

2017

**AP**<sup>®</sup> CollegeBoard

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# AP United States Government and Politics

## Sample Student Responses and Scoring Commentary

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# AP<sup>®</sup> UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS 2017 SCORING GUIDELINES

## Question 2

### 5 points

#### Part (a): 1 point

One point is earned for identifying the primary goal of interest groups.

- Influencing public policy/government actions

#### Part (b): 2 points

One point is earned for a description of the following strategy used by interest groups.

- Lobbying
  - Persuading decision makers to adopt their preferences
  - Providing information to lawmakers
  - Writing legislation/consulting
  - Offering expertise

One point is earned for a description of the following strategy used by interest groups.

- Amicus Curiae
  - Providing legal arguments to support interest group positions on court cases
  - Joining with other interest groups before courts to support common goals

#### Part (c): 2 points

One point is earned for an explanation of how the following hinders the success of interest groups in obtaining their primary goal.

- Separation of powers
  - Complicates efforts/ability to influence policy
  - Each branch requires interest groups to use different strategies
  - Multiple access points

One point is earned for an explanation of how the following hinders the success of interest groups in obtaining their primary goal.

- Bureaucratic discretion
  - The bureaucracy may not follow the intentions of interest groups.
  - The bureaucracy may not implement the law in the way interest groups desire.
  - The bureaucracy may not write rules that interest groups prefer.

A score of zero (0) is assigned to an answer that is off-task or is attempted but earns no points.

A score of dash (—) is assigned to an answer that is blank.

2. Interest groups play an important role in the political process.
- Identify the primary goal of interest groups.
  - Describe EACH of the following strategies used by interest groups.
    - Lobbying
    - Amicus curiae
  - Explain how EACH of the following hinders the success of interest groups in obtaining their primary goal.
    - Separation of powers
    - Bureaucratic discretion

a) The primary goal of interest groups involves political policy, whether it be implementation or changing it to match the interest group's personal agenda. They do not attempt to get a party elected, per se, but rather a specific law or change to public ~~part~~ legislation.

b) Lobbying is a strategy used by interest groups designed to persuade members of congress to do what the group wants them to do. Most lobbyists use money to persuade politicians to vote a certain way on a bill or to introduce new legislation. Many individuals believe lobbying to be corrupt, though it is legal as a form of free speech - people are expressing ~~views~~ and supporting specific policies and agendas.

From the latin alone, one can tell that amicus curiae relates in some way to the judicial branch. If a case is being examined regarding the constitutionality of a specific piece of legislation,



amicus curiae enables an interest group to declare their support for one side of the case. The justices take these declarations of support or dissent into account when making their final ~~decision~~ ruling.

C) Due to separation of powers in government, interest groups can only do so much in regards to supporting specific policies. Initial efforts to get a piece of legislation drawn up and presented to congress may be successful, but then the ~~bill~~ bill must be approved by the president before it becomes law. If he so chooses, the president may veto or pocket veto the legislation he disagrees with. Interest groups aren't created to influence executive decisions, but rather legislative ones.

The Bureaucracy is often referred to as the fourth branch of government, and it is very powerful and massive. Although not part of the legislative branch, the bureaucracy is allowed to implement specific policies of its own. For instance, the ~~FDA~~ Food and Drug Administration passes thousands of regulations that most of the public never even thinks about. Because bureaucratic agencies possess these powers, it is more difficult for an interest

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2A - (3 of 3)

Question 2 is reprinted for your convenience.

2. Interest groups play an important role in the political process.
- (a) Identify the primary goal of interest groups.
  - (b) Describe EACH of the following strategies used by interest groups.
    - Lobbying
    - Amicus curiae
  - (c) Explain how EACH of the following hinders the success of interest groups in obtaining their primary goal.
    - Separation of powers
    - Bureaucratic discretion

group to get a uniform policy across the board. So many regulations are created and destroyed that to try to influence all of them would be an impossible task.

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2B

(1 of 2)

2. Interest groups play an important role in the political process.

(a) Identify the primary goal of interest groups.

(b) Describe EACH of the following strategies used by interest groups.

- Lobbying
- Amicus curiae

(c) Explain how EACH of the following hinders the success of interest groups in obtaining their primary goal.

- Separation of powers
- Bureaucratic discretion

Interest groups are very important and a very big component of politics. Their main purpose is to influence law makers to help their cause, like the NRA wanting less gun restrictions. Interest groups use many different ways to spread their influence and one way is by lobbying Congress. They lobby Congress by hiring usually past members who turn to experts in the interest groups field and who still have some ties in the government. They pay the lobbyists a lot of money to try to influence current members of Congress to support the interest groups opinion and help pass laws in their favor. Interest groups also use an amicus curiae brief or a "friend of the court" to influence the Supreme court in cases involving their field. The groups write a brief that is given to the members of the court which has ~~facts~~ facts, information, research, or anything to try to explain why they should rule in the interest groups favor. These briefs are used very little but are still used. There are some things that do hinder the success of interest groups however. One way is through the Separation of powers. This hinders their success by essentially not



allowing them to obtain full support from all levels of government. The federal government will a lot of times leave decision making for issues not so important up to the individual states and not all states usually agree on a topic. If the majority of states don't agree with the interest groups opinion this can hinder the success by the federal government eventually passing a law against the interest group. Bureaucratic discretion also prevents their success by not allowing interest groups to hire lobbyists within six years of leaving congress. This to try and prevent the lobbyist from having too much influence from knowing everybody in congress. This also means laws may be passed without the groups having much knowledge and can lead to bills being past against the groups, hindering their success.

