Chapter 6
Interest Groups: The Politics of Influence

Focus Questions

Q1 Have the concerns of the Founders about the problems that factions might pose for our national politics been borne out?

A1 Madison believed that the number of interests would be so great that the competition between them would prevent anyone from controlling the others. In turn, he proposed institutional and structural mechanisms: representatives filtering the views of their constituency and an extended republic to control the effects of factions, which place self-interests before the common good. As Theodore Lowi maintains, this pluralistic notion has largely been replaced by a special interest state whereby certain economic and social interests have greater influence in the development and implementation of economic and social policies than other organizations. Consequently, it is plausible that the Framers expected a natural aristocracy to lead and therefore elite interests would be expected to dominate policy decisions and would be disproportionately represented in government.

Q2 How do interest groups try to influence public policy?

A2 Interest groups rely on the size of their membership, the intensity of their members, financial resources, and the expertise of their members, leadership strengths, and strategic alliances with other groups to further their organizations’ ideas. Lobbying groups use institutional avenues including face-to-face meetings with policy-makers to influence their decisions. This is known as the “insider strategy.” Conversely, groups that are unable to directly meet with policy-makers must use other tactics, including marches, protests, civil disobedience, and public information campaigns to promote their causes. These tactics illustrate the “outsider strategy” whereby groups appeal to the public to “spread the news” and pressure their elected representatives to support the organizations’ causes.

Q3 How do interest groups try to influence public policy?

A3 Interest groups primarily influence public policy by lobbying, engaging in campaign fundraising and dissemination, drafting legislation, testifying during congressional hearings, submitting amicus curiae briefs to the courts, engaging in issue campaigns, endorsing candidates/parties, and mobilizing voters. As for lobbying, there are two primary types: the insider strategy which involves contacting governmental actors and the outsider strategy which is characterized by mobilizing public opinion in favor of a group’s cause. Lobbying and other interest group activities can be seen as evidence of an elite orientation, if not dominance, in American politics.
However, pluralists contend that interest group influence is quite variable since they are part of shifting coalitions referred to by scholars as issue networks. The extent of interest group influence is debatable but group proliferation as well as issue fragmentation has contributed to the development of the current political system which involves interest group activities at all levels and across all branches of government from campaigning to governing among both elites and masses within our society.

**Q4** What role do lobbyists play in the political process?

**A4** Lobbyists provide information to legislators during committee deliberations. In addition, representatives of PACs may contribute money to aid political candidates to win elected office. However, interest groups are limited to aggregate donations of $10,000 per election cycle and cannot provide “in kind” gifts. Lobbyists may also appeal directly to the public via mass mailings and issue advocacy advertisements. Subsequently, public opinion may influence policy makers using this “bottom-up approach.”

**Q5** What role did interest groups play in the debate over healthcare reform?

**A5** Interest group activism during the recent healthcare reform effort by the Obama administration and congressional Democrats was unprecedented and ultimately decisive in both the character that the debate took and the end-product of the legislation itself. A plethora of groups were involved in both promoting and demoting the virtues of expanding as well as attempting to decrease the cost of healthcare in the U.S. Traditional Democratic-leaning interest groups like the AFL-CIO were joined by various healthcare advocacy groups like Health Care for America Now as well as non-traditional groups like the American Medical Association to support the reform. Meanwhile, a coalition of traditional Republican-leaning groups led by the Heritage Foundation’s Health Policy Consensus Group, the Chamber of Commerce, and the Tea Party Movement vigorously opposed the legislation. The final legislation was watered down by moving away from a single payer system to a managed care system in order to gain support from certain wavering coalition members and help ensure passage in the Democratic Congress. The money spent opposing the effort reached historic levels: drug companies spent $270 million lobbying both ways on the legislation, insurance companies spent $162 million in opposition, and the Chamber of Commerce spent $194 million ($50 million alone in grassroots lobbying through television).
Chapter Outline

I. Interest Groups in American Politics

Within Chapter 6, we explore two primary ways individuals form associations to influence politics: interest groups and social movements. Interest groups are often granted access to policy-makers and attempt to influence these officials to support or oppose specific issues or policies. Social movements are primarily concerned with making broader social or policy changes and usually do not attempt to change policies through institutional channels. Consequently, differences in strategies, membership, and financial resources distinguish an interest group from a social movement.

