

**2012 AP<sup>®</sup> UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS  
FREE-RESPONSE QUESTIONS**

3. The judicial branch is often assumed to be insulated from politics. However, politics affects many aspects of the judiciary.
- (a) Describe two political factors that affect presidents' decisions to appoint members of the federal judiciary.
  - (b) Identify two political factors that affect the confirmation process of a president's nominees and explain how each factor complicates a confirmation.
  - (c) Explain how one legislative power serves as a check on court decisions.
  - (d) Explain how one executive power serves as a check on court decisions.
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4. Interest groups seek to influence political processes in ways that benefit their members. In doing so, however, they may not act in the overall public interest.
- (a) Describe two techniques interest groups use to influence elections.
  - (b) Explain how interest groups use each of the following to influence government decision making.
    - Issue networks (also known as iron triangles)
    - Amicus curiae briefs
  - (c) Explain how each of the following serves to limit interest group influence.
    - The media
    - Pluralism

**STOP**

**END OF EXAM**

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## Question 4

**6 points**

### Part (a): 2 points

One point is earned for each correct description of a technique used by interest groups to influence elections.

Techniques include:

|                                   |   |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| campaign contributions            | GOTV efforts                                  |
| candidate ratings                 | independent expenditures                      |
| endorsements                      | issue ads                                     |
| 501(c)4                           | PACs  |
| 527                               | providing information on issue and candidates |
| funneling volunteers to campaigns |   |

Notes: Must describe a technique, not merely identify it. No double dipping on PACs and Super PACs.

### Part (b): 2 points

One point is earned for an acceptable explanation that demonstrates **how** interest groups use issue networks (iron triangles). One point is also earned for an acceptable explanation that demonstrates **how** interest groups use amicus briefs:

- Interest groups participate in issue networks by providing money, information, and resources in hopes of obtaining political support from Congress, the bureaucracy, or the White House.
- Interest groups use amicus briefs to inform the Court in hopes of influencing the acceptance of cases, Court reasoning, or decisions.

### Part (c): 2 points

One point is earned for a correct explanation of **how** the media acts to limit interest group influence. An additional point is earned for a correct explanation of **how** pluralism acts to limit interest group influence:

- Media can act as a gatekeeper of information or a watchdog of interest group behavior.
- Pluralism limits interest group influence because of the competition among a vast number of groups.

A score of zero (0) is assigned to an answer that is completely off-task or is on-task but earns no points.

A score of dash (—) is assigned to an answer that is blank.