

**AMERICAN GOVERNMENT**  
**AND POLITICS TODAY** 2015-2016 EDITION



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# Chapter Seven

## Interest Groups

# Learning Outcomes

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- 7.1 Define an interest group and explain the constitutional and political reasons why so many groups are found in the United States.
- 7.2 Explain why an individual may or may not decide to join an interest group and the benefits that membership can confer.
- 7.3 Describe different types of interest groups and the sources of their political power.
- 7.4 Identify the direct and indirect techniques that interest groups use to influence government decisions.
- 7.5 Describe the legislation which regulates the reporting of lobbying efforts at the federal level and discuss why it is relatively ineffective.

# Interest Groups: A Natural Phenomenon

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- Interest Groups and Social Movements
- Why So Many?



Peter Silva/Zumapress.com/Newscom

# Social Movement Interest Groups

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NAACP	<a href="http://www.naacp.org">www.naacp.org</a>
Human Rights Campaign	<a href="http://www.hrc.org">www.hrc.org</a>
The Urban League	<a href="http://www.nul.org">www.nul.org</a>
NOW	<a href="http://www.now.org">www.now.org</a>
League of United Latin American Citizens	<a href="http://www.lulac.org">www.lulac.org</a>
National Gay and Lesbian Task Force	<a href="http://www.nglftf.org">www.nglftf.org</a>

# Interest Groups: A Natural Phenomenon

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dapd-Sipa USA/dapd/Sipa USA/Newscom

In February 2013, activists gathered in front of the White house to convince the president to deny the permits for the Keystone XL Pipeline and to show their support for other environmental issues.

# Why Do Americans Join Interest Groups?

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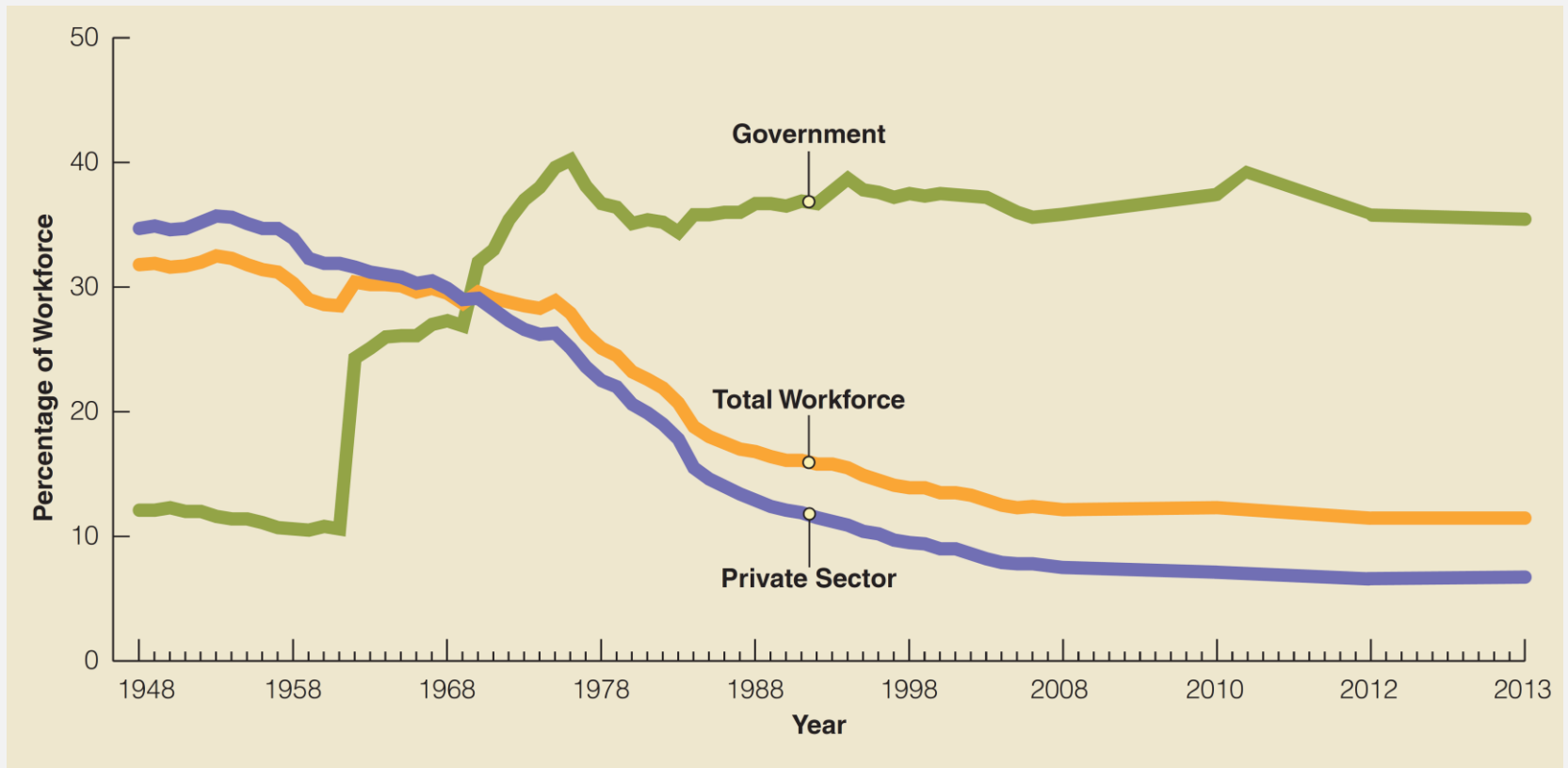
- Incentives
  - Solidary Incentives
  - Material Incentives
  - Purposive Incentives

