AP Government and Politics

**Chapter Focus**
**Chapter 11: Interest Groups**

The purpose of this chapter is to survey the wide variety of interest groups or lobbies that operate in the United States and to assess the effect they have on the political system of the country. After reading and reviewing the material in this chapter, you should be able to do each of the following:

1. Explain why the characteristics of American society and government encourage a multiplicity of interest groups, and compare the American and British experiences in this regard.
2. Describe the historical conditions under which interest groups are likely to form, and specify the kinds of organizations Americans are most likely to join.
3. Describe relations between leaders and rank-and-file members of groups, including why the sentiments of members may not determine the actions of leaders.
4. Describe several methods that interest groups use to formulate and carry out their political objectives, especially the lobbying techniques used to gain public support. Explain why courts have become an important forum for public interest groups.
5. List the laws regulating conflict of interest, and describe the problems involved with "revolving door" government employment. Describe the provisions of the 1978 conflict-of-interest law. Explain the suggestions that have been made for stricter laws. Describe the balance between the First Amendment's freedom of expression and the need to prevent corruption in the political system.

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