A. The Rise of Interest Groups

1. An interest group may be defined as an organization based on shared interests that attempts to influence society and government to act in ways benefiting the organization’s interests.

2. Two competing perspectives address the role and influence interest groups possess in a democratic society:
   a. Pluralism asserts interest groups represent the benefits of citizens to government and that the competition between these groups will achieve reasonable policy outcomes; consequently, no one interest group will become overly powerful. Pluralists believe:
      1) Interest groups do not pose a threat to the public good because public policy emerges from the balance of competing interests.
      2) Special interests are equally represented within the political arena.
      3) An increased number of citizens will increase the likelihood that no one common motive or passion will prevail over others.
      4) Democratic government is respective of majority opinions and governs accordingly.
   b. Elitism is the belief that American politics will be dominated by well-funded interest groups who are much more likely to form, win access, and exercise influence on behalf of the interests of the wealthy rather than the poor.

B. As David Truman contends in the seminal work, The Governmental Process, as social and economic conditions change, individuals form groups and associations to protect their interests. Yet, all associations are not able to attract the attention of policy-makers.

C. Furthermore, Mancur Olson points out in his text, The Logic of Collection Action, that there are differences within the group system and institution barriers affecting strategies to achieve the desired outcome(s).

D. In fact, prior to the ratification of the U.S. Constitution, James Madison addressed the role of interest groups in Federalist #10.

1. Because human nature is such that individuals will naturally form groups to advance self-interests, Madison believed the structure of a government should:
   a. Encourage groups to form to protect these interests.
   b. While also ensuring no one interest becomes too powerful.

2. Madison proposed two primary mechanisms to ensure that no one interest would form a faction which is adverse to the rights of other citizens, or to the permanent interests of the community (contrary to the common good).
   a. The two mechanisms advocated are:
1) The formation of an extended republic so a greater number of parties and interests spread over a large geographical area will make it harder for a majority faction to form and dominate the national government.

2) A representative democracy whereby people elect a number of representatives who refine and “filter” the views of the constituency.

b. Thus, only by the combination of representatives acting as trustees within an extended republic may groups, organizations, and interests check each other and further republican liberty.

3. The Madisonian model illustrated the role and effectiveness of interest groups early in our republic.

4. The Madison model doesn’t solve the problem of faction but it does allow for the possibility of controlling the effects of faction.

E. However, after the Civil War, technological advances including the use of the telegraph and railroads to ship goods across the country led to business monopolies that began to have an enormous influence on state legislatures which appointed members to the U.S. Senate (this is prior to the Seventeenth Amendment being ratified in 1913). In effect, national groups began to emerge.

1. The economic interests of large manufacturers and industrialists were disproportionately represented in the national government.

2. As a result, trade and professional organizations mobilized to protect the interests of their members.

3. This system of trade unions, professional organizations, and business groups dominated the political arena until the rise of the Progressives in the early twentieth century.

F. The modern group system formed as a result of the burgeoning American population, the expanding geographic of the United States, the use of government to protect workers’ rights and intervene in economic affairs, and advances in the telecommunication industry.

1. The Progressives sought to limit the powers of political parties leading to a rise in interest groups who worked with the government to enact reforms.

2. FDR’s National Recovery administration (1933–1935) gave federal money to businesses and other organizations to lift the country out of the Great Depression. The New Deal programs and increased governmental involvement in all facets of society established an unprecedented network of national organizations, specifically groups representing labor interests.

3. LBJ’s expansion of social welfare programs, support for civil rights, and the increasingly unpopular Vietnam War led to the formation of large interest groups who profited from the war and social movements who opposed it.

