranchers, and trappers rather than people concerned with preserving wildlife.



Cutting timber

WHAT KIND
OF JOB
IS THE
PRESIDENT
DOING?
A POLL.



Opinion Polls Political cartoons may focus on political leaders, government policies, or public opinion. *What does this cartoon say about the relevance of opinion polls?*

cause it is biased, or written in a way that will get a certain, in this case negative, response.

Voinovich the winner weeks before the election. As a result, some voters did not bother to vote on Election Day because they thought the race had already been decided.

The Effect of Polls

Political parties and news organizations frequently hire polling organizations to take political polls. The results are then released to the public. Some critics feel that these polls not only measure public opinion but also affect it. They argue that the polls may influence many voters to support a candidate who is leading in the polls.

Public opinion polls may also have the opposite effect, that is, influencing people not to vote at all. For instance, in the 1994 gubernatorial race in Ohio, polls declared Republican George

★ SECTION 1 REVIEW ★

UNDERSTANDING VOCABULARY

Define public opinion, mass media, interest group, pollster.

REVIEWING OBJECTIVES

- 1 What factors are important in affecting public opinion?
- 2 What are two methods of measuring public opinion?

SUPREME COURT CASE STUDIES

Muller v. Oregon

The National Consumers' League was one of the first public-interest groups to use federal courts to help change working conditions. The league was established in the 1800s to deal with social problems and political corruption in cities.

The Issue

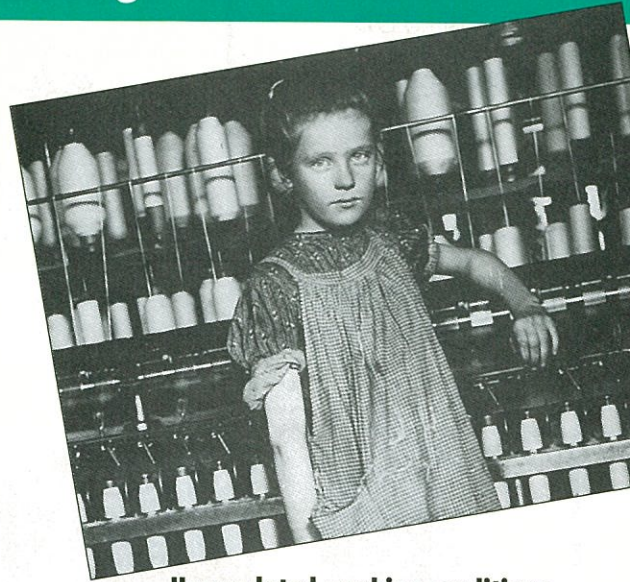
In the 1800s, working conditions in factories and mines were disgraceful. At the turn of the century, groups such as the league began demanding laws that would regulate working conditions for women and children.

In 1906 Oregon passed a law limiting the number of hours women could work in factories and laundries. One laundry owner, Curt Muller, ignored the law. He claimed that it interfered with his right of contract—his right to arrange working conditions with his employees.

The Case

Oregon prosecuted Muller, and the case—*Muller v. Oregon*—went to the United States Supreme Court. The National Consumers' League hired Louis Brandeis to defend the Oregon law before the Court. In his argument to the Court, Brandeis took an unusual tack. Instead of arguing about the law, he presented research showing that long working hours affected the health and capabilities of women, causing them to make mistakes and be less productive.

The Court unanimously upheld the Oregon law. It ruled that states could pro-



Unregulated working conditions

tect women workers if they could provide a reasonable justification for doing so. In this case, it ruled that women's "unique physical structure and maternal functions" were sufficient justification.

The Impact

The *Muller* case opened the door for similar social reforms. It was also the first time an interest group had convinced the Supreme Court to protect the interest of the general public instead of the interests of business tycoons and rich property owners.

REVIEWING THE CASE

- 1 Why did Muller believe the Oregon law was unconstitutional?
- 2 What role did the National Consumers' League play in the case?



Interest Groups

FOCUS

TERMS TO KNOW

bias, impartial

OBJECTIVES

- Identify three **types of interest groups**.
- Describe various **techniques interest groups use** to try to influence public opinion.

