

# Gov 1539: Section 7

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# The goals for today

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- Memo #2
- **Going Public**
  - the classic: Kernell (2006)
  - **when** does public approval generate policy influence?  
Canes-Wrone and Marchi (2002)
  - what about when others **respond**? Cameron and Park (2011)

# Going Public



Wilson promotes League of Nations - St. Louis, MO 1919  
(Source: Getty)

# Going Public



## Weekly Address: President Obama Calls for Real Health Care Reform

72K views • 11 years ago

 The Obama White House

The President makes clear that as Congress works through health care reform legislation, it must include fundamental

CC



## Weekly Address: It's Time To Reform our Criminal Justice System

22K views • 5 years ago

 The Obama White House

In this week's address, the President spoke to the need for meaningful criminal justice reform in America.

CC

Obama Weekly Youtube Addresses  
(Source: Tyler taking screenshot)

**Going Public:** President making direct appeal to voters to scare others (normally Congress) into passing legislation President wants.

- Which theory is going public fundamentally opposed to?
  - **Bargaining** (Neustadt 1960).
  - Going public emphasizes *pressure* instead of *persuasion*.
- Who is most likely to use this strategy?
  - Argues political outsiders with few in-group connections.

Kernell argues the rise of going public comes from a fundamental change in the operation of American politics. How? Argues American federal politics has transitioned from **institutionalized pluralism** to **individualized pluralism**.

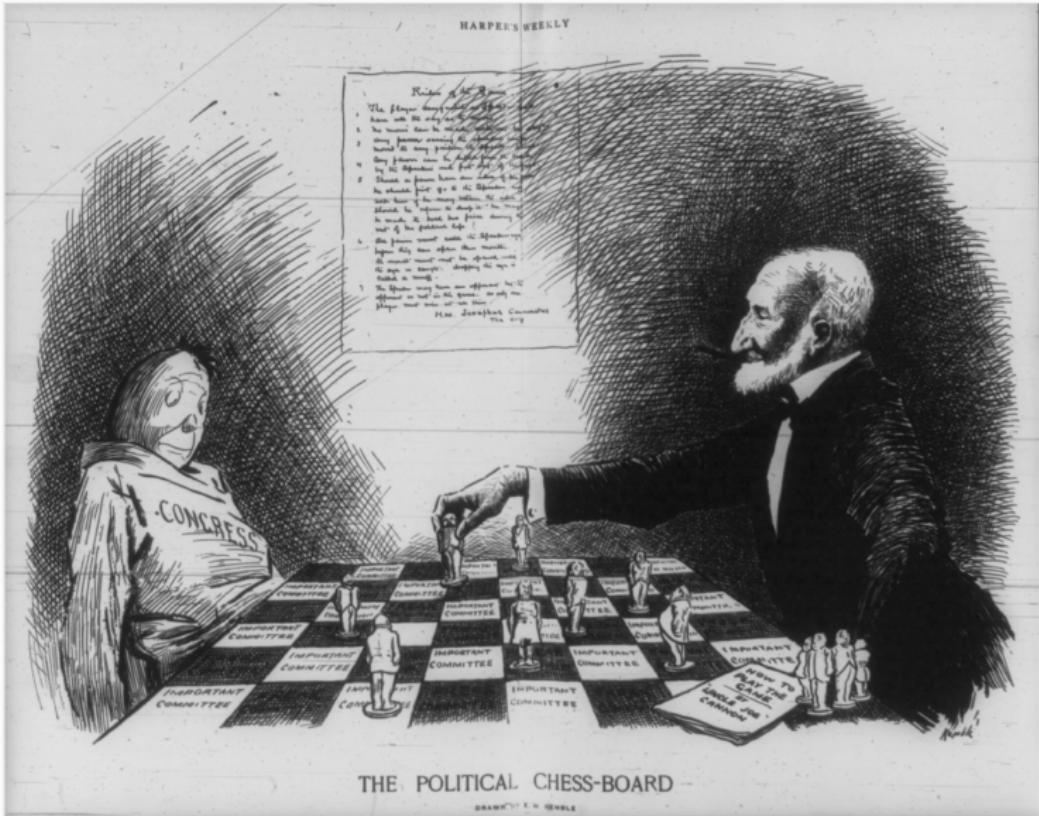
- Institutionalized pluralism (Kernell says was more common before modern era)
  - Politics features a small number of fixed actors (party leaders are powerful, committee chairs, etc.)
  - Opinion of a few political “elites” is what matters. Most debates are internal discussions among these powerful leaders.
  - Public opinion matters relatively little.
- Individualized pluralism (Kernell says reigns from about 1950s/1960s-today).
  - Politics is more **individualized** in this model, single politicians have more influence regardless of party position.
  - Party cohesion declines, more internal debate.