G. The average American adult is a member of four organizations.

H. As of 2005, there are over 35,000 registered lobbyists in Washington, DC.

II. Types of Interest Groups

A. An interest group is an organized body of individuals who share common political goals and try to influence public policy decisions.

1. Baumgartner and Leech’s publication, The Encyclopedia of Associations, lists fewer than 6,000 interest groups in 1959. Today the same source lists over 22,000 and about 75 percent represent occupational interests. These organizations may be classified in the following groups:
a. Business and Occupational Groups are the largest and oldest types of interest groups representing economic interests including business, labor, and professional organizations.
   1) Peak associations represent the general interests of business including the Chamber of Commerce and the National Association of Manufacturers.
   2) Trade associations bring together companies in a single business, commercial, or industrial sector. Examples are The American Petroleum Institute and American Electronics Association.
   3) Labor groups, including the American Federation of Labor (AFL) later the AFL-CIO represented the interests of skilled laborers. Congress passed the Wagner Act in 1935 as part of FDR’s New Deal Program allowing unions (organized labor) to collectively bargain, or negotiate employment contracts for its membership.
   4) Professional associations serve members of specialized professions such as lawyers, the American Bar Association (ABA), and physicians, the American Medical Association (AMA).

b. Public interest groups (aka “Watchdog groups”) differ from economic or professional associations in that they are geared toward the “public interest.” These groups aim at securing benefits for all members of society. Such goals include clean air and water, safe highways, and honest government. Examples include Citizens against Government Waste and the World Wildlife Fund.

c. Social equity groups attempt to represent the interests of those individuals who are not members of the aforementioned mainstream economic or public interest groups. Organizations include the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) and the National Organization of Women (NOW).

d. Ideological PACs are groups promoting a single issue or political ideology in an attempt to influence public policy. Examples are the Eagle Forum (conservative), CATO (libertarian), and Americans for Democratic Action (liberal).

III. Interest Group Resources and Strategies

A. Different organizations use a variety of strategies based upon the resources available to them to achieve their goals. Nevertheless, the result is to influence policy-makers to support their causes.

1. Interest Group Resources:
   a. Membership intensity, size, and motivation.
   b. Financial resources: Money gained through membership fees and contributions.
   c. Expertise of the organization’s members.
   d. Organization and leadership have an influence on the success of an organization.
      1) Unitary groups have a single level of administration.
      2) Federations are comprised of member organizations with varying levels of autonomy.
   e. Strategic alliances are formed to coordinate resources and efforts to improve the probability that the goal will be reached. These alliances are usually formed among ideologically like-minded groups.

2. Interest Group Strategies:
a. Interest groups are referred to as “lobbies.”
b. Individuals who represent an interest group are called “lobbyists.”
c. The role of lobbyists:
   1) Lobbyists representing special interests are often former governmental employees who have extensive knowledge of the political process and use their former positions and friendships with policy-makers to promote their organizations’ goals.
   2) While lobbyists are known to provide money through campaign contributions to policy-makers in return for access to those individuals involved in determining policy decisions, special interests are vital in providing specific and detailed information concerning the proposed policies.
   3) The practice of reciprocal favors (quid pro quo) between legislators and special interests is illegal but still occurs.
d. Interest groups directly lobbying policy-makers are known as the insider strategy that is illustrated by the formation of close relationships in which access is granted in exchange for information.
e. Subsequently, lobbyists have extensive influence during committee deliberations and play an important role in the policy-making process.
f. An alternative strategy used by interest groups is known as the outside strategy whereby the organization brings to light a specific policy issue and seeks to influence policy-makers by appealing directly to the public. This method is used by organizations that are unable to meet with government officials.
g. Restrictions on interest groups: McCain-Feingold Act (2002), the 2002 Bipartisan Campaign Contribution Reform Act
   1) Limited PAC contributions to $10,000 ($5,000 for a primary, $5,000 per election cycle per candidate).
   2) 501/527 iii ads: non-profit ads (illegal to advertise sixty days prior to a general election/thirty days prior to primary).
h. Various tactics (both legal and illegal) may be used:
   1) signing petitions or letter-writing campaigns;
   2) peaceful demonstrations;
   3) strikes and boycotts;
   4) disruptive protests (50 percent legal, 50 percent illegal);
   5) civil disobedience—deliberate violation of the law;
   6) violent protests (riots);
   7) revolution/succession (most extreme).
i. These strategies are employed by organizers of social movements who seek to educate and motivate large numbers of people to facilitate social change.