People form or join interest groups because there is strength in numbers. Although one person might not have much luck convincing the town board to start a waste recycling program, a homeowners' association of 300 members would be able to exert much more influence. The town board members would find it more difficult to oppose 300 voters than to oppose only one. Interest or special-interest groups are also called pressure groups because they try to influence or pressure the government into adopting certain policies or taking specific actions.

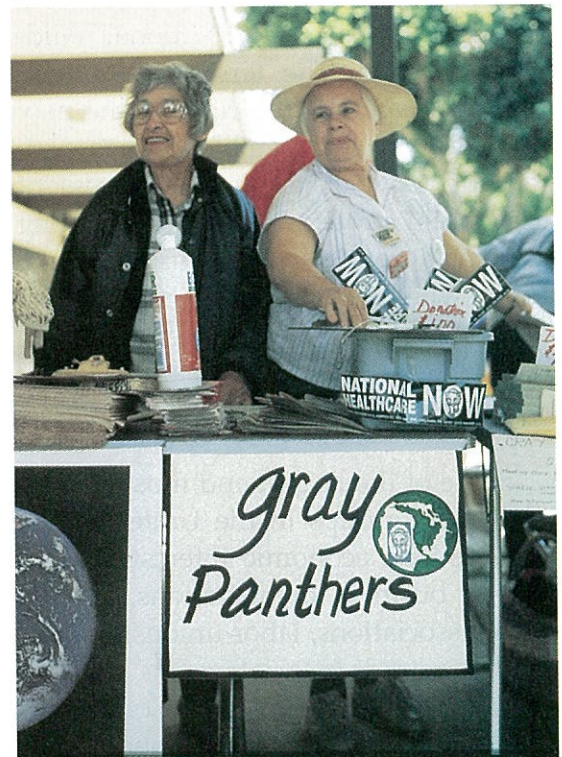
Interest groups are an important part of our democratic process. Different interest groups constantly bombard public officials with opinions and demands. These groups often hold conflicting views on an issue. For example, while labor unions might demand a higher minimum wage, business groups might urge that it be kept at the current level. Because an interest group usually

holds one particular viewpoint, we say it has a **bias**, or one-sided point of view. To be biased is the opposite of being **impartial**—or considering all viewpoints equally.

Types of Interest Groups

Interest groups vary greatly in size and influence. Some have only a handful of members and a few hundred dollars to spend a year. Others have several million members and multimillion-dollar budgets. Some large interest groups have a national headquarters and hundreds of regional chapters, and others have a small local organization that meets in a member's living room.

Interest Groups The Gray Panthers work for legislation to protect the interests of older Americans. *What is such legislation likely to involve?*





Trade Associations Trade associations often use billboard campaigns to convince people they need a product or service. *What is the message about milk in this ad?*

An individual can belong to a number of different interest groups. Perhaps a person is a member of a labor union, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), and the local parent-teacher organization and also contributes to the National Wildlife Federation. The First Amendment, which guarantees “the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances” protects the right to belong to interest groups. Individuals are free to decide whether to belong to any interest groups and to choose which ones to join.

Economic Interest Groups

Some of the largest and most powerful interest groups in the United States are based on economic interests. These include business organizations, professional associations, labor unions, and industrial or trade associations.

The national Chamber of Commerce, with more than 200,000 members, and

the National Association of Manufacturers (NAM), which represents more than 13,000 manufacturing companies, are two of the largest business organization interest groups. Many business organizations represent specific kinds of businesses. These are called industry or trade associations. One of the largest is the Tobacco Institute, which represents cigarette manufacturers. This association is frequently involved in fighting proposed laws to restrict or ban smoking around the country. Other trade associations include the National Association of Printing Ink Manufacturers and the California Redwood Association. Trade associations exist for nearly every kind of business in the United States.

