



## AP Government & Politics: United States 1999 Sample Student Responses

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Interest groups are large numbers of citizens who join together to advance a common interest or goal. They attempt to advance their cause by targetting national-level policy making institutions.

~~The~~ \*The American Association of Retired Persons (AARP) is one of the largest and strongest interest groups in the United States. They often focus their attention on the \*legislative body. Congress is easily targeted ~~for this reason~~ because they are elected officials who are expected to meet the needs of their constituents. The number of older Americans that \*participate in elections by voting is much higher than that of any other age group. This makes them a powerful force when dealing with their representatives. They can use the threat of the vote when bargaining for their needs and wants. Most representatives, with the desire for reelection would not want to go against the large body of the AARP.

The AARP is a successful interest group because so many elderly people have large amounts of \*discretionary funds. This enables the AARP to develop a powerful PAC. With the strength of a wealthy PAC, the group can provide monetary support for those who agree to further their cause while at the same time withhold funds from those who do not. The power of money is the power to influence. The AARP can influence Congress with its power of the purse.

The AARP also has the ability to put a lot of \*time into their campaigning of ~~the~~ ~~to~~ Congress for their needs. Retired people often have large amounts of free time (in addition to their discretionary funds). With this time the members can focus on grassroots campaigning. They can write letters and make phone calls at enormously high rates. In addition to the letters and calls, retired people's time can also be spent on trips to speak directly with their congressmen and women or their staffs ~~but~~ through this kind of commitment, changes can be made because the message has ~~been~~ reached the legislators.

Through high voter turnout, the use of discretionary funds to create PACs, and the use of time for grassroots ~~poli~~ campaigning of important issues the AARP has earned the nickname the "Gray Panthers" and become one of the most successful interest groups in the U.S. Most legislators would not want to go against this group's objectives if they wanted to remain in office.\* For these reasons the AARP has been extremely successful in meeting its policy objectives. This can be clearly seen in the recent attention that has been given to Social Security and Health Care Reform by Congress.

most of interest groups ~~the~~ desire to promote their interests in a national level, American Association of Retired Persons (AARP) is not the exception. In this particular interest, they hope to gain more benefit for ~~the~~ greying population in America.

a). AARP would target particularly at the social welfare or social securities institution. In addition, they might

b). Due to the rapid growth of senior population in America, ~~the~~ greying population had become an important constituent in the nation. ~~They are~~ The ~~the~~ leaders of AARP would most likely contacted some of subcommittee in Congress which dealing with social policies. AARP ~~is~~ is able to provide the precise research to the subcommittees about the policies that AARP attempted to achieve.

c). It is very likely that AARP would have financial support from PAC, the arms of the interest groups.

PAC could donate the campaign for those members on the committees who push the legislation forward. Apparently, the iron triangle (subcommittees in Congress, bureaucracy, and interest group) would play the dominate role in this policy promotion.

Lobby their interests  
in subcommittees of  
Congress.

National interest groups are always looking for a way to achieve their policy objectives. Through contacts in the federal bureaucracy and Congress, members of interest groups hope to influence their decisions on ~~aiding~~ bills, creating and passing bills. The National Association of Manufacturers (NAM) relies heavily upon Department of Commerce to help insure free trade<sup>and business regulations</sup> and 'continue Congress' support of this concept.

The National Association of Manufacturers pushes for business regulations and free trade agreements in order to maintain good business and relations. Since the Department of Commerce deals with trade and business regulations, they figure these issues are of importance. Together they attempt to keep Congress on the side of fair regulations.

Through lobbying with Congressmen, interest groups attempt to influence policy-making by possibly offering supplying campaign funds. Through<sup>partially</sup> funding a candidate's reelection campaign, interest groups hope to possibly ~~a~~ influence a member's vote on a relevant issue or bill.

The National Association of Manufacturers, and other interest groups as well, target national-level policymaking

institutions to achieve their policy objectives and goals. Lobbying and forming iron triangles are common resources to target and influence policy-making.