IV. The Fight Over Healthcare
A. The Origins of Health Care Reform
   1. Generally, this issue made it on the national agenda in the twentieth century and has been a perennial point of conflict since. The Democrats have traditionally advocated for some type of national health insurance while the Republicans have usually opposed such efforts. The first such effort was actually proposed by the Progressive and former Republican President Theodore Roosevelt in his 1912 campaign under the “Bull Moose” Banner. FDR, Truman, Johnson, Nixon, Carter, and Clinton all proposed some
type of nationalized healthcare and were subsequently opposed by Republicans who continually spoke of “creeping socialism.” The winning effort was championed by Barack Obama and based on “lessons learned” in Clinton’s failed attempt from 1994.

B. Interest Groups in the Healthcare Debate
1. Coalitions of interest groups formed, one with traditional Democratic-leaning organizations joined by key players from the healthcare sector like the AMA advocated on behalf of the reform and was instrumental in putting the legislation together. A key coalition formed specifically for the avocation of such reforms was Health Care for American Now. In opposition stood traditional Republican groups formed into a few coalitions that were led principally by the Chamber of Commerce, the Heritage Foundation, and specified coalitions like America’s Health Care Providers, and Conservatives for Patients’ Rights. Massive amounts of money were spent in the issue campaign, especially by the opposition groups, going well into the hundreds of millions of dollars.

C. Key Provisions of the Obama Health Care Bill
1. The bill containing the healthcare reform was passed on March 21, 2010 with a follow-up bill passed through reconciliation procedures to seal the deal; no Republican supported the measure in the House of Representatives in the 219-212 tally. The bill expanded coverage, increased the regulation of health insurance industry practices, and put in place taxes and fees to finance the package. In particular, it expanded coverage to 32 million previously uninsured, bridging the uninsured gap by decreasing it from 17 percent to 5 percent. It did this by expanding Medicare and creating state-run insurance exchanges as well as filling gaps in elderly prescription drug coverage by 2020. The bill also limits health insurance industry practices by guaranteeing dependent child coverage up to age twenty-six, eliminating annual or lifetime caps, proscribing against pre-existent condition denial by insurance companies (goes into effect in 2014), requires company coverage for health insurance by employers with fifty or more workers (or face a penalty), and requires self-employed persons to have coverage either on their own or through a state-run exchange (or face a penalty). New taxes were levied as a progressive increase to payroll taxes for Medicare of 3.8 percent for those making in excess of $200,000 individually or $250,000 as a family. Finally, companies selling brand name drugs and high cost “Cadillac” insurance plans also had taxes and fees levied on them. The CBO claims that over the next ten years the plan will actually reduce deficits by $143 billion, though these figures have been disputed by opponents.

D. Now What—Reservations, Problems, and Pitfalls
1. The public is skeptical and needs to be educated as to the virtues of Obamacare if it is to be a policy success. Also, a new relationship between the government and the insurance system has to be cultivated in order to implement the oversight capacities called for by the reform. And, while access was increased costs have not decreased so far, more aggressive intervention is needed in order to get the process going with an emphasis on good health outcomes as opposed to piecemeal tests and treatments.

