



AP[®] United States Government and Politics 2006 Sample Student Responses and Scoring Commentary

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The fundamental goal of an interest group is their particular interest; whatever they stand for whether it be abortion, gun control or the environment. They want their views to be heard and would like to see their interests protected or implemented by the federal government.

The fundamental goal of the major political parties is to get their people elected with the particular set of beliefs that the party wants to see implemented. The best way for the party to have its interests protected and its views heard is by electing people to office who will hopefully carry out the political party's agenda.

If the ~~goals~~ goals and interests of an interest group coincide with those of a particular candidate running for office, then it is likely that the interest group will contribute to that candidate in some meaningful way. One way that the interest group can help the political candidate get elected is through direct contributions, most ~~likely~~ likely in the form of money. Political campaigns are

expensive these days, especially air time on television and radio. Another way the interest group could help the political party achieve its goal is to make indirect contributions. An example would be ~~making~~ advertising a particular issue and associating it with that candidate like ~~the~~ the candidate's stance on abortion or gun control. Perhaps the interest group could also donate personnel to the political party. In the case of direct contributions made by the interest group, those contributions not only help the political parties achieve their fundamental goal but they also help the interest groups achieve their goal of have their views heard and interests protected.

In the case of money donated to the campaign, that money allows the candidate to continue his quest for election, ~~the~~ ultimately hoping to land himself ~~the~~ a political office but it also helps to promote the views of the interest group more through things like the media.

~~There~~ There is really a symbiotic relationship ~~in~~ in American politics

1

Write in the box the number of the question you are answering on this page as it is designated in the examination.

today between the interest groups and the political party. Both benefit one another and allow the other to achieve their fundamental goals. What ~~one~~ one lacks the other makes up for.

Lined writing area for the answer.

Write in the box the number of the question you are answering on this page as it is designated in the examination.

1

13

The fundamental goal of interest groups with regards to the political process is to protect civil liberties / rights and to lobby successfully for liberties / rights which have not been officially established.

The fundamental goal of major political parties is to control the presidency, House/Senate majority, and the Supreme Court. One way by which interest groups support the political parties is by associating themselves with one of the parties. This way supporters of the interest group support the party and perhaps puts the party into power. Another way interest groups support the fundamental goal of political parties is by giving them money which can be used by the parties for campaigning. By associating with one political party an interest group not only shares it's supporters but generally supporters of the affiliated party will be turned on to the interest group and join it / it's campaign. Also, by associating with a political party an interest group can have that party realize its goal as / when that party comes into ~~power~~ power.

The fundamental goal of an interest group in the political process is to advance its own agenda and special interest. The fundamental goal of a political party in the political process is also to promote the party's agendas, but by attempting to gain different government positions, instead of just making "friends" in high places, like the interest groups prefer. Interest groups support the fundamental goal of political parties in the following ways: ~~bring~~ bring attention to their own personal interest, and discrediting those who oppose their views. Interest groups work very similar to political parties in the sense that they both try to advance their own political agendas. Interest groups do it through protest, court cases, and "friends" in high places. Political parties, on the other hand, do want to advance themselves as well, but prefer to do it through gaining the actual political seat themselves, instead of just befriend one in authority. These two groups also work similarly through the tactic of discrediting their opponent. Interest groups attack anyone available who oppose their ideas or plans. They often will discredit this person or try to turn others against them. ~~Political~~ Political parties work in a similar

1

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1C2

fashion in the fact that a large part of their strategy is to discredit the opposing party. They will often use prior voting records or past mistakes or mishaps to decrease the support of the opponent.

By bringing an interest group's agenda to the "front lines," it can benefit the group in many ways. It will help bring awareness to more people of their proposal or problem and in return gain more followers and members. By gaining more followers, the interest group now becomes a louder voice in the political world, and therefore has a greater chance of passing legislation in its favor. An example of this would be the NAACP.

What started as a small group, has now become a roaring train, in which many political advances are being made each year.