Business organizations are interested in shaping the government’s policy on such economic issues as free enterprise, imports and tariffs, the minimum wage, new construction, and government contracts for construction and manufacturing. The Aerospace Industries Association of America, for instance,

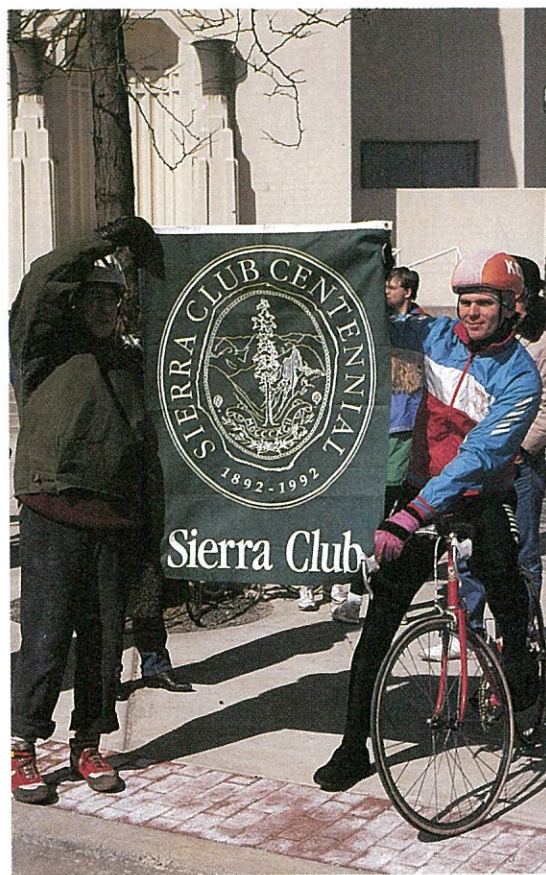
encourages the federal government to build rocket ships, space stations, and satellites.

While business groups represent the owners and operators of businesses, labor unions focus on wages, working conditions, and benefits such as pensions and medical care for workers. Unions pressure the government to pass laws that will benefit and protect their workers. The largest labor organization in the United States is the American Federation of Labor–Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO), an association of unions whose members do all kinds of work. The International Airline Employees Association and the National Football League Players Association, for example, are both AFL-CIO unions. Many other unions, such as the National Education Association for teachers, are independent and also represent workers in specific industries.

Professional associations are made up of members of specific professions. Many doctors belong to the American Medical Association (AMA), and many lawyers belong to the American Bar Association (ABA). Accountants, journalists, real estate agents, and many other kinds of professional people also have their own organizations.

Other Types of Interest Groups

Many people belong to interest groups that work to promote their particular ethnic group, age group, or gender. These organizations include the NAACP and Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) for African Americans, the National Organization for Women (NOW) and National Women’s Political Caucus for women, and the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP) and National



Environmental Issues The Sierra Club works to protect wilderness areas and parks for future generations. *What other environmental concerns draw interest groups?*

Council of Senior Citizens for older Americans.

Another category of interest groups covers those working for specific causes. For example, the Sierra Club, the National Wildlife Federation, and Greenpeace are concerned with environmental issues.

All the interest groups discussed so far are considered private groups, each pursuing issues of interest to its own members. Some groups, however, work to benefit all or most of society. These groups are called public interest groups. One example is Common Cause, an organization of 250,000 members that



CHART STUDY

Types of Propaganda Techniques Political parties use various techniques to promote their candidates. *How does name-calling differ from the other techniques?*

NAME-CALLING



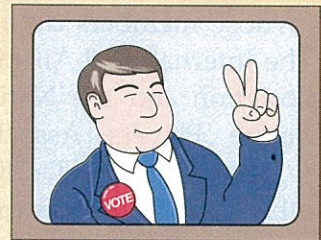
"Candidate A is the candidate of liberals and Communists."

ENDORSEMENT



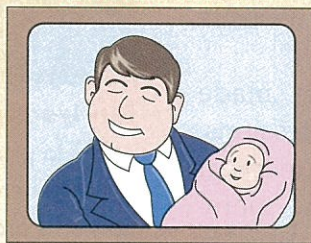
Popular movie star says, "I'm voting for Candidate A, and so should you."

GLITTERING GENERALITY



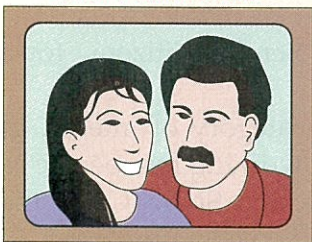
"Candidate A is the one who will bring us peace and prosperity."