E. The Fight Goes on—Inside and Outside Lobbying After Adoption
1. Inside lobbying has focused on bureaucratic implementation procedures in the executive branch as well as prospective court challenges by supporters and opponents alike. Republicans are following a line of “repeal and revise” while both sides have cashed in with relevant interest groups for campaign financing as a result of this issue.
V. Interest Groups v. The Public Interest
   A. An ongoing debate centers around the democratic quality of interest groups in our political system, are they pluralistic enterprises or elitist manipulators? Have attempts to limit interest group influence like in McCain-Feingold been appropriate? Or, are activities of things like 527 Groups OK in the “marketplace of ideas?”

VI. Conclusion
American politics has always included organized individuals who try to affect politics. Yet, access to policy-makers has largely been reserved to elites and those representing business, occupational, and professional interests. Interest groups have been a major part of the American political system since the beginning of the country, providing a means of access between the citizenry and the state as well as a mechanism for social and economic activism. Interest groups engage in insider and outsider strategies for the lobbying of government officials in all three branches of government and at all three levels of government. They also try to influence public opinion by engaging in issue education and advocacy with the public. Recently, various coalitions of interest groups tackled the difficult issue of healthcare reform. There were pitched battles between adherents and opponents which occurred in the halls of Congress and across the airways as both sides agitated for/against and ultimately shaped the health policy future of this country.
Lecture Suggestions

Theory/Philosophical Focus: Federalist #10

I. Introduction
A. In Federalist #10, Madison counters the Anti-Federalist’s arguments against the proposed Constitution.
   1. Specifically the Anti-Federalist Papers: Letters from the Federal Farmer (October 8–9, 1787) and Brutus’ Essay #1, (October 18, 1787) opposing the proposed Constitution and supported tenets of Jeffersonian democracy:
      a. stipulating sovereignty should reside in small republics;
      b. a large, consolidated republic will threaten republican liberty;
      c. a distant federal government will lead to tyranny (faction);
      d. local traditions and regional differences will inhibit an effective national government.
B. Alternatively, Publius believes an extended republic will actually control the effects of factions.
   1. Representation alone will be insufficient because it would require the representatives to have good character, morality, and good judgment. This is utopian, as history has shown, given the conflicts, animosities, and unfriendly passions among men.
   2. There must be another “mechanism” to ensure that if representation fails faction can still be controlled.
   3. That mechanism is the Extended Republic:
      a. By taking in a multiplicity of interests, the interests and parties will effectively moderate the threat to republican liberty.
      b. The differences between regions and locales will cancel each other so no one interest will become overly powerful.
C. James Madison lays out the skeleton of his argument for the proposed Constitution in the first paragraph:
   1. A well constructed Union will break and control the violence of faction.
   2. A friend of popular government understands the threat of faction and will support a governmental plan that provides a proper cure for faction.

II. Controlling the Effects of Faction
A. The definition of faction is a number of citizens, whether amounting to a majority or minority of the whole, who are united and actuated by some common impulse of passion, or of interest, adverse to the rights of other citizens, or to the permanent and aggregate interests of the community (contrary to the common good).
B. Reasons for factions:
   1. The nature of man
      So strong is this propensity of mankind to fall into mutual animosities, that where no substantial occasion presents itself, the most frivolous and fanciful distinctions have been sufficient to kindly their unfriendly passions, and excite their most violent conflict.
   2. Difference in possession of property.
C. How do we deal with the problem of faction?
   1. Madison provides two alternatives:
      a. removing its causes; or
b. controlling its effect(s).
2. How do we remove the cause of faction?
   a. Liberty is the cause of faction and to remove the cause destroys liberty.
      \textit{Give all people the same opinion is impossible but also a cure worse than the disease.}
   b. So, we cannot get rid of faction without destroying liberty.
3. According to Madison, if we cannot rid ourselves of faction then we need to control the effects of faction.
4. How do we secure the public good and private rights without destroying liberty?

