

IMPACT OF PARTIES, INTEREST GROUPS, MEDIA, AND INDIVIDUALS	
SS.912.CG.2.8	Explain the impact of political parties, interest groups, media and individuals on determining and shaping public policy.

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2023 BENCHMARK UPDATES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Updated from SS.912.C.2.15 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Changed from “Evaluate the origins and roles of political parties, interest groups, media, and individuals in determining and shaping public policy.” to “<u>Explain</u> the <u>impact</u> of political parties, interest groups, media and individuals on determining and shaping public policy.” ● Depth of Knowledge Changes within Benchmark <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Changed from “Evaluate” to “Explain” ● Addition of Benchmark Clarifications <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Benchmark clarifications are an addition to the 2023-2024 high school civics and government benchmarks. Benchmark clarifications are listed in the lesson summary below.

Essential Teacher Content Background Information

[Teacher Content Notes Not Appropriate For Student Use]

This section addresses the following topics:

1. The Origins of Republican and Democratic Political Parties and their Roles in Shaping Public Policy
2. The Constitutional Basis for Monitoring and Influencing Government
3. Monitoring and Influencing Government

1. The Origins of the Republican and Democratic Political Parties and their Roles in Shaping Public Policy

Before we begin a discussion of political parties, it is important to recall that our Founding Fathers, particularly Washington, viewed political parties (what they termed as ‘factionalism’) as potentially dangerous to the republic. That aside, however, the Founders themselves ultimately sorted into their own factions despite the potential conflicts this would raise.

Political parties serve several interconnected roles in American politics. They serve a socializing role for the public, where they impact political knowledge and political activity. Party organizations oversee nominations and elections, contribute resources to political campaigns, and shape party messages. Parties also impact policy making and political decision making among elected officials. These roles are interconnected in that how the public perceives political parties will impact their vote choice and campaign contribution decisions, which impacts who wins elections. How elected officials create and shape public policy impacts how the public perceives political parties because most elected officials are identified as political party members.

Political parties serve critical roles in our system because they combine individual citizens’ political views and communicate them to government. In combining these views, the public’s voice is more readily heard by public officials. The Democratic and Republican parties have served as the two main U.S. political parties since 1860. It is through parties that the public learns about, sees and understands the political process. Political parties also act as a vote guide because voters more often select candidates who represent their own party identification or party registration.

The role of parties as policy guides functions particularly well within the systems of separation of powers, checks and balances and federalism. All elected offices are tied to party labels at the national and state levels although this does not preclude independents from seeking office. For example, as of 2023, two U.S. Senators were elected as independents. At the local level, counties and cities decide if their public officials will seek election under party labels.

Members of Congress who share a party label tend to shape public policy together while different parties tend to take opposing views on key policy issues. Similarly, the president tends to spend more time with members of his own party in Congress compared with members of the opposite party.

The Democratic Party is the nation's oldest existing political party. Although the idea of political parties can not be found anywhere in the U. S. Constitution, soon after the creation of the new government, factions developed among the nation's founders. The two-party system emerged in 1792 in Washington's first cabinet; as issues were discussed, cabinet members took sides, creating "factions". George

Washington, John Adams, and Alexander Hamilton had similar ideas and created the Federalist Party. Thomas Jefferson and James Madison had disagreements with the Federalists in just about every area and created a political party known as the Democratic-Republican Party. Despite Washington's warnings about the dangers of political parties in his well-known farewell address, the power struggle between Federalists and Democratic-Republicans monopolized the nation's early years. Jefferson and his supporters emerged triumphant after the election of 1800, and other parties were created as the Federalists disappeared. The Democratic Party as we know it today, however, can be traced back to the election of Andrew Jackson in 1828. Cartoonist Thomas Nast popularized the donkey as the party's symbol in the late nineteenth century.

The Republican Party, our other major party, was formed when members of diverse political groups held a political convention committed to resisting the expansion of slavery in the United States. Many of these individuals came from the former Whig party, so some historians will say that the Republican Party was an extension of the Whig party. Much of its support was centered in the Western states and territories and in the North. Abraham Lincoln was the first member of the party to be elected President of the United States. Lincoln was instrumental in bringing together the Republican Party; therefore, it is sometimes referred to as the "Party of Lincoln." In the 1870s, the Republican Party was nicknamed the "Grand Old Party" or "GOP" because it kept the Union together through the Civil War. The Republican Party adopted the elephant symbol when the originator of the political cartoon, Thomas Nast, used an elephant in one of his cartoons to represent the party.

Both the Republicans and Democrats have evolved well beyond their initial founding and platforms.

