

**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

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Question 3

8 points

Part (a): 2 points

One point is earned for each of two descriptions of political factors that affect presidential appointment decisions.

Acceptable descriptions include:

campaign promises	party
gender	potential for confirmation success
geographic diversity	professional background, experience, education
home-state senator (if lower courts)	race
ideology	religion
interest group input	scandal
issue positions	

Part (b): 4 points

One point is earned for each of two identifications of political factors that affect the confirmation process for presidential nominees. One point is earned for each of two explanations for **how** the political factor complicates the confirmation of judicial appointees.

Acceptable factors include:

advice and consent	the media (televising Judiciary Committee hearings)
campaign promises	party
filibuster	professional background, experience, education
gender	race
geographic diversity	religion
holds	safe/weak nominee
home-state senator (if lower courts)	scandal
ideology	senatorial courtesy
interest group input	
issue positions	

Part (c): 1 point

One point is earned for correctly explaining **how** a legislative power serves as a check on court decisions.

Acceptable legislative powers include:

amendments	impeachment
confirmation	jurisdiction stripping
congressional funding	legislation

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Question 3 (continued)

Part (d): 1 point

One point is earned for correctly explaining **how** an executive power serves as a check on court decisions.

Acceptable executive powers include:

- power of appointment
- executive enforcement

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

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