D. It is surprising to many students that Madison is arguing against democracy in that he is showing that democracy provides no control of faction.
1. When people directly administer the laws there is no check on the passions or interest of the people. The passions and interest become the administrators of the laws.
2. Pure democracy does not provide any cure for the mischief of faction. A common passion will be felt by the majority of the whole which will rule unchecked, sacrificing the minority for the passion or interest.
3. Democracy is a flawed government in that it cannot secure inalienable rights against faction.

III. Madison’s Mechanisms to Control the Effects of Faction
A. Madison proposes two mechanisms that will allow the Republic to control the effects of faction or the tyranny of the minority: (Remember: factions are contrary to the common good.)
   1. First mechanism: Representation (the filtration argument)
      a. Government in which the scheme of representation takes place: A simple majority of votes eliminate the threat of a minority faction.
      b. The representative process, which will take place within the two legislative branches, allows for a refinement and enlargement of the public views as the view is passed through a body whose insight will help determine if the view is consistent with “the true interest of their country.”
      c. According to Madison, factions will be controlled by a representative acting as a trustee who will use his wisdom and expertise to filter the views of his constituency: \textit{Representatives as Trustees: may know better than the people.}
   2. However, to control faction you need something else.
B. Second mechanism: An extended Republic—(the size argument)
   1. Madison proposes an \textit{Extended Republic}
      a. Republics, through representation, can be spread out over large territories.
      b. The people elect a number of representatives and then the representatives make the laws.
      c. A greater number of parties and interests will make it harder for a majority faction to form.
   2. Why?
      a. Harder to find a lot of people with the same passions or interests.
      b. If there are people with the same interests it is physically harder for them to be in the same place at the same time.
American Political Development (APD)/Historical Focus: The Women’s Rights Movement

I. The Impetus for Political Equality (1848–1899)

A. In July 1848, Lucretia Mott and Elizabeth Cady Stanton organized the convention in Seneca Falls, New York, publicly adopting a statement calling for women’s suffrage.

B. The meeting attracted 240 people, including forty men including the first man to speak in favor of women’s suffrage, the abolitionist, Frederick Douglas.

C. The convention convened with the first written document, the Seneca Falls Declaration, publicly stating, in language similar to the Declaration of Independence, the reforms needed to provide political, economic, and social equity to women.

D. Initially, abolitionists, including Susan B. Anthony, a Quaker from Rochester, NY, and Stanton formed the National Woman Suffrage Movement that advocated a broad equal rights platform while Lucy Stone (who incidentally kept her maiden name after marriage) created the American Woman Suffrage Association dedicated to extending suffrage to women.

1. Yet, many in the suffrage movement, including Stanton and Anthony, were against extending suffrage to slaves.

2. The two groups merged in 1890 to form the American Woman Suffrage Association concentrating their efforts on gaining women the right to vote.

E. In the 1872 presidential election, hundreds of suffragists went to vote for Ulysses S. Grant and other Republican candidates.

1. Susan B. Anthony was found guilty of voting and fined $100.

2. In 1873, the Supreme Court ruled that only individual states could allow women to vote per Article I, section 4, of the U.S. Constitution.

3. In 1890, the admission of Wyoming into the Union created the first state allowing women the right to vote.

F. In 1893, Carrie Catt was dispatched by Anthony and Stanton to Denver, Colorado, to help promote women’s suffrage. Catt had addressed Congress in 1892 promoting women’s political equality.

G. A third group, the Women’s Christian Temperance Union, joined suffragists and abolitionists to push for political equality.


I. In Boston, MA, anti-suffragists organizations, known as Beacon Hill societies, form to counter the influence of suffragists: Why?
1. This would be detrimental to women because they would become “crooked and distrustful” like men.
2. As a result of these organizations, referenda advocating political equality were defeated throughout Massachusetts.

II. The Suffragist Movement Goes National (1900–1917)

A. In 1896, the women’s rights movement gained another ally, the National Association of Colored Women, with its charismatic leader, Mary Church Terrel, who was invited to speak at national conventions.

