

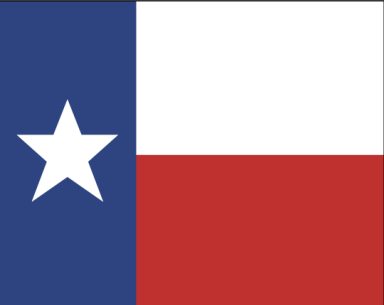
Chapter 6: Interest Groups and Lobbying

Champagne & Harpham

State and Local Government

GOVT 2306

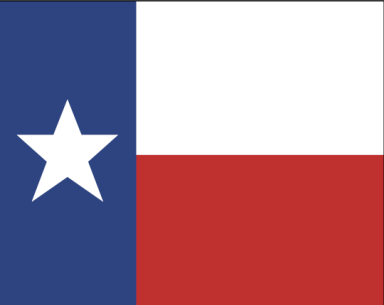
Professor Davis



Upcoming Exam Information

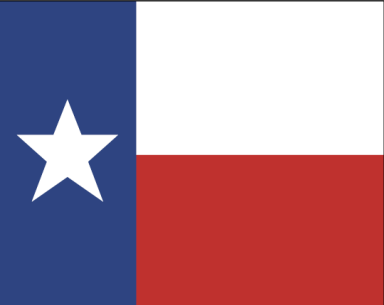
- Exam 2: **Monday, February 20** during normal class hours (Champagne and Harpham, chapters 4, 5 and 6)
- You are required to provide your own scantron (available in the UTD Bookstore)
- Fill out your name and Student ID
- Fill out your class time
- Mark whether you have Form A or Form B

*For all of this information and more, please see the link on *Exam Information* located on the Course Homepage in eLearning.



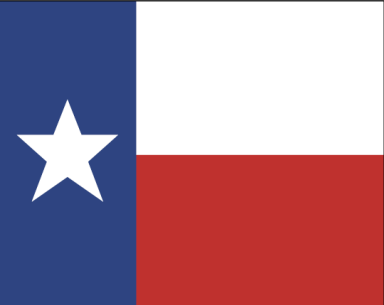
Interest Groups

- An **interest group** is an organization established to influence government policies and programs
- Interest groups assume a variety of forms and can be set up to serve small or large numbers
 - Reforming school policy; school vouchers
 - Interests in common, such as in workers' unions



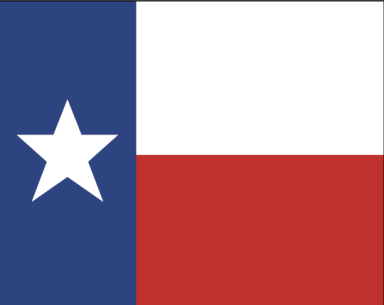
Why Interest Groups Matter

- Interest groups provide support for existing policies
- They support legislators in their electoral campaigns
- They articulate ideas from which policies can be crafted and are mobilized to challenge the ideas and interests of others
- Interest groups play an important role in elections and the legislative process in Texas



