



## **AP<sup>®</sup> United States Government and Politics 2012 Free-Response Questions**

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FREE-RESPONSE QUESTIONS**

**UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS**

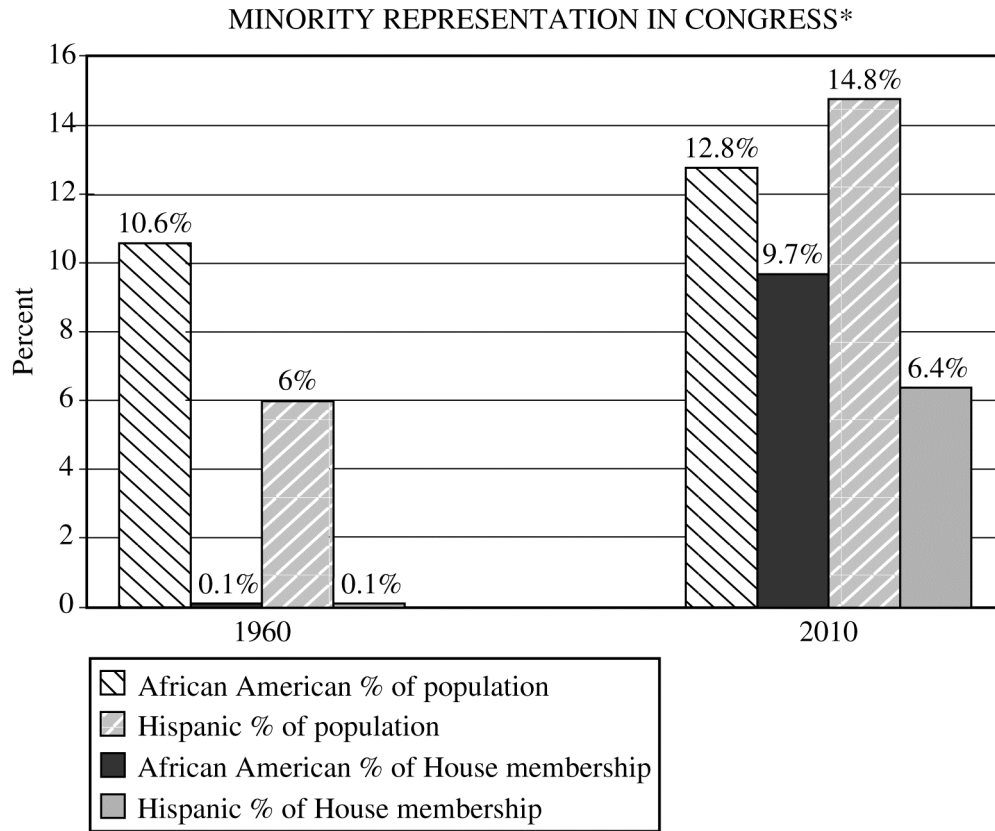
**SECTION II**

**Time—1 hour and 40 minutes**

**Directions:** You have 100 minutes to answer all four of the following questions. Unless the directions indicate otherwise, respond to all parts of all four questions. It is suggested that you take a few minutes to plan and outline each answer. Spend approximately one-fourth of your time (25 minutes) on each question. In your response, use substantive examples where appropriate.

1. Members of Congress are charged with three primary duties—writing laws, overseeing the implementation of laws, and serving the needs of their constituents.
  - (a) Describe the role of each of the following in lawmaking.
    - Senate filibuster
    - House Rules Committee
    - Conference committee
  - (b) Describe one method by which Congress exercises oversight of the federal bureaucracy.
  - (c) Explain how casework affects members' attention to legislation.

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\*Figure does not include all minority groups in Congress.

2. (a) Using the chart above, compare minority representation in 1960 and 2010.
- (b) Explain how each of the following assisted in the removal of barriers to minority voting.
- Voting Rights Act of 1965
  - Twenty-fourth Amendment
- (c) Identify one barrier that currently impedes minority representation in Congress. Explain why the barrier you identified inhibits minority representation in Congress.

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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**