B. As a result of the large number of immigrant workers pouring into the Northeast during the turn of the twentieth century, Harriet Blache, the daughter of the recently deceased Elizabeth Cady Stanton, began to bring in women from trade unions to support women’s suffrage.

C. Yet, the suffragists were fractured with some opposing political equality for blacks and immigrants while also split as to what strategies should be incorporated to achieve equality.

D. With the advent of the Progressive Party in the United States, the International Workers’ Movement, and the equal rights marches in London, suffragists began to stage “open air speeches” and organize public demonstrations and parades in New York promoting political equality for women.

E. In 1912, the Suffragist Movement begins to gain momentum.

F. Suffragists Alice Paul (who gained a PhD in English) and Lucy Burns organize a demonstration outside the White House before Woodrow Wilson’s inauguration as president in 1913.
   1. 8,000 demonstrators descend on Washington, DC.
   2. National recognition of the Suffragist Movement is illustrated by the introduction of the Susan B. Anthony Amendment calling for an amendment to be added to the U.S. Constitution guaranteeing women the right to vote.

G. The labor movement joins the suffragists in a national push for women’s equality by actively campaigning against Democratic candidates in nine Western states.

H. In 1915, Washington, California, Arizona, Kansas, and Oregon join four other states permitting women the right to vote (referendum defeated in New York state).

I. In 1916, Jeannette Rankin is the first woman elected to Congress representing the state of Montana.

J. As the president of the NAWSA, Carrie Chapman Catt hires Maude Hill Park who begins lobbying members of Congress to support the Anthony Amendment.

K. However, congressional members from Southern states are adamant in opposing the amendment.
   1. Scared that blacks would gain too much power.
   2. Challenged the traditional notion of the family structure.

L. In 1917, Alice Paul who is the leader of the suffragist organization, the National Women’s Party, begins to stage daily protests and pickets the White House.
   1. Public discontent rises as daily protests occur.
   2. This strategy is impeding the incremental strategy of Catt and Park.
   3. Violent clashes erupt and 168 protesters are jailed.
   4. Public opinion is swayed by the abusive treatment of the protesters by the Washington, DC police and the subsequent imprisonment of some suffragists.

III. Political Equality: The Nineteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution

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A. In 1917, President Woodrow Wilson realizes the women’s vote is politically beneficial as several Democratic candidates are defeated in Western states that allow women to vote.

B. After two unsuccessful bids to pass a suffragist referendum in New York, the state assembly agrees to the referendum in 1918.

C. Politically equality for women is now being debated in every state.

D. In 1918, Jeannette Rankin, as a member of the House of Representatives, speaks on the floor supporting the Anthony Amendment and calls Woodrow Wilson “a Kaiser” referencing Kaiser Wilhelm who is now a declared enemy of the United States.

E. The Amendment Process
   1. The House passes the Anthony Amendment by one vote in 1918 as Southern Democrats were allowed to attach a rider to the legislation permitting states to bar women from voting in the next general election based upon state voting registration guidelines.
   2. On June 4, 1919, the amendment passes the Senate by one vote.
   3. The Anthony Amendment now must be ratified by two-thirds of the state legislatures (thirty-six states) per Article V of the U.S. Constitution.
   4. As a result of Delaware rejecting the amendment, Tennessee becomes the battleground state.
   5. In the Tennessee legislature, first-term Republican, Harry Burns, changes his vote to support the amendment because he receives a note from his mother asking him to do so.

F. The Nineteenth Amendment providing women the right to vote is ratified on August 26, 1920!

IV. Conclusion
A. While the Nineteenth Amendment was ratified in 1920, it by no means indicated women became active in politics. In fact, Kristi Andersen’s book, *After Suffrage* (see Supplemental Reading section) actually provides empirical evidence that women’s participation declined throughout the 1920s and early 1930s in many states.