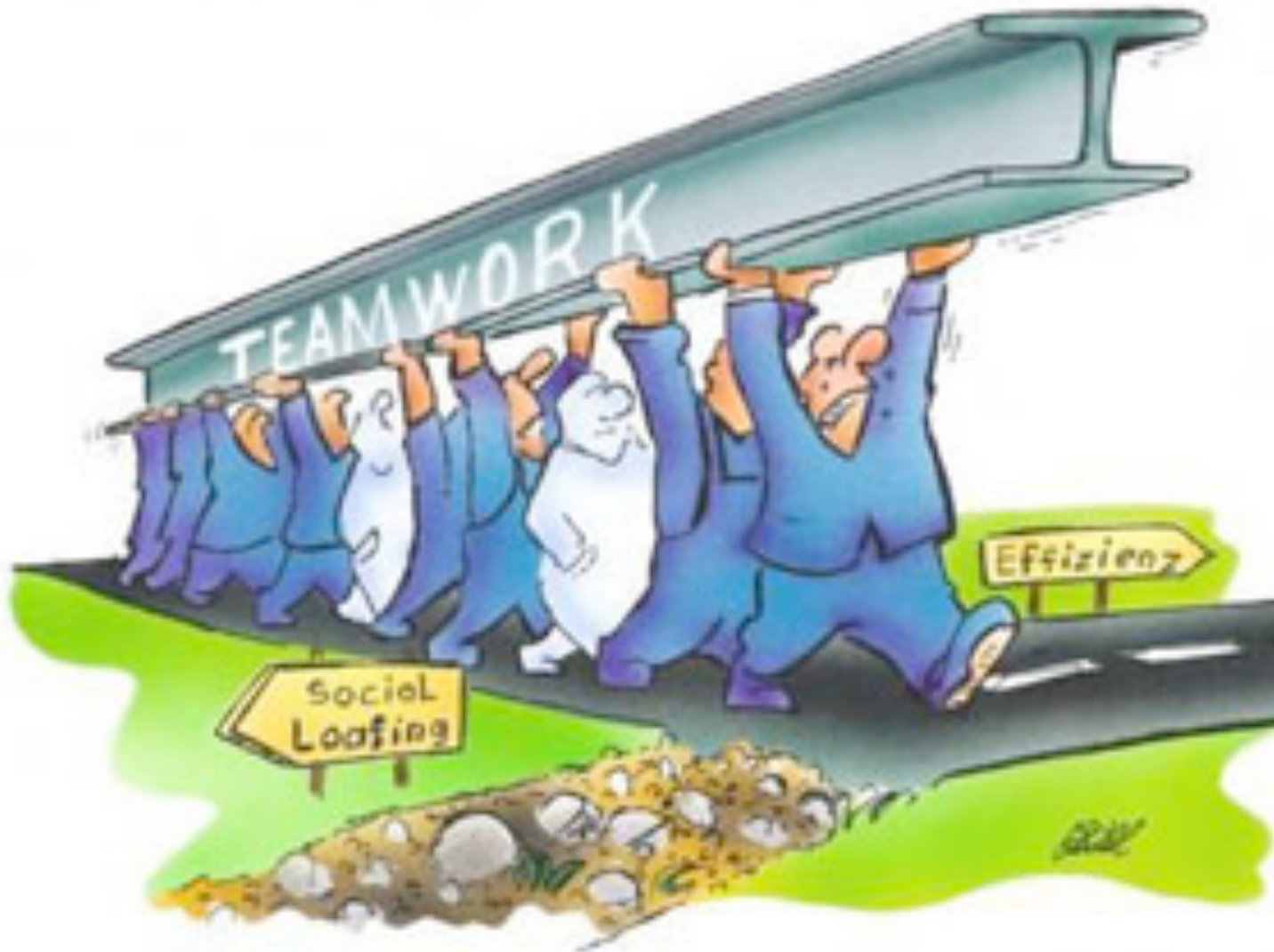
Interest Group Resources and Strategy

- Members—numbers matter
- Money—access to deep pockets
- Information—first drafts of legislation often come from interest groups
- Credibility—the information provided must be *good* information
- These resources are the foundation upon which strategies are developed to promote an interest group's concerns



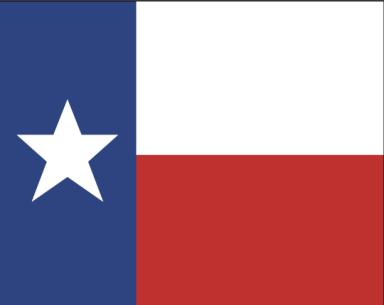
Collective Action Problems

- People have an interest in organizing into an interest group that represents their interests, but most people want someone else to pay for the groups organizational cost
- **Free rider problem** the incentive to benefit from others' work without making a contribution, which leads individuals in a collective action situation to refuse to work together