THE BANDWAGON



"As the polls show, Candidate A is going to win the election. Vote for A, and be part of this great victory."

JUST PLAIN FOLKS



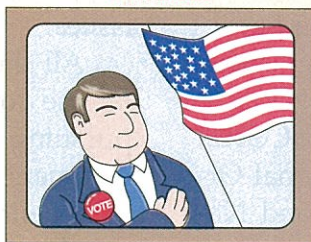
"My parents were immigrants. I understand the problems of ordinary Americans."

STACKED CARDS



"Candidate A has the best record on the environment."

SYMBOLS



"I pledge allegiance..."

works to expose corruption and favoritism in government. The League of Women Voters is a nonpartisan group that promotes voting and educates voters about candidates and issues.

Techniques Interest Groups Use

All interest groups want to influence public opinion both to increase their memberships and to convince people of the rightness of their causes. They attempt to do this in a number of ways. Many use direct-mail campaigns to recruit members. They target potential new members by using subscriber or membership mailing lists from magazines or groups with a similar viewpoint.

Interest groups also advertise on television or in newspapers and magazines. Perhaps you have seen ads urging you to drink milk or to buy cotton clothing. Trade associations sponsor these types of ads. Interest groups also stage protests or organize public events to get free coverage in the news media. For example, a peace group might demonstrate at a local defense plant, or a business group might ask for coverage of its annual “Businessperson of the Year” dinner.

In Chapter 7, you learned that political parties use propaganda to promote a particular idea or viewpoint. Interest groups also use propaganda techniques to advance their causes. Here are some common propaganda techniques that political parties and their candidates and interest groups use.

Endorsements

Political candidates and interest groups often get famous people such as movie stars, rock stars, or sports figures

to endorse, or support, them. In the 1996 presidential race, for example, movie actor and singer Barbra Streisand made appearances in support of Bill Clinton. The idea behind endorsements is that if people admire the person endorsing a candidate or product, they will endorse the candidate or product, too.

Stacked Cards

Card stacking is a technique that presents only one side of an issue by distorting the facts. For example, a group advocating nuclear power might present only facts that would make nuclear power seem safe, omitting any that might indicate safety problems.

The Bandwagon

Getting on the bandwagon means convincing people that everyone else agrees with the interest group’s viewpoint or that everyone is going to vote for a certain candidate. This technique tries to appeal to many people’s desire to be on the winning team.

Glittering Generality

A glittering generality is a statement that sounds good but is essentially meaningless. For example, in the 1994 congressional campaigns, candidates from both parties called for a “return to family values.” The statement is a glittering generality.

Symbols

Political candidates and interest groups use and misuse symbols when appealing to the public. For example, one candidate for public office might salute the flag at every public event to appear more patriotic than his or her opponent.



Techniques President Clinton and Vice President Gore help to build a house during the 1996 presidential campaign. Which propaganda technique does this demonstrate?

Just Plain Folks

Political campaigns often use countless photographs of candidates wearing hard hats, talking to factory workers, eating pizza or tacos, or even milking cows. The idea of this plain-folks appeal is to make people think that the candidate is just like them, with the same desires and concerns.

Name-calling

Name-calling is an attempt to turn people against an opponent or an idea by using an unpleasant label or description for that person or idea. In the 1990s, for example, Republicans often referred to their opponents as “tax-and-spend Democrats,” and some people called candidates who opposed welfare and

affirmative-action programs “racists.” Name-calling is meant to harm the image of a person, group, or idea. One should therefore always consider the accuracy of the label.

★ SECTION 2 REVIEW ★

UNDERSTANDING VOCABULARY

Define bias, impartial.

REVIEWING OBJECTIVES

- 1 What are three general types of interest groups?
- 2 What are some of the techniques interest groups use to try to influence public opinion?



How to Distinguish Fact From Opinion

Facts are statements that can be proved. Opinions are statements that express feelings, attitudes, or beliefs. Although opinions may be stated very persuasively, they are not always based on facts. For this reason, you should check the accuracy of information before using it to make a decision.

Questions to Ask

Is the information factual? Decide whether the information seems believable, and then look for evidence to verify that the facts are correct.