B. Furthermore, Mississippi and Georgia do not allow women to vote in the proceeding November elections.

C. Political change does not equate to social change.

D. The decline of the Progressive Movement led to less national attention for women’s issues.

E. Nevertheless, the Democratic Party began to gain the support of women by supporting the Nineteenth Amendment.
   1. National leaders hoped women would support the League of Nations.
   2. Sponsor women as political candidates in Western and Midwestern states.
   3. Southern Democrats remained hostile to women’s equality.

F. Carrie Chapman Catt founded the League of Women’s Voters (originating from the NAWSA) and continued to work to further women’s rights until her death in 1947.
Projects, Exercises, and Activities

1. Social movements propose broad changes that challenge societal norms, cultural practices and seek to influence governmental institutions and procedures. In turn, reforms occur because government officials are forced to respond to public opinion. As an out-of-class assignment, have the students choose a particular social movement (examples include women's suffrage, the civil rights movement, environmental issues, the twenty-six amendments to the U.S. Constitution, etc.), and identify the group(s) that spearheaded the movement and the specific policy changes that the movement caused. Consider the following questions: What were the most effective strategies used by this group? Why was it effective? What strategies did they use that failed to produce change? Why did these strategies fail?

2. Engage the students, as a class project, in the creation of a Carrot Mob-style (https://carrotmob.org/) exercise. Select a charity or issue that the students will promote (good choices can be women’s shelters and food banks). Organize the class into sub-groups focused on planning, promoting, negotiating with the businesses, etc. When the students have completed the experience ask them to consider the work and problems of organizing and mobilizing citizens for a cause in a reflective paper.

2. Invite a representative from a lobbying group, PAC, public interest group, watchdog organization, or think tank to speak to the students. Have the students ask questions following the presentation. Finally, have them write a paper on the presentation and what implications the organization might have on public policy and society at large.

3. As an assignment, have the students contact an individual who is employed or works with interest groups (preferably a lobbyist). Next, have the students interview the person asking questions that address the particular strategies used and actions taken to influence policy-makers. Furthermore, is there a particular ideological bias expressed by the organization(s) or issues the lobbyist represents? Finally, what is the personal and professional background of the lobbyist or representative of the organization? How has his/her personal background influenced, affected, or prepared the lobbyist to perform the tasks necessary to successfully influence policy-makers?
Additional Resources

Supplemental Readings


Websites

**American Association of Retired Persons**
Website for the largest American lobbying organization whose membership totals over thirty-five million including those individuals who are aged fifty or older.

**Americans for Democratic Action**
Website for the ideologically liberal PAC, Americans for Democratic Action. This organization produces a data set of Congress members’ voting records evaluated according to ideological orientation.

**Citizens Against Government Waste**
Website for the government watchdog group, Citizens against Government Waste, that advocates lower taxes and opposes wasteful government programs.

**CATO Institute**
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Website for the ideologically libertarian think tank, Cato Institute.

**Christian Coalition**  
Website for the socially conservative interest group, the Christian Coalition.

**American Conservative Union**  
Website for the ideologically conservative lobbying group, American Conservative Union. This organization produces a data set of Congress members’ voting records evaluated according to ideological orientation.

**Federal Election Commission**  
This is the Web page of the Federal Election Commission that provides information on campaign finance laws.

**International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers**  
This is the site for the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW) representing approximately 750,000 members who are employed as skilled laborers.

**National Association for the Advancement of Colored Peoples**  
Website for the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People dedicated to advancing civil rights legislation.

**National Abortion and Reproductive Rights Action League**  
This is the Web page of the National Abortion and Reproductive Rights Action League that supports pro-choice candidates and policies.

**National Organization for Women**  
Official website of the National Organization for Women.

**Open Secrets**  
This site operated by the Center for Responsible Politics provides information on lobbying activity, campaign donations lists and expenditures, as well as PAC contributions.

**U.S. Chamber of Commerce**  
Website for the pro-business lobbying organization, the United States Chamber of Commerce, which has numerous affiliates in all fifty states.

**National Right to Life**  
This interest group agitates on behalf of the pro-life position relative to the abortion issue.