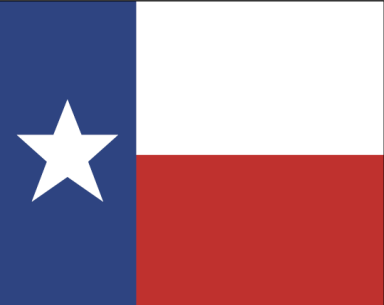
The Free Rider Problem

Political cartoon from:
<https://apgovernmentchs.wikispaces.com>



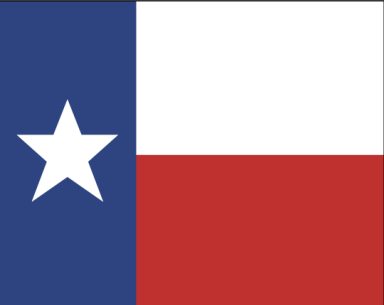
Interest Groups & Policy Makers

- Interest groups want policies to their benefit
- Policy makers benefit from interest groups
- Interest groups have time, money, expertise, and continuity advantages over individuals



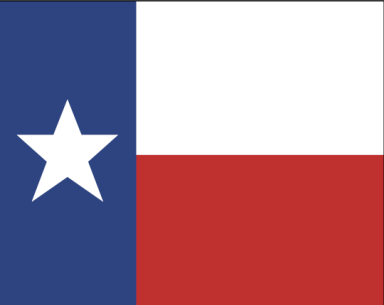
Interest Groups & Policy Makers

- Well-funded interest groups have an advantage in affecting the policy process
- Campaign contributions can be combined by **bundling** them to increase their impact
 - **Bundling**: the interest-group practice of combining campaign contributions from several sources into one larger contribution from the group, so as to increase the group's impact on the candidate



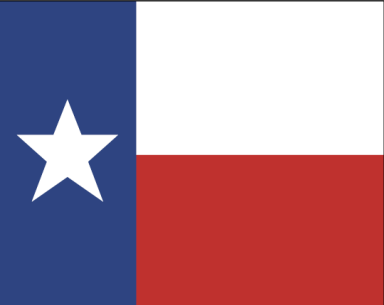
Lobbyists

- **Lobbyists**: an individual employed by an interest group who tries to influence governmental decisions on behalf of that group
- Interest groups strive to influence public opinion, take their views to policy makers, and support those policy makers that are friendly to their causes
- Interest groups use **lobbyists** to reach these goals
- Lobbyists must be able to reach and communicate with policy makers



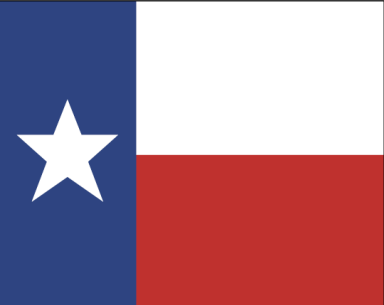
Gaining Access to Policy Makers

- Interest groups sometimes fund lavish benefits for lawmakers
 - Is the low pay for Texas lawmakers a factor?
- Some lobbyists have long-standing personal ties to policy makers
- Access to policy can also be gained by building support for an issue among constituents
 - Interested voters are mobilized to get involved
- Texas lawmakers are permitted to use campaign contributions for expenses associated with holding office.



Gaining Access to Policy Makers

- In a “revolving door” fashion, former legislators are often employed as lobbyists
 - They can use friendships and experience to gain access
- Former lobbyists may also become legislators
- Once lobbyists have access, they provide information that may be useful, may write bills to be introduced, and arrange testimony

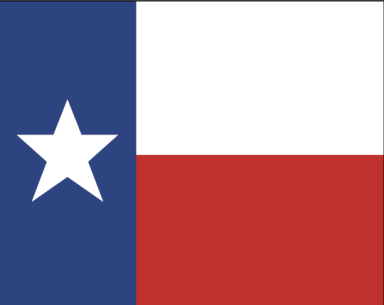


Can lobbying lead to corruption?

Sometimes...