Do I have all the facts? Try to learn all the facts that relate to an issue. The more facts you have, the more confidence you can have in the information.

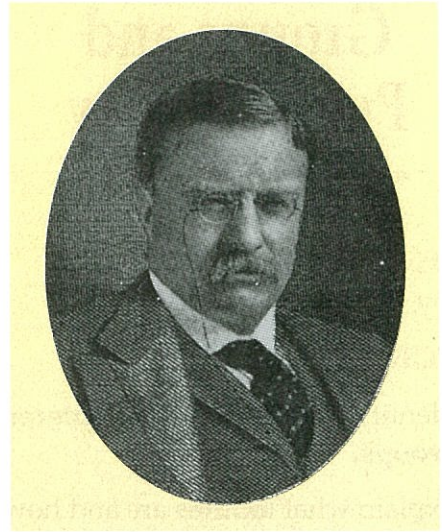
From where did the information come? Eyewitness accounts and physical evidence are good sources of information. Information based on rumor or unreliable sources may be suspect.

How up-to-date is the information? Information should be current and timely.

Is the information accurately stated? Information presented in an emotional manner may be an expression of an opinion, bias, or point of view rather than of fact. Look for information presented in an impartial manner.

Testing Your Ability

The following is an excerpt from President Theodore Roosevelt's 1907 message to Congress. Read the excerpt and answer the questions.



President Theodore Roosevelt

“The land law system which was designed to meet the needs of fertile and well-watered regions of the Middle West has largely broken down when applied to the drier regions of the great plains, the mountains, and much of the Pacific slope. . . . Three years ago a public-lands commission was appointed. . . . Their examination . . . showed the existence of a great fraud upon the public domain. . . . The recommendations [of the commission] are . . . so just and . . . so essential to our national welfare, that I feel confident . . . that they will ultimately be adopted.”

CITIZENSHIP IN ACTION

- 1 What facts did Roosevelt offer to support his claims about the land law system?
- 2 What words indicate that Roosevelt is expressing an opinion?



Interest Groups and Public Policy

FOCUS

TERMS TO KNOW

lobby, lobbyist

OBJECTIVES

- Identify three **functions of interest groups**.
- Explain what **lobbies** are and how lobbyists try to accomplish their goals.

Many people think special-interest groups are harmful to American democracy because they exert too much influence over political decisions. In reality, interest groups serve a number of useful functions.

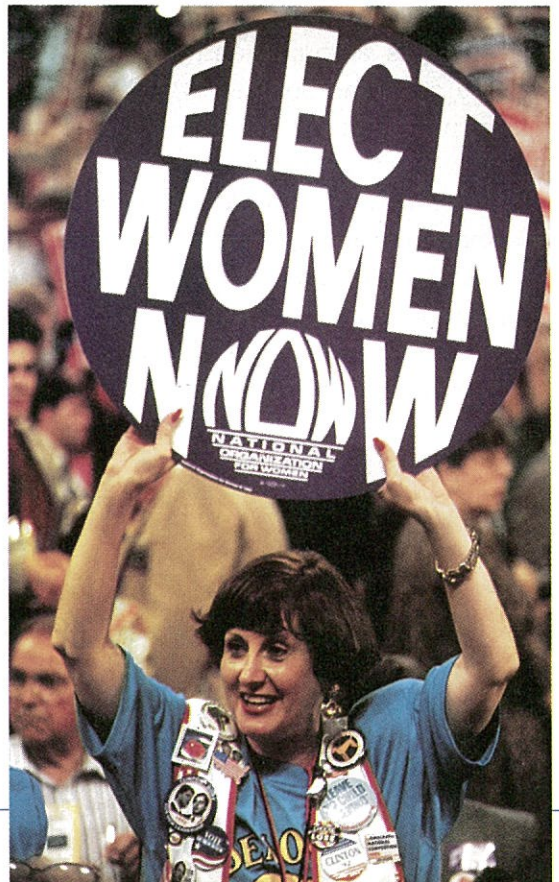
Functions of Interest Groups

The major contribution of interest groups is to bring issues and concerns to the attention of the public, lawmakers, and policymakers. They do this by presenting facts and opinions to support their positions and to counter the arguments of their opponents. For example, much of the current concern about air and water pollution can be traced to information and arguments from interest groups.