- 2) a) An entitlement program is a program funded by congress, in which beneficiaries ^{automatically} receive money if they meet certain basic requirements
- b) The primary source of revenue for the Social Security program is taxes payed by current ~~and~~ employees ~~and~~ and employers in America to ~~the~~ ^{the} social security ~~reserve~~ Fund.
- c) Should the trends depicted in the chart above continue, by about the year 2035 the Social Security program could be paying out more money to beneficiaries than it earns in tax revenue, ^{possibly} causing the ~~the~~ Social Security program to go ~~to~~ bankrupt, by the year 2035.
- d) One demographic trend currently threatening the future of Social Security is the increasing number of senior citizens, and the not-increasing number of workers. Today in the United States, huge ^{increasing} numbers of seniors are retiring, and living longer. ~~supported by~~
This means that the Social Security Fund will have to support them for longer periods of time, using more money. However, the numbers of workers ^{who fund social security} are not increasing at such a huge rate; this number tends to stay constant, if not decrease. Therefore,

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2A2

The amount of money being paid in ^{will} decrease or stay the same, while money being paid ~~in~~ out will continue to increase rapidly. ~~By~~ Therefore, by 2015 the money paid out will be ~~higher~~ higher than the money being paid in, and by 2035 the Fund could ~~deplete~~ possibly deplete its reserves, resulting in bankruptcy.

e) If the age of eligibility for social security were raised, the money being paid in could be raised, and the money being paid out could be lowered. ^{This could} possibly allow ~~the~~ the Social Security ~~to~~ program to break even, rather than force it to tap into its reserves. If the age of eligibility were raised, workers would contribute tax money to the Social Security fund for more years, allowing the fund more ~~revenue~~ revenue. Raising the age would also lower the amount of time that a beneficiary would be supported, therefore lowering the amount of money paid out.

Write in the box the number of the question you are answering on this page as it is designated in the examination.

2

2B

~~An~~ An entitlement program is a government program that gives money ~~to~~ to directly back to citizens. The primary source of income for the Social Security program is the Social Security tax that everyone who works is required to pay. One threat to the future of the Social Security program is the level of income falling in relationship to the level of expenditure. A demographic trend that threatens the future of Social Security is the increase of early retirement, which results in a decrease in the level of income for the Social Security program. If the eligibility age for Social Security ~~was~~ was raised, the the amount of money paid out would decrease.

Write in the box the number of the question you are answering on this page as it is designated in the examination.

#2

2C1

A.) An entitlement program is a program made by the U.S. government which gives people something (usually money) when they reach a certain point in their life (age) or meet a requirement (usually financial).

B.) The primary source of revenue for SS. is tax dollars.

C.) In the chart, the bold dotted line depicts the reserve that our country has to give to people who are eligible for Social Security. It appears that around the year 2035, the reserve amount will actually become less than what monies are coming in. This means that our government will be shelling out more money than what is coming in. Anytime this happens, we call it a budget deficit, which is never good for the economy.

d.) One demographic trend that threatens social security is our national population and what percentage of that population is eligible for social security. This is responsible for the potential deficit explained in letter C because more people does not constitute more money for social security. To better explain this, ~~say~~ consider the following: ~~say~~ say in the year 2040 that the trends for social security continues. This means that the government's reserve will total to approximately 500 billion dollars, while the amount needed for the predicted population will have to be approximately 5 trillion dollars. This deficit is so large that the idea of social security



#2

Write in the box the number of the question you are answering on this page as it is designated in the examination.

2C2

May not be around, unless there are major changes.

E.) If the social security age were raised to, say 70 years of age, then the money paid out would go significantly down. This is because the percent of the population receiving aid would decrease, meaning less people would need money, resulting in less money spent.

Congress Gives Bureaucracies the ability to carry out their policies how they choose. This leaves the door wide open. Congress does this ~~in~~ because if the agency did not, then Congress would be swamped with trying to establish how to carry out the policy. ~~For all of the decisions~~ Another reason Congress has the agency do their own policy making is that they are experts on the topic, compared to Congress. Agencies know what needs to be done to uphold their ideas.

The FCC is a Federal agency charged with monitoring, and regulating television and airwaves. They filter out what is obscene and what is acceptable. And if something slips past, then the FCC places heavy fines on the company responsible for the slipup.