In 1989, Bo Pilgrim of Pilgrim's Pride Poultry distributed \$10,000 checks to state senators in the capital while he was lobbying them on workers' compensation reform.

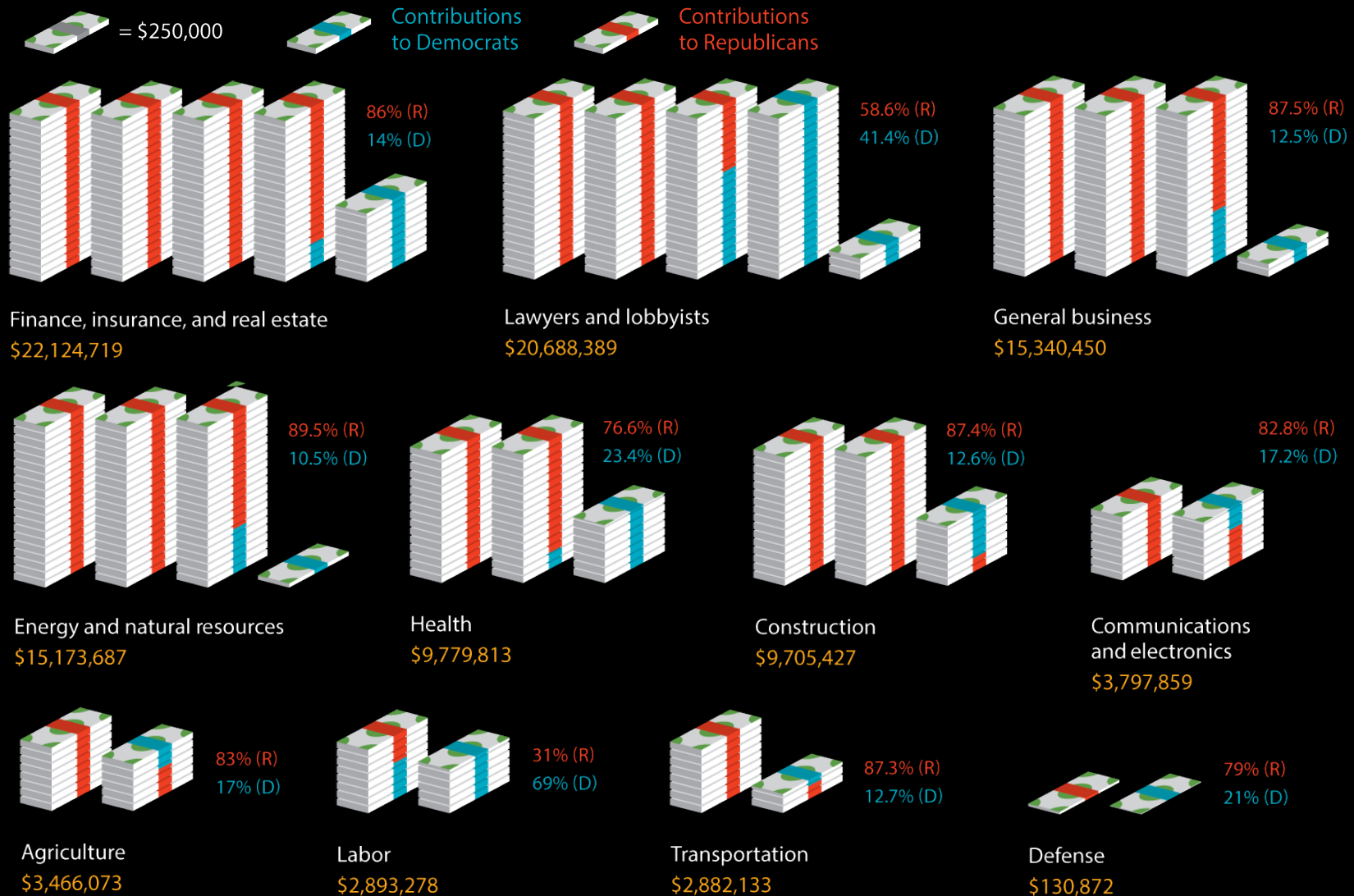


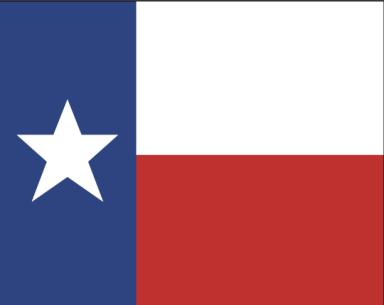


Who Represents Ordinary Texans?