So in 2021, why go public **instead** of bargaining? In Kernell's view, the change from **institutionalized pluralism** to **individualized pluralism** made **bargaining less effective over time**.

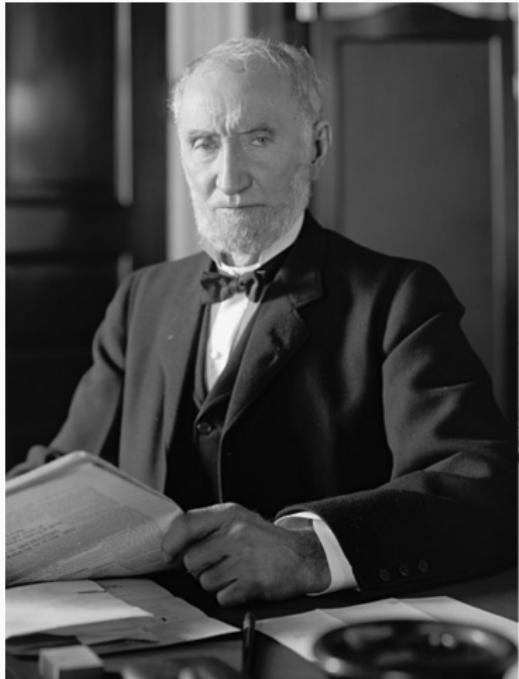
- Decline in strength of party leadership / less party cohesion.
- Divided govt. more common (each side finds advantage in making the other look bad).
- Increase in size of govt. (FDR, New Deal welfare state, etc.) brought more actors.
  - More interest groups, organizations, etc..
  - Harder to bargain effectively with more interests at work.
- Technology made back door deals harder (more people are paying attention) and public appeals easier.

**Takeaway:** more players + more political freedom → bargaining is harder and less effective → going public is more attractive.

# One reason: party leadership has weakened over time



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Joe Cannon: Speaker of the House 1903-1911 (Source: LOC)

## One reason: party leadership has weakened over time

Cannon is generally described as an emblematic example of strong party leadership. This wouldn't last.

- By 1910, Cannon alone as Speaker:
  - appointed **every** committee member and chair.
  - controlled debate on the floor.
  - Chaired the Rules Committee, so determined rules and restrictions of each bill and amendments.
  - ↪ Speaker essentially controlled the entire House legislative process.
- “Revolt of 1910” revoked Speaker’s chair of Rules Committee.
  - Turning point, soon after appointment power of committees fell.
  - Replaced by seniority system.

## Another example: McGovern-Fraser Commission



1968 Democratic Convention Protests

## Another example: McGovern-Fraser Commission

'68 convention was a disaster - party disunity, Humphrey won without winning a single primary. Commission was called to clean up the process:

- Convention delegates (who nominate) could no longer be chosen by party leaders in secret.
- Delegates had to represent (mainly gender + race) their constituents
- Not required, but led to shift from state nominating conventions to direct primaries to choose delegates.

**Takeaway:** commission **democratized** the convention nomination process in various ways by **limiting power of party leaders**.

**Question:** when does public approval actually allow presidents to generate policy influence?

- Two conditions both need to be met:
  - **salience**: issue needs to be well-known among electorate.
  - **complexity**: issue needs to be complex - electorate doesn't have clear entrenched opinions.
- **Takeaway** ↪ Presidential approval generates influence for issues that are both (not either) **salient and complex**.
- What kind of issues might these be?

**Question:** existing work doesn't address that other actors can make public appeals too. How does this change things?

- Introduces an "**opinion contest**" framework.
- President alone does not go public, but instead competes against other public pressures (interest groups, congress, etc.).
- Focuses on Supreme Court nominations.
  - When is President most likely to go public in this case? When they expect opposition (more common since Bork, rise of interest groups).
  - What will the president's public message be? "**Crafted talk**."