2. The Constitutional Basis for Monitoring and Influencing Government

The First Amendment guarantees freedom of the press. The Bill of Rights, which includes the First Amendment, was added to the U.S. Constitution in order to protect individuals from the national government infringing on their rights.

Several of the rights included in the First Amendment allow media, individuals and interest groups to monitor and influence government. The rights that facilitate monitoring and influencing the government include freedom of speech, the press, assembly and petitioning the government "for redress of grievances". In protecting these freedoms, the Bill of Rights extends to the media, individuals and interest groups the right to interact with the government in ways that bring criticism about the government to the people (the watchdog role) and directly to the government (lobbying/lobbyists, special interests). Freedom of the press allows it to serve in a watchdog role as one means to protect individuals from the government infringing on their rights.

First Amendment freedoms also extend to political campaigns where individuals, candidates, special interests and political parties use the media to disseminate political messages.

3. Monitoring and Influencing Government

Individuals and organizations seek to influence government by interacting directly with government, and by using the media to bring attention to government actions. The media also acts alone to bring attention to government actions. In bringing attention to the public about government actions, also known as the watchdog role, the public may use its First Amendment rights to monitor and influence government. Individuals work together to form interest groups (special interests) which are guaranteed by the First Amendment's freedom of association. Interest groups form to draw attention to government actions, encourage their members to interact with government and with the press, and raise money as a means to accomplishing their political and policy goals. Interest groups also employ persons or firms to interact with the government in order to educate and

persuade the government to take action on their behalf. These persons and firms, called lobbyists, communicate with government officials in individual meetings and testify at hearings, such as before congressional committees. The term lobbyist emerged from the old English practice of persons trying to persuade the government waiting in the Parliament lobby to interact with Members of Parliament as they entered or left the building. The combined impact of these individual, group and media actions are to bring attention to, and influence, government actions.

Freedom of the press extends to election campaigns where press coverage includes providing information about the candidates, issues and political parties. The media also serves as a vehicle for candidates, political parties, interest groups and even ordinary citizens to convey their messages during election campaigns. These campaign-related entities pay media outlets to advertise their message. Campaign advertising gives candidates, interest groups and political parties the opportunity to control their message about themselves and their opponents.

Political Action Committees (PACs) are organizations associated with interest groups, individuals, labor groups and corporations that raise and spend money in order to impact election outcomes. PACs give money directly to candidates, and also spend money on candidates' behalf such as sponsoring campaign commercials advocating how citizens should vote, or to shape opinions about candidates and political parties.

PACs are not wholly unregulated. Congress and the U.S. Supreme Court have regulated PACs. These regulations have impacted PAC influence.

Below is a recent timeline focusing on PAC regulations (adapted from Center for Responsive Politics, www.opensecrets.org).

Date	Law	Key Provision(s)
1971	Federal Election Campaign Act (FECA)	Repealed Federal Corrupt Practices Act (1910, 1925) Required full and timely disclosure Set ceilings on media advertising Set limits on contributions from candidates and their families
1971	Revenue Act	Created public campaign fund for eligible presidential candidates to begin 1976 Campaign fund created voluntary \$1 (now \$3) check-off on federal income tax returns
1974	Federal Election Campaign Act Amendments	Full public financing of presidential elections Revised spending limits for Congressional elections Set individual contribution limits Set PAC contribution limit (\$5000) Limit overall annual individual contributions Abolished limits on media advertising Created Federal Election Commission (FEC) to enforce campaign finance laws
1976	Buckley v. Valeo 424 U.S. 1	1974 FECA restrictions challenged on First Amendment grounds U.S. Supreme Court upheld disclosure requirements and limits on individual contributions The U.S. Supreme Court struck down limits on independent expenditures. Independent expenditures are those expenditures not coordinated with candidates or their campaign committees.

1979	FECA Amendments	Allowed state and local parties to promote federal candidates by spending unlimited amounts on campaign materials, voter registration, and get-out-the-vote (GOTV) drives
1986	FEC v. Massachusetts Citizens for Life, Inc.	The court issues a narrowly defined exception for nonprofits General funds may be used for express advocacy as long as the nonprofit does not accept business corporation funding
2000	Modified tax laws	Congress closes loophole in tax law to require public disclosure of donations to “issue groups” known as “527s”
2002	Bipartisan Campaign Reform Act (BCRA; Also known as the McCain-Feingold Act)	Reinstituted limits on the sources and size of political party contributions Regulated how corporate and labor treasury funds could be used in federal elections.
2003	McConnell v. Federal Election Commission 540 U.S. 93	2002 BCRA challenged on First Amendment grounds U.S. The Supreme Court upheld the constitutionality of most of the BCRA.
2010	Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission 558 U.S. 310	2002 BCRA challenged on First Amendment grounds The U.S. Supreme Court held that corporate funding of independent political broadcasts in candidate elections cannot be limited.
2014	McCutcheon v. FEC	The Supreme Court struck down a law that placed total contribution caps an individual could contribute to all candidates, PACs, and parties combined. The Court ruled it limited participation in the democratic process and violated the First Amendment