- There is no counterbalancing lobby to represent ordinary Texans
- The Trial Lawyers Association frequently allies with consumer interests
- Business interests dominate in Texas
- Money unquestionably helps in politics

Contributions to Texas Legislature Candidates in 2012



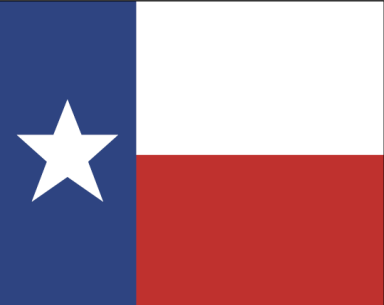


Supporting the Candidate: PACs

Political action committee: private group that raises and distributes funds for use in election campaigns

Issue advocacy: independent spending by individuals or interest groups on a campaign issue that is not directly tied to a particular candidate

****** Take a look at “get out the vote” initiatives on pages 184 and 186



Defeating Opponents

- Incumbents have the advantage over challengers
 - Two exceptions: scandal can destroy an incumbency; and redistricting can ruin the political base of an incumbent
- An interest group's goal may be to defeat a candidate
- *Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission* (2009)
 - Resulted in new funding structures known as sources of dark money
 - **dark money**: political money where the donors of the money do not have to be disclosed

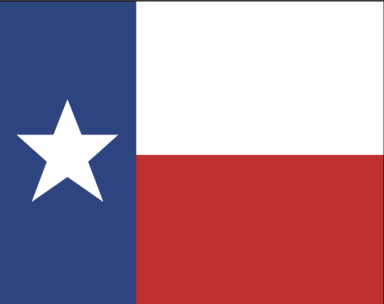
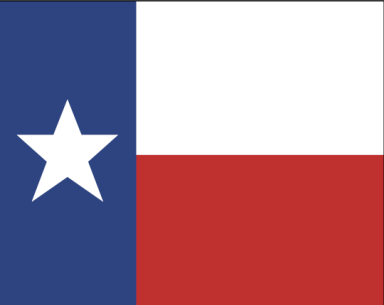


TABLE 6.1

Average Dollars Raised by Incumbents and Challengers for the Texas Legislature, 2012

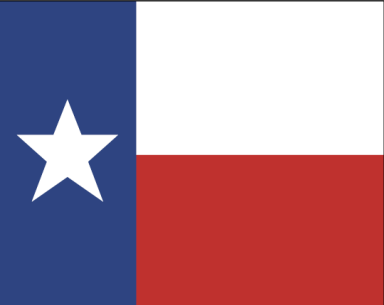
OFFICE	INCUMBENTS (\$)	CHALLENGERS (\$)
House	\$388,719	\$79,258
Senate	1,113,440	103,823

SOURCE: National Institute on Money in State Politics.



Interest Group Capture

- With **interest-group capture**, a government agency serves the interests it is supposed to regulate
 - Texas Railroad Commission
 - A Public Citizen report pointed out that by 2010, 80 percent of donations were to incumbent commissioners from industries they regulated
- Reform proposals failed in the 2013 legislature



Individuals as Lobbyists

- Ordinary individuals can impact policy
 - Tyrus Burks: smoke alarms for the hearing-impaired
- Few Texans are engaged in politics, so lobbying is largely left to organized interest groups with professional lobbyists
- Texas's low levels of voter participation—the lowest level in the country—means that organized interest groups fill the void



ANTHONY CHAMPAGNE and EDWARD J. HARPHAM
Revised by Ronald Vardy