

**2012 AP® 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.
- Describe two political factors that affect presidents' decisions to appoint members of the federal judiciary.
 - Identify two political factors that affect the confirmation process of a president's nominees and explain how each factor complicates a confirmation.
 - Explain how one legislative power serves as a check on court decisions.
 - 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.
- Describe two techniques interest groups use to influence elections.
 - Explain how interest groups use each of the following to influence government decision making.
 - Issue networks (also known as iron triangles)
 - Amicus curiae briefs
 - Explain how each of the following serves to limit interest group influence.
 - The media
 - Pluralism

STOP

END OF EXAM

AP® UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS

2012 SCORING GUIDELINES

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

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.