Another important function of interest groups is to represent the interests and concerns of specific groups. For example, the United Auto Workers Union represents automobile assembly line workers. Although politicians may not listen to the concerns of one autoworker, they are likely to listen to a group representing hundreds of thousands of voters. As a member of an interest group, an individual can thus have a greater influence on the political system.

A third contribution of interest groups is their support of political candidates who favor their interests and goals. Many large groups, such as the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP), have PACs that contribute funds

Political Influence Members of large interest groups can have considerable influence on political life. *To which interest group does this woman belong?*



to the campaigns of selected candidates. Some interest groups also rate lawmakers according to how they voted on certain issues. Such ratings help voters decide which candidates to support.

Lobbies

One of the primary goals of interest groups is to influence public policy. An anti-abortion group wants the government to pass laws outlawing abortion. Railway commuters want the government to run more trains at lower fares. The NAACP wants the courts to enforce laws against discrimination. Interest groups affect public policy and bring about changes by lobbying.

To **lobby** is to try to get government officials to support a group's goals. The word dates from the 1830s, when it described how people would wait in the lobbies of statehouses to ask politicians for favors. The people who lobby politicians are called **lobbyists**. They are either paid employees or volunteers who work for interest groups. Their job is to persuade government officials to support their group's policies.

Lobbying Government

Lobbying takes place at the local, state, and federal levels of government. It occurs in all branches of government, but most lobbying focuses on Congress and the state legislatures. Lobbyists spend much of their time trying to persuade lawmakers to reject or enact laws that will affect their interest groups.

Lobbyists must have a good understanding of how the government functions. They must know where to go and whom to see. The federal government and each state government have hun-



Lobbying An effective lobbyist knows where to go and whom to contact about the concerns of an interest group. *What do you think would be some concerns of autoworkers?*

dreds of departments, offices, and agencies, but a good lobbyist knows which department to contact about a particular concern. Lobbyists must also be skilled at making contacts with lawmakers, legislative aides, and other government officials. Some lobbyists are former legislators with many contacts in government. Others are lawyers or public relations consultants who specialize in lobbying.

What Lobbyists Do

How do lobbyists go about their jobs? Suppose Congress is considering a bill to allow oil exploration on national park lands in Alaska. Lobbyists for business and oil industry groups would promote the bill, and lobbyists for environmental groups would probably oppose it. Each side would research the issue and submit reports, news articles, and statistics supporting its views. The



Consumer Advocate Ralph Nader frequently speaks out against government agencies and public policies. *How does this help consumers?*

lobbyists might also testify at a House or Senate committee hearing on the bill.

These activities provide lawmakers with a tremendous amount of information. Because Congress deals with thousands of bills each year, lobbyists play an important role in making legislators aware of the merits and drawbacks of many bills. Lobbyists sometimes even submit their own drafts of bills for lawmakers' consideration.

Using Public Opinion

Another way that lobbyists try to persuade lawmakers is by arousing public opinion. They often encourage their interest group's members to write or telephone key legislators. If these lawmakers receive enough mail supporting a proposed bill, they may be persuaded to vote for the bill. Yet lawmakers usually know when a small but active interest group rather than a majority of the public is pressuring them.

The job of lobbyists does not end once a law is enacted. Their interest groups are also concerned with making sure that laws are carried out, enforced, and stand up in court. For example, if an oil exploration bill is approved, environmental groups are likely to watch the whole operation carefully. They want to make sure that the oil companies observe any provisions aimed at protecting the environment. If not, lobbyists for the environmental groups will lobby various government departments or agencies to see that the law is enforced.

Sometimes lobbyists initiate court actions on behalf of their interest groups. The American Civil Liberties Union has gone to court to defend all kinds of interest groups, including students, police officers, and even Communists. Public Citizen, Inc., a consumer group Ralph Nader leads, has brought suits against various companies for violating consumer protection laws.

Regulation of Lobbies

In the past, lobbying was criticized severely because some lobbyists tried to win legislators' votes by providing them with fancy meals and free trips. Some lobbyists also provided large campaign contributions and even used bribery.