Lesson Summary

BENCHMARK		
SS.912.CG.2.8 Explain the impact of political parties, interest groups, media and individuals on determining and shaping public policy.		
BENCHMARK CLARIFICATIONS		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students will explain the origins of the Republican and Democratic political parties and evaluate their roles in shaping public policy. Students will identify historical examples of interest groups, media and individuals influencing public policy. Students will compare and contrast how the free press influenced politics at major points in U.S. history (e.g., Vietnam War Era, Civil Rights Era). 		
FLORIDA CIVIC LITERACY EXAM COMPETENCY CONNECTION		
<p>Competency 1: Understanding of the basic principles and practices of American democracy and how they are applied in our republican form of government</p> <p>Competency 4: Understanding of landmark Supreme Court cases, landmark legislation, and landmark executive actions and their impact on law and society</p>		
OVERVIEW		
In this lesson, students will explain the impact of political parties, interest groups, media, and individuals on shaping public policy.		
ESSENTIAL QUESTION		
How have political parties, interest groups, media, and individuals shaped public policy throughout history?		
GOVERNMENT CONTENT VOCABULARY		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> bias, civic meeting, Democratic Party, freedom of the press, impact, influence, interest group/special interest group, lobbying, lobbyist, media, monitor, party affiliation, party platform, petitioning the government, political action committee (PAC), political party, public opinion, public policy, Republican Party, suffrage, third party, two-party system, vote, watchdog 		
INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES		
Analyze primary sources	Video as text	Research
MATERIALS		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Political Parties article (external link) Political Parties QAR activity sheet Was George Washington a Republican or a Democrat? video (external link) Origins of Political Parties activity sheet 		

- Origins of the Republican and Democratic Political Parties slides
- Public Policy Definition and Discussion slides
- Timer
- Influencing Policy slides
- The Public in Public Policy reading and activity packet
- Interest Group Take Home Exit Ticket (2 per page)
- The Civil Rights Movement and Media video viewing guide
- Civil Rights Movement Gets a Boost from TV News video (external link)
- Free Press in U.S. History slides
- World War II and Media video (external link)
- Vietnam War and Media video (external link)
- Vietnam: The First Television War activity sheet
- Vietnam: The First Television War reading

B.E.S.T. STANDARDS

The grade in which this lesson is taught will determine the specific B.E.S.T. standards correlation.

Thematically, this lesson aligns to:

- ELA.V.1.1 Academic Vocabulary
- ELA.V.1.3 Context and Connotation

Suggested Student Activity Sequence & Pace

DAY	ACTIVITY SEQUENCE
DAY 1	<p>Teacher Note: The content in this lesson overlaps with lesson SS.912.CG.2.12 where students will be able to apply their learning to current public issues in Florida and the United States.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To begin today, ask students the following fun fact: All elected U.S. presidents except for one belonged to a political party. Do you know who that one president was? (Answer: George Washington) 2. Explain to students that for almost all of our country's history, political parties have played a major role in elections, voting, and shaping the nation's policies. 3. Pass out or project the "Political Parties" article from the Library of Congress. 4. Read through the article as a whole class, modeling text marking strategies and pausing to summarize sections. 5. Pass out the "Political Parties QAR" activity sheet and instruct students to use the Library of Congress article to complete the sheet individually. 6. Place students in groups of four and have them remain in these groups for the duration of the activities. 7. Have them check their answers to the 'Right There' and 'Think and Search' sections. 8. Next, have the groups share their responses for the 'Author and You' and 'On My Own' sections. As a group, instruct them to pick one response for each section that will serve as the group response. 9. Divide your whiteboard into four separate sections, giving each one a heading: Right There, Think and Search, Author and You, On My Own. 10. Have each group select one person to come up to the whiteboard and record their group's responses. 11. Choose a few of the shared responses to discuss as a class. <p>Teacher Note: Be sure to emphasize that the Author and You and On My Own questions do not have right or wrong answers. We want students to understand that they can share their opinions if they have evidence to support them.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 12. Next, have students watch a summary video from Mount Vernon called "Was George Washington a Republican or a Democrat?". Have students record one additional piece of information they learn from the video. 13. Pass out the "Origins of Political Parties" activity sheet to each student. 14. Use the "Origins of the Republican and Democratic Political Parties" slides to share information with students on the topic. 15. As you go through the slides, pause to provide time for students to record notes/answers and complete a quickdraw to help them remember the information. 16. Have a few students share their responses and/or drawings before moving on to the next slide/question. 17. Once notes are complete, project the "Public Policy Definition and Discussion" slide 1 and review the definition. 18. Pose the following question: How do political parties shape public policy? 19. Display slide 2 with the Group Share Directions on the board so students can see the steps as they brainstorm. 20. Set a timer for four minutes.

