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**Topic Name:**

Congress II: jobs, influences, and views

**Vocabulary:**

Delegate – A view of the role of legislators that holds that they should represent the views of their constituents even when personally holding different views.

Trustee – A view of the role of legislators that holds that they should vote independently based on their judgment of the facts

Issue advocacy – Unlimited and undisclosed spending by an individual or group on communications that do not use words like “vote for” or “vote against,” although much of this activity is about electing or defeating candidates

Interest group – a collection of people who share common interest and seek to influence government

Lobbyist – person employed or acts on behalf of an interest group or corporation to try and influence policy decisions

**Abstracts:**

* Produce legislation
* Debate and discuss social and political issues
* Chooses committee members that make most decisions
  + This is where most of the action comes from. Each bill that is introduced must first make it through a committee before it reaches the floor. This has the ability to simplify the discussion and make it easier to work with as there are fewer people. Most bills die in committees, but those that make it out are loaded with unrelated additions.
* Creates and oversees many government agencies
* Public usually tends to have low ratings of congress
* People see them as unrepresentative and disconnected from their constituents
* People view congress as lacking collective responsibility
  + Despite the large amount of the public that feels congress hasn’t been doing a good job, people still view their representative in a good light. This characteristic is due to the tendency of the representative to point the blame on the other congressmen, not taking responsibility of his own actions. Along with this, with so many people working in congress, there is no one to point the blame to.
* Public opinion along with vote count and surveys influence them
* Lobbyists use mostly money to persuade Congressmen
  + Congress is heavily influenced by the money of interest groups. Money is a major factor in elections, which is what the representatives care about most. Interest groups will agree to make campaign contributions if the congressman will pursue the issue that they want them to.
* Interest groups have major influences
  + Economic, ideological, public, foreign policy, government

**Necessities:**

Congress is the branch of government that creates laws and regulations

Most influence comes from lobbyists and interest groups

Americans mostly view congress in a negative light

**Further Information:**

Pg. 117-140 of book – interest group info

Pg. 254-258 of book – congress views/jobs