Today most lobbyists are ethical and professional. Instead of trying to buy votes, they rely on their ability to present the facts and make persuasive arguments to influence public officials. Nevertheless, many people still criticize lobbyists and their special-interest groups. They feel that some interest groups, because of their power and influence, have an unfair advantage over their opponents. These groups can afford to spend a great deal of money trying to promote or defeat legislation. Groups



CHART STUDY

PAC Spending These PACs spent the most in 1995–1996. *What are PACs trying to do when they contribute to political campaigns?*

PAC	Amount Spent
Emily's List (group supporting women for political office)	\$9,190,660
Democratic Republican Independent Voter Education Committee	6,214,520
Association of Trial Lawyers of America Political Action Committee	3,322,980
National Rifle Association Political Victory Fund	2,950,770
Campaign America	2,921,813
National Education Association Political Action Committee	2,562,574
American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees	2,418,440
AT&T Corp. Political Action Committee	2,207,903
American Medical Association Political Action Committee	2,027,521
Machinists Non-Partisan Political League	1,962,259

Source: Federal Election Commission, 1996.

such as the National Rifle Association and the Tobacco Institute can amass enormous PAC funds to spend on the campaigns of legislators who support their causes.

To prevent abuses among lobbyists, Congress passed the Federal Regulation of Lobbying Act in 1946. This law requires lobbyists at the federal level to register themselves and their interest groups and to report all lobbying expenditures. The law has not been very effective,

however, because it applies only to people whose primary job is lobbying. People who claim that only a small portion of their time is spent lobbying are not required to register. As a result, only about one-fifth to one-quarter of all lobbyists are registered. The law does not provide for any means of enforcement. Most states have lobbying laws. Some state laws are more effective than the federal law.

Federal and state laws that require a waiting period before former officials can become lobbyists also restrict lobbying. The terms of these laws vary from state to state. A typical law might bar a former state legislator from lobbying the legislature or its committees for one or two years after leaving office. The purpose of these laws is to prevent ex-public officials from taking unfair advantage of their inside knowledge and close friendships with former associates on behalf of special-interest groups. Unfortunately, these laws have proved inadequate, especially at the federal level. In recent years, for example, the Department of Defense has come under increasing criticism because many military officers retire and seek jobs with defense industries.

★ SECTION 3 REVIEW ★

UNDERSTANDING VOCABULARY

Define lobby, lobbyist.

REVIEWING OBJECTIVES

- 1 What are three functions of interest groups?
- 2 What are lobbies and how do lobbyists try to accomplish their goals?

Identifying Key Terms

Choose the vocabulary term that best completes each of the sentences below. Write your answers on a separate sheet of paper.

interest group bias mass media
pollster lobby impartial

1. The interest group had a(n) _____ toward one particular candidate because they agreed with his views.
2. The homeowners' association could be considered a(n) _____ because members were all concerned with similar issues.
3. In considering all sides of the issue, the legislator tried to remain _____.
4. Most people look to the _____ as their source of news and information.
5. The group planned to _____ congressional leaders to get them to change their views on the issue.
6. According to the _____, the results of the survey indicated that public opinion was divided on the issue.

Reviewing the Main Ideas

SECTION 1

1. What factors can influence a person's opinion on public issues?
2. Why do some people criticize public opinion polls?

SECTION 2

3. Why do people form interest groups?
4. Why are interest groups an important part of our democratic system?
5. Identify and explain three propaganda techniques interest groups use.

SECTION 3

6. What are the main tasks of lobbyists?
7. What are the provisions of the Federal Regulation of Lobbying Act of 1946?

Critical Thinking

SECTION 1

1. **Analyzing Information** What role do you think public opinion polls should play in the political process? Explain.

SECTION 2

2. **Demonstrating Reasoned Judgment** Do you think interest groups are a positive or a negative force in politics? Explain your answer.

SECTION 3

3. **Determining Cause and Effect** How effective is lobbying as a means of influencing public officials to support a particular cause? Explain.

