**Your name:**  Brandon Myers

**Topic name:** Interest Groups

**Vocabulary:**

Interest group-- people who share a common interest and seek to influence government with tactics such as lobbying

Free rider—someone who does not join an interest group but receives the benefit

Lobbying—activities aimed at influencing legislators and the policies they enact

Political action committee (PAC)—interest group that is legally entitled to raise funds in order to contribute them to candidates or political parties

Iron triangle—relationship between interest groups, congressional committees, and government agencies that share a common policy concern

**Abstracts:**

* Interest groups can be categorized into types such as economic, ideological, public interest, foreign policy, or government itself
* Union members can’t be required as a condition of employment is an open shop
* Union members may be required as a condition of employment is a closed shop
* Interest group characteristics include size, resources, cohesiveness, leadership, and techniques
* Three types of members are; full time formal leaders, people who are intensely involved, and people who are name members only and don’t contribute
* Techniques can include presenting cases to Congress, lobbying, establishing political parties, mass mailing, and being involved in litigation
* The most important thing a lobbyist can do is provide money to members of Congress for their reelection campaign
* Many lobbyists move from a government job to one with an interest group, this is called the revolving door
* PAC’s raise funds and give aid to politicians and officials in an attempt to persuade voting on issues
* PAC’s have grown from about 150 in 1970 to about 4,000 today
* The Federal Election Campaign Act (1971) limited PAC’s to $5,000 per election or $10,000 per election cycle
* Individuals have a limit of 2,000 per candidate per election cycle
* PAC’s can give unlimited soft money to any challengers of the incumbent
* Most reforms of interest groups include regulations that seek fairness, disclosure, and balance between them
* The categories of interest groups vary widely. They may be organized to lobby for wage increases, conducting research, or shaping public opinion. Many of our interest groups have an overlapping nature which is described as interest group pluralism. Most Americans are either in an interest group or are represented by one. Every interest group is different based on what they represent such as economic or ideological interests, and other factors such as size and power.
* Lobbyists try to influence policy decisions and positions in the executive and legislative branches of our government. They are very experienced often have serving other corporations and associations. They are known as the third house because they represent people based on interest and money.
* PAC’s are the political arm of an interest group. Over the past four decades they have had major growth. They invest their money in either candidates or parties in an attempt to influence outcomes of elections and legislation in Congress.

**Necessities:**

You need to know the importance of interest groups, lobbying, lobbyists, and PAC’s

**For Further Information:**

Chapter 6 in the Gov book or go to apstudynotes.org for a list of key terms