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2C  
(1+2)

2. Interest groups play an important role in the political process.
- (a) Identify the primary goal of interest groups.
- (b) Describe EACH of the following strategies used by interest groups.
- Lobbying
  - Amicus curiae
- (c) Explain how EACH of the following hinders the success of interest groups in obtaining their primary goal.
- Separation of powers
  - Bureaucratic discretion

(a) The primary goal of interest groups are to affect public policy, and some strategies used by interest groups to accomplish this include lobbying, and Amicus Curiae. (b) Interest groups would lobby a particular law that supports their issue to support or lobby one that goes against their issue to bury it.

(c) The iron triangle. While the Congress is able to provide public policy changes in return for campaign support from the interest. It isn't able to put much influence other than oversight on the bureaucracy due to the president only being able to appoint officials because of

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2C (20+2)

ADDITIONAL ANSWER PAGE FOR QUESTION 2

separation of powers. While bureaucratic  
direction limits the bureaucracies from  
aiding the interest groups to an extent  
because of Congressional oversight, with  
the bureaucracies in risk of losing funding  
they would prefer to keep everything  
in place.

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# AP<sup>®</sup> UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS

## 2017 SCORING COMMENTARY

### Question 2

#### Overview

This question examined the significant role of interest groups in government and politics. Part (a) asked students to identify the primary goal of interest groups. Part (b) asked students to describe interest groups' strategies of lobbying and amicus curiae. Finally, part (c) asked students to explain how separation of powers and bureaucratic discretion can hinder the success of interest groups in obtaining their primary goal.

#### Sample: 2A

##### Score: 5

In part (a) the response earned 1 point for identifying the primary goal of interest groups by stating, "The primary goal of interest groups involves political policy, whether it be implementation or changing it to match the interest group's personal agenda."

In part (b) the response earned 1 point for describing the interest group strategy of lobbying by stating, "Lobbying is a strategy used by interest groups designed to persuade members of congress to do what the group wants them to do."

In part (b) the response earned 1 point for describing the interest group strategy of amicus curiae by stating, "If a case is being examined regarding the constitutionality of a specific piece of legislation, amicus curiae enables an interest group to declare their support for one side of the case. The justices take these declarations of support or dissent into account when making their final ruling."

In part (c) the response earned 1 point for explaining how separation of powers hinders the success of interest groups in obtaining their primary goal by stating, "Due to separation of powers in government, interest groups can only do so much in regards to supporting specific policies. Initial efforts to get a piece of legislation drawn up and presented to congress may be successful, but then the bill must be approved by the president before it becomes law."

In part (c) the response earned 1 point for explaining how bureaucratic discretion hinders the success of interest groups in obtaining their primary goal by stating, "[T]he bureaucracy is allowed to implement specific policies of its own. ... Because bureaucratic agencies possess these powers, it is more difficult for an interest group to get a uniform policy across the board."

#### Sample: 2B

##### Score: 3

In part (a) the response earned 1 point for identifying the primary goal of interest groups by stating, "Interest groups are very important and a very big component of politics. Their main purpose is to influence law makers to help their cause."

In part (b) the response earned 1 point for describing the interest group strategy of lobbying by stating, "Interest groups use many different ways to spread their influence and one way is by lobbying Congress. ... They pay the lobbyists alot of money to try to influence current members of congress to support the interest groups opinion and help pass laws in their favor."

In part (b) the response earned 1 point for describing the interest group strategy of amicus curiae by stating, "The groups write a brief that is given to the members of the court which has facts, information, research, or anything to try to explain why they should rule in the interest groups favor."



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**Question 2 (continued)**

In part (c) the response did not earn a point for explaining how separation of powers hinders the success of interest groups in obtaining their primary goal. “The federal government will a lot of times leave decision making for issues not so important up to the individual states and not all states usually agree on a topic” is an incorrect explanation of separation of powers.

In part (c) the response did not earn a point for explaining how bureaucratic discretion hinders the success of interest groups in obtaining their primary goal. “Bureautic [*sic*] discretion also prevents their success by not allowing interest groups to hire lobbyists within six years of leaving congress” is an incorrect explanation of bureaucratic discretion.

**Sample: 2C**

**Score: 1**

In part (a) the response earned 1 point for identifying the primary goal of interest groups by stating, “The primary goal of interest groups are [*sic*] to affect public policy.”

In part (b) the response did not earn a point for describing the interest group strategy of lobbying. “Interest Groups would lobby a particular law that supports their issue/to support or lobby one that goes against their issue to burry [*sic*] it” is an insufficient description of lobbying.

In part (b) the response did not earn a point for describing the interest group strategy of amicus curiae. The student does not attempt to answer this part of the question.

In part (c) the response did not earn a point for explaining how separation of powers hinders the success of interest groups in obtaining their primary goal. “While Congress is able to provide public policy changes in return for campaign support from the interest [groups] it isn’t able to put much influence other than oversight on the bureaucracy due to the president only being able to appoint official [*sic*] because of separation of powers” is an incorrect explanation of separation of powers.

In part (c) the response did not earn a point for explaining how bureaucratic discretion hinders the success of interest groups in obtaining their primary goal. “While bureaucratic discretion limits the bureaucracies from aiding the interest groups to an extent because of Congressional oversight. With the bureaucracies in risk of losing funding they would prefer to keep everything discreet” is an incorrect explanation of bureaucratic discretion.