Reinforcing Citizenship Skills

In a newspaper or newsmagazine, find a report on or an actual transcript of a political speech of a candidate for office or a government official. Many newspapers publish the complete text of the President's annual State of the Union Address. Look through the report or the transcript and mark in some way the facts this person gave about one issue. Analyze these facts and decide if they are believable and complete. Then look for a stated opinion about this same issue. Share your findings with the class.

Cooperative Learning

In groups of four, research a current issue in the news. As an interest group, decide what your position is on this issue. Then write four paragraphs or prepare an oral presentation to illustrate your position, using four different propaganda techniques. Share your results with the class.

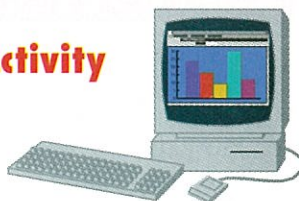
Focusing on Your Community

Investigate some of the special-interest groups in your community. You may be able to locate the names of some of these groups through a local newspaper or television station. Once you have a list, ask the following questions. How many of them have local offices with full-time staffs? How many are local branches of national organizations? How many employ full-time lobbyists? Choose one of the interest groups to investigate further. Find out the group's major issues and concerns. What methods does the group use to try to inform the public and to influence public opinion? What activities is it involved in at the local, state, or national level? How effective has it been in changing policy or influencing the public? Share your findings with the class.

Technology Activity

Using a Spreadsheet

Review the issues you noted in your



civics journal that you began keeping when you began studying this chapter. Imagine that you belong to an interest group concerned with one of these issues. You have been asked to survey public opinion on this issue. Use a word processor to write a 20-question public opinion survey. Distribute the questionnaires to 30 people in the community. When you have the results, use a spreadsheet to tabulate the responses.

Analyzing Visuals

The political cartoon below expresses an opinion on the influence of lobbyists. Study the cartoon, then answer the questions.

1. What do the oxen's words suggest about politicians?
2. What is about to happen in the picture?
3. What does the choice of the wagon and oxen suggest about the cartoonist's viewpoint?





CLOSEUP

POLITICAL LABELS

What does it mean to be a liberal, a conservative, a moderate, a radical, or a reactionary? Political labels can be very confusing. It is helpful to think of these labels as describing a spectrum, or line, of political ideas.

The Political Spectrum

At one end of the political spectrum are reactionaries, who favor a return to more traditional policies. At the other end are radicals, who favor sweeping changes in government policies. In between are conservatives, moderates, and liberals.

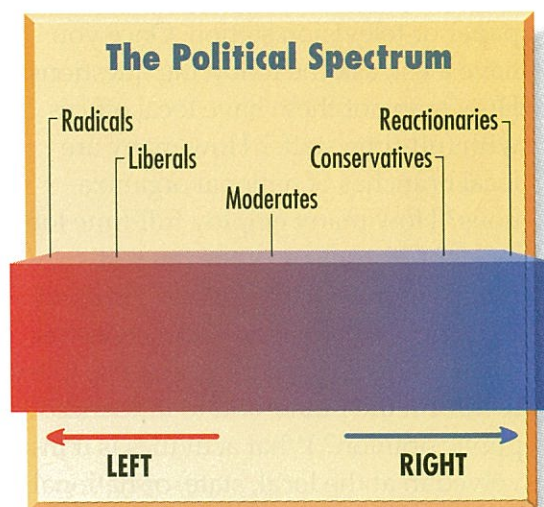
Conservatives generally believe that the role of government should be limited, and that individuals should be responsible for their own well-being. They oppose government regulation and favor traditional values. Conservatives often seek to reinstate prayer in school, curb affirmative action programs, and ban abortions. Conservatives tend to be Republican.

Liberals believe that government should help meet the needs of individual citizens and protect and extend their rights. They often support affirmative action, public housing, and programs for the poor. Most liberals are Democrats or independents.

Moderates follow a course between conservatism and liberalism. They may support government action in some areas and reject it in others.

Other Labels

The terms *the left* or *left wing* and *the right* or *right wing* may be used to refer to liberals and conservatives, respectively. These terms are based on a custom in the French National Assembly of seating liberals on the left, conservatives on the right, and moderates in the middle.



CLOSEUP REVIEW

- 1 What is the basic difference between conservatives and liberals?
- 2 How did the terms *left wing* and *right wing* originate?