# Types of Interest Groups

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- Economic Interest Groups
  - Business Interest Groups
  - Agricultural Interest Groups
  - Labor Interest Groups
    - Labor movement
    - Service sector
  - Public-Employee Unions
  - Interest Groups of Professionals
  - The Unorganized Poor

# Decline in Union Membership, 1948 to Present





# Types of Interest Groups

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Justin Sullivan/Getty Images

In July 2013, the Bay Area Rapid Transit System was shut down by striking union members who opposed proposed changes in their health care and pension plans. Thousands of commuters were forced to find other types of transportation during the strike.

# Types of Interest Groups

10

- Environmental Groups
- Public-Interest Groups
  - Nader Organizations
  - Other Public-Interest Groups
- Other Interest Groups
- Foreign Governments

# “One-Issue” Interest Groups

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National Right to Life Committee	<a href="http://www.nrlc.org">www.nrlc.org</a>
NARAL Pro-Choice America	<a href="http://www.naral.org">www.naral.org</a>
National Rifle Association	<a href="http://www.nra.org">www.nra.org</a>
Brady Campaign (handgun control)	<a href="http://www.bradycampaign.org">www.bradycampaign.org</a>
American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals	<a href="http://www.aspca.org">www.aspca.org</a>
People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals	<a href="http://www.peta.org">www.peta.org</a>
Mothers Against Drunk Driving	<a href="http://www.madd.org">www.madd.org</a>
AARP	<a href="http://www.aarp.org">www.aarp.org</a>

# What Makes an Interest Group Powerful?

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- Size and Resources
- Leadership
- Cohesiveness

# Profiles of Power – Four Influential Interest Groups

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## AARP, formerly the American Association of Retired People



**Membership:** 40 million Americans, mostly over 50

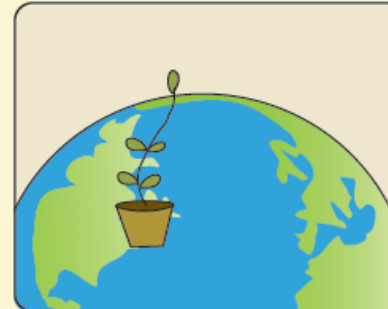
**Location:** Washington, DC

**Web site:** [www.aarp.org](http://www.aarp.org)

AARP began as an organization of retired teachers and has grown in the last three decades to a mass organization serving more than 40 million members. With a membership fee of only \$16 per year, members are entitled to magazines and information, lobbying on their behalf, and access to purchase medical insurance, automobile insurance and travel services. AARP's political power derives from its huge membership, its ability to communicate to its members, and its mission to serve the needs of seniors. The group is now one of the best financed in Washington with an annual revenue base of \$1.1 billion. Critics point out that AARP doesn't really offer insurance but lends its name and membership to other corporations, which pay royalties of \$700 million a year to AARP. In 2013, AARP spent \$9.6 million on lobbying Congress.

Source: Center for Responsive Politics, [www.opensecrets.org](http://www.opensecrets.org).

## The Nature Conservancy



**Membership:** 1 million through subscriptions to the magazine

**Location:** Fairfax, Virginia

**Web site:** [www.nature.org](http://www.nature.org)

The Nature Conservancy is one of the largest and most successful environmental groups in the world, with total lobbying expenditures for 2012 of \$900 million. The Conservancy is often criticized by other environmental groups because it is very willing to partner with private property owners, corporations and the states to purchase and save specific tracts of land. It is seen as being more favorable to private ownership and capitalism than many other environmental interest groups. However, it has successfully purchased and preserved millions of acres of land, reefs, and seabed around the world. The organization has net assets of more than \$5.2 billion.