	<p>21. Students rotate around the circle, saying one possible answer each time (without duplicating previous answers).</p> <p>Teacher Note: Students may choose to write down their list individually or as a group.</p> <p>22. Students continue brainstorming until the timer goes off.</p> <p>23. Wrap up the discussion by sharing ideas from each group.</p>
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DAY 2	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Begin today by projecting the “Influencing Policy” slides. 2. Have students work with a partner to analyze the political cartoon on slide 1, jotting their observations and thoughts down on looseleaf paper or in notebooks. 3. Review the cartoon analysis questions as a whole class, leading students to the understanding that similar to political parties learned about yesterday, interest groups are another entity that help determine and shape public policy in the United States. 4. Use slide 2 and review with students the definition of public policy. 5. Ask students: In addition to political parties and interest groups, who/what else in the United States helps determine and shape public policy? 6. While projecting slide 3, lead students to the understanding that impact on policy predominantly comes from political parties, interest groups, individuals, and media. 7. Explain to students that yesterday they examined political parties, today they will learn more about interest groups/individuals, and tomorrow they will finish with the media. <p>Teacher Note: More about the impact of individuals on determining and shaping policy is covered SS.912.CG.2.2, SS.912.CG.2.3, SS.912.CG.2.7, and SS.912.CG.2.9</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 8. Keeping students in their pairs, distribute “The Public in Public Policy” reading and activity packet from iCivics. 9. Provide students time to complete the reading and the corresponding questions. While students work, monitor for engagement and walk around checking in with each of the pairs to ensure understanding. 10. Once finished, bring students back together as a whole class. 11. Ask students: Think about major time periods and moments in U.S. history. Can you name some landmark legislation or executive actions? (railroad regulation, Progressive era reforms, Prohibition, New Deal legislation, Civil Rights Act of 1964, Voting Rights Act of 1965, Great Society, wars, environmental policies, gun control policies, etc.) 12. Explain to students that in a form of government where ‘we the people’ have the power, major public policy decisions are influenced by groups and individuals. Oftentimes, major public policy decisions may even spark new groups/individuals to form and try to influence the future direction of that topic. 13. Distribute the “Interest Group Take Home Exit Ticket” to each student. 14. Instruct students to take their learning from today and identify a historical example in which an interest group influenced public policy. This may be a trade/professional association type interest group or an issue-based type of interest group.
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DAY 3	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Start class today by passing out a “The Civil Rights Movement and Media” video viewing guide. 2. Have students watch the “Civil Rights Movement Gets a Boost from TV News” video and answer the questions on their viewing guide.
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3. Review the answers as a whole class.
Teacher Note: Use the answer key provided below to help guide discussion.
4. Project the “Free Press in U.S. History” slides.
5. Scroll through each of the slides and show students the images that depict some of the major moments in U.S. history in which the free press acted as a large influence. There are notes within the speaker notes to guide discussion.
6. Ask students: Why is freedom of the press an important 1st Amendment right? How can the media play a role in determining and shaping public policy? What are the benefits of the role media may play in shaping public policy? What are the downsides?
7. Lead students to the understanding that in our constitutional republic, while the media plays a crucial part in keeping citizens informed and keeping government accountable, the way a story is portrayed may have an impact on perception and therefore politics and policy.
8. Play for students two examples of media coverage during two different wars: World War II and the Vietnam War.
 - “[World War II and Media](#)” video
 - “[Vietnam War and Media](#)” video
9. Ask students to share initial observations about what they noticed in terms of similarities and differences in media coverage between the two wars. Ask: How do you think the differences in press may have impacted politics and policy?
10. Distribute a “Vietnam: The First Television War” activity sheet and “Vietnam: The First Television War” reading to each student.
11. Provide students time to complete the reading and fill in the venn diagram on their activity sheet.
12. Once students finish, review as a whole class.
13. Remind students that while individuals and groups work to monitor and influence the government, we may be influenced as well. It is up to citizens to use our civic reasoning skills when encountering the information shared by other individuals, media, and interest groups.
14. Checking for Understanding (Formative Assessment):
 Instruct students to write a well-crafted response using the following prompt:
 Using what you have learned, select either individuals, media, political parties, or interest groups and write a paragraph explaining their impact on determining and shaping public policy. Cite specific examples to support your argument.