Source: The Nature Conservancy 2012 Annual report, Charity Navigator, [www.charitynavigator.org](http://www.charitynavigator.org).

# Profiles of Power – Four Influential Interest Groups

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## Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America (PhRMA)



**Membership:** Only about 50, including all of the major drug-makers in the world. The list is available on PhRMA's website.

**Location:** Washington, D.C.

**Web site:** PhRMA.org

During the debate over the Patient Protection and Affordability Act (the Obama health care plan), PhRMA was considered one of the most influential players, working on the behalf of its corporate members to keep the government from regulating the cost of drugs. While the overall finances of the association are not public, the not-for-profit arm, PhRMA Foundation distributes hundreds of thousands of dollars to scholarship and research each year, and the interest group itself spent more than \$17.8 million on lobbying in 2013.

Source: Center for Responsive Politics, [www.opensecrets.org](http://www.opensecrets.org).

## Service Employees International Union (SEIU)



**Membership:** 2.1 million

**Location:** Washington, DC

**Web site:** [www.seiu.org](http://www.seiu.org)

One of the fastest growing unions in the country, the SEIU played an important role in the election of President Barack Obama. With its growth concentrated among public workers, the union saw the election of a progressive president as essential to the welfare of its members. SEIU has been a major campaign contributor for Democratic party candidates. In the 2012 election cycle, the organization donated \$18 million to candidates and outside organizations. In addition, the union spent about 23 million on "independent" expenditures for advertising and other forms of communication in 2012. The organization reported that it spent about \$900,000 on lobbying in 2013.

Source: Center for Responsive Politics, [www.opensecrets.org](http://www.opensecrets.org).

# Interest Group Strategies

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- Direct Techniques
  - Lobbying Techniques
  - The Ratings Game
  - Building Alliances
  - Campaign Assistance

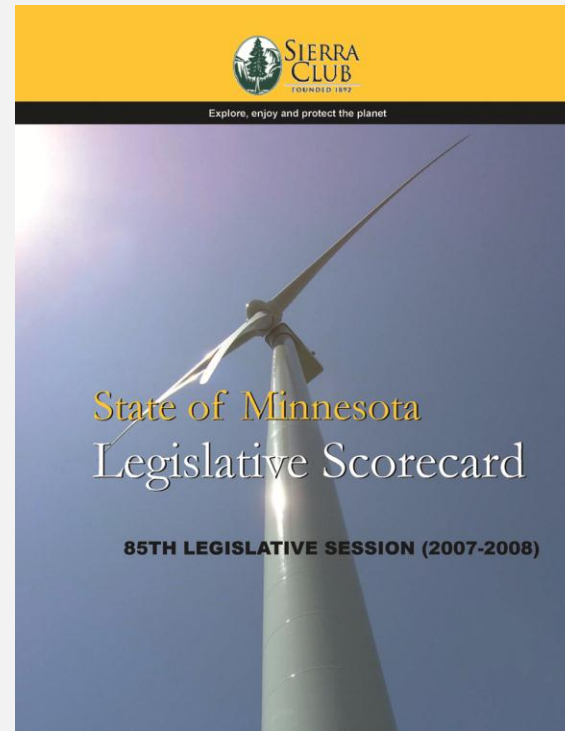
# Interest Group Strategies

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## SENATE Scorecard

Senate Member's Name	Party	District	PH (2007)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	Cumulative Rating
Arenett, Rip	R	22	483-0021	O	X	O	O	X	O	O	X	O	O	X	O	O	X	O	O	X	O	O	X	O	O	X	O	147	
Carona, John	R	46	483-0004	O	X	X	O	O	X	O	X	O	O	X	O	O	X	O	O	X	O	O	X	O	O	X	O	161	
Chico, Wendy	D	19	483-0002	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	47	
Dowell, Robert	R	7	483-0003	O	X	X	O	X	O	X	O	O	O	X	O	O	X	O	O	X	O	O	X	O	O	X	O	161	
Duncan, Robert	R	28	483-0018	O	X	O	O	X	O	X	O	O	X	O	O	X	O	O	X	O	O	X	O	O	X	O	O	161	
Ellis, Rodney	D	13	483-0009	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	45	
Ellis, Wade	R	4	483-0001	O	X	X	O	X	O	X	O	O	X	O	O	X	O	O	X	O	O	X	O	O	X	O	O	161	
Estes, Craig	R	30	483-0008	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	142	
Fraser, Troy	R	14	483-0014	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	143	
Gallegos, Mario	D	6	483-0005	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	115	
Harris, Chris	R	39	483-0006	O	X	X	O	X	O	X	O	O	X	O	O	X	O	O	X	O	O	X	O	O	X	O	O	175	
Hogan, Glenn	R	18	483-0008	O	X	X	O	X	O	X	O	O	X	O	O	X	O	O	X	O	O	X	O	O	X	O	O	158	
Hutchins, Juan	D	39	483-0006	O	X	O	O	X	O	X	O	O	X	O	O	X	O	O	X	O	O	X	O	O	X	O	O	142	
Huffman, Juan	R	47	483-0007	O	X	X	O	X	O	X	O	O	X	O	O	X	O	O	X	O	O	X	O	O	X	O	O	161	
Jackson, Mike	R	11	483-0001	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	161	
Leach, Eddie	D	22	483-0002	O	X	O	O	X	O	X	O	O	X	O	O	X	O	O	X	O	O	X	O	O	X	O	O	175	
Nelson, Jane	R	12	483-0001	X	X	O	X	X	O	X	X	O	X	X	O	X	X	O	X	X	O	X	X	O	X	X	O	142	
Nichols, Robert	R	3	483-0003	O	X	O	O	X	O	X	O	O	X	O	O	X	O	O	X	O	O	X	O	O	X	O	O	161	
Ogden, Steve	R	5	483-0004	O	X	X	O	X	O	X	O	O	X	O	O	X	O	O	X	O	O	X	O	O	X	O	O	147	
Patrick, Dan	R	7	483-0003	O	X	X	O	X	O	X	O	O	X	O	O	X	O	O	X	O	O	X	O	O	X	O	O	161	
Salgado, Jeff	R	19	483-0009	O	X	O	O	X	O	X	O	O	X	O	O	X	O	O	X	O	O	X	O	O	X	O	O	161	
Shapiro, Florence	R	8	483-0004	O	X	X	O	X	O	X	O	O	X	O	O	X	O	O	X	O	O	X	O	O	X	O	O	147	
Shapleigh, Ellen	D	19	483-0009	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	107	
Shurtz, Carlin	D	19	483-0009	O	X	O	X	O	X	O	O	X	O	O	X	O	O	X	O	O	X	O	O	X	O	O	O	147	
Van Der Prie, Leticia	D	26	483-0004	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	115	
Winters, Kirk	D	14	483-0004	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	47	
Westworth, Jeff	O	25	483-0005	O	X	O	O	X	O	X	O	O	X	O	O	X	O	O	X	O	O	X	O	O	X	O	O	147	
West, Bruce	D	13	483-0009	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	161	
Whitman, John	D	15	483-0009	O	X	O	O	X	O	X	O	O	X	O	O	X	O	O	X	O	O	X	O	O	X	O	O	161	
Williams, Kimberly	R	4	483-0001	O	X	X	O	X	O	X	O	O	X	O	O	X	O	O	X	O	O	X	O	O	X	O	O	142	
Zubrin, Judith	D	31	483-0001	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	115	



Legislative Scorecards:  
*How much value can voters place on these kinds of ratings?*



# Interest Group Strategies

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- Indirect Techniques
  - Generating Public Pressure
    - Climate control
  - Using Constituents as Lobbyists
  - Unconventional Forms of Pressure
    - Boycott

# Interest Group Strategies

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Dusit/Shutterstock.com

# Interest Group Strategies

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Al Pereira/WireImage/Getty Images



Singer Jennifer Hudson joins the Sandy Hook Elementary School chorus at the Super Bowl to sing “America the Beautiful.” Hudson’s appearance with the children demonstrated her support for stronger gun control legislation.

# Interest Group Strategies

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- Regulating Lobbyists
- The Results of the 1946 Act
- The Reforms of 1995
- Recent Lobbying Scandals

# Interest Groups and Representative Democracy

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- “Elite Within an Elite”
- Interest Group Influence
  - Not all have equal influence
  - Even most powerful not always successful

# Battle Over Wisconsin Budget Bill

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**Click picture to view video**



# Video Discussion Questions

1. What types of interest groups are represented by the protestors?
2. What does collective bargaining mean? Are states legally obligated to meet pension and other commitments to public employees?
3. Do you think this demonstration is a successful strategy?