Government Content Vocabulary

Word/Term	Definition
bias	favoring one view over another
civic meeting	a meeting that is held for the people to share their opinions with government officials
Democratic Party	a political party that believes that the national government should take a more active role in people's lives, particularly those who are in need
freedom of the press	the right that the media has to present information to the people without government control
impact	to have a strong effect on something or someone
influence	having an effect or impact on the actions, behavior, opinions, etc., of another or others
interest group/special interest group	a group of people who are concerned with a particular issue and who try to influence legislators to act in their favor, also known as a special interest group
lobbying	participating in activities in order to influence government officials
lobbyist	a person who participates in activities in order to influence government officials
media	the plural form of the word “medium,” refers to various means of communication. For example, television, radio, newspapers and the Internet (web) are different types of media. The term can also be used to describe news organizations as a whole group.
monitor	to watch, keep track of, or check usually for a special purpose
party affiliation	the political party a voter is registered as belonging to or is most closely connected with
party platform	a written statement of the goals and principles of a political party
petitioning the government	the right to ask the government to solve a problem or to express an opinion about how the government is being run
political action committee (PAC)	an independent political organization that promotes the cause of a particular interest group, usually through raising money and campaigning to elect candidates who support the group's views
political party	an organization that tries to get political power by electing members to public office so that their political ideas can become laws or policies
public opinion	the collection of attitudes of a group of people in a population

public policy	actions taken by the government to solve problems and achieve goals
Republican Party	a political party that believes that the national government should play a less active role in people's lives and that individuals can take care of themselves without government help
suffrage	the legal right to vote
third party	a political party that is not one of the two major political parties in the country; a minor party
two-party system	a political system consisting primarily of two major political parties, more or less equal in strength
vote	to elect or decide
watchdog	a person or group who acts as a protector or guardian

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

[Florida Department of Education: Florida Civic Literacy Exam Homepage](#)

Florida Department of Education's Civic Literacy Reading List

- *Civil Disobedience* by Henry David Thoreau
- For the Equal Rights Amendment (1969) by Shirley Chisholm
- *Land of Hope: An Invitation to the Great American Story* by Wilfred McClay
- Letter from Birmingham Jail by Martin Luther King Jr.
- Speech to Congress on Voting Rights (1965) by Lyndon Johnson
- The New Nationalism (1910) by Theodore Roosevelt

ANSWER KEYS

Sample Answers: Political Parties QAR activity sheet

Sample Answers: Origins of Political Parties activity sheet

Sample Answers: The Public in Public Policy reading and activity packet

Sample Answers: Interest Group Take Home Exit Ticket

Sample Answers: Civil Rights Movement and Media video viewing guide

Sample Answers: Vietnam: The First Television War activity sheet

Written Response: Sample Scoring Rubric

SOURCES

U.S. Constitution–National Archives:

https://www.archives.gov/files/founding-docs/constitution_1_of_4_630.jpg

First Amendment:

<https://www.uscourts.gov/about-federal-courts/educational-resources/about-educational-outreach/activity-resources/what-does#:~:text=Among%20other%20cherished%20values%2C%20the%20First%20Amendment%20protects%20freedom%20of%20speech.>

Political Parties/ The Presidential Election Process from Library of Congress:

<https://www.loc.gov/classroom-materials/elections/presidential-election-process/political-parties/>

“Was George Washington a Republican or a Democrat?” video from Mount Vernon:

<https://www.mountvernon.org/george-washington/the-first-president/political-parties/>

Our History-Democrats: <https://democrats.org/who-we-are/our-history/>

About Our Party/GOP: <https://gop.com/about-our-party/>

The Public in Public Policy Lesson Plan from iCivics:

https://www.icivics.org/sites/default/files/2023-07/The%20Public%20in%20Public%20Policy_Student%20Docs.pdf

Civil Rights Movement Gets a Boost from TV News:

<https://www.nbcnews.com/video/civil-rights-tv-and-the-mass-media-mlk-50-1194379843575>

Vietnam: The First Television War from National Archives reading and videos from:

<https://prologue.blogs.archives.gov/2018/01/25/vietnam-the-first-television-war/#:~:text=The%20dramatization%20of%20stories%20in,public%20opinion%20against%20the%20war>

The Emergence of National Interest Groups in American History:

<https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/polq.13247>

PAC Regulations Timeline: www.opensecrets.org

All citations for images on slides are sourced within the presentations