Congress does have control when it comes to ensuring the legislative intents of an agency. First of all, Congress can cut the funding of the agency. This will force them to reconsider their policy making. And another way Congress controls agencies is with their ability to dissolve them. Congress made the agency, and they can take it away if it gets too unruly.

Congress gives federal agencies policy-making discretion in executing federal laws because the agencies are experts in their field and congress assumes that they know what they are talking about. They also allow discretion because the agencies were created to regulate certain areas and without some power, the agencies cannot fix many problems. One agency that uses policy-making discretion is the Environmental Protection Agency or EPA. The EPA is in charge of protecting the environment by making national parks, game lands, and regulating pollution levels. It recently ~~passed a law~~ put restrictions on how much pollution could be made by cities and it ordered that changes had to be made to cities that did not pass the pollution test. Congress can regulate ~~the~~ federal agencies by controlling the funding that each agency receives. Congress can give block grants or other types of grants to the agency depending on how productive the agency is. Another way that congress controls federal agencies is by voting out its members and by replacing its members.

Question #3

Write in the box the number of the question you are answering on this page as it is designated in the examination.

3C

a) One reason that Congress restricts federal agencies is so that they don't become power-hungry. If a certain agency is always allowed to do whatever it wants, no questions asked, the agency as a whole, might get a little 'big-headed':

~~Another~~ Another reason is so that the agency doesn't become too large. It is much easier to have a small group working towards a common goal than hundreds.

b) The Federal Communications Commission exercises power over radio, television, and the internet, along with other modes of communication. One way that they exercise their power is by regulating profanity and vulgarity on television. This is to help protect young children from seeing/hearing things they aren't prepared to understand.

c) Congress

4.

Write in the box the number of the question you are answering on this page as it is designated in the examination.

4A,

(4) (a) • The reason that the Framers created a bi-cameral Legislature was because of dissenting opinions on either side about a uni-cameral Legislature. Larger states wanted representation based on population - so as to wield more power. Smaller states wished to have equal representation for every state - so as not to be subject ~~to~~ to the tyranny of the majority. To resolve this difference, the Framers created one of each - the House of Representatives, which was based upon upon population; and the Senate, with 2 representatives from each state.

• Another reason that the Framers created a bi-cameral Legislature, was to slow the legislative process itself. This was a measure to make sure that any law that was to be enacted would be exhaustively deliberated - so as to not have the Legislature be subject and susceptible to the wild swings of public opinion. It was a safe guard against the tyranny of the masses.

B. one power that is unique to the house of representatives is the ability to introduce fiscal pieces of legislation. This was given to the House because the house's representatives are based on population. A part of the newly

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4.

4A2

clichéd rhetoric of the revolution was "No taxation without representation" and to do otherwise would be hypocritical.

c. a power that was given to the Senate by the Framers was the ability to confirm the president's nomination for a Supreme Court justice. the reasoning that followed would be that the Supreme Court has equal influence over all the states, regardless of size or population, and it would be imperative for the states to have equal representation in that case.

Write in the box the number of the question you are answering on this page as it is designated in the examination.

4

4B

I am working on Question #4 before #3.

Thank You! :)

A) These Framers liked both the New Jersey Plan and the Virginia Plan, so they combined them into the Connecticut Compromise. This created the bicameral legislature.

Some agree that Congress ^{representation} should be based on population, while other disagreed and said it should be equal. So, then came the ~~House~~ House of Representatives & ~~Congress~~ Senate

↓ (population)	↓ (equal)
↓ minimum of 2 per state	↓ 2 per state

B) The House of Representatives has the power to impeach the president.

C) The Senate has the power to take the President to trial and actually remove him.

a.) The framers created a bicameral legislature because:

1) it ensures that a sole branch of legislatures control all the decisions made.

2) it enables them to have a check and balance system.

b.) One power that is unique to the House of Representatives is that bills relating to apportionment must originate in the House. The reason the power to originate all bills relating to money was given to the House is because there are more members in the House than there are in the Senate. In order for a bill to pass through the house more people have to vote in favor of it, therefore more members must agree that a certain spending is ~~warranted~~ worth it.

c.) One unique power that is given to the Senate is they are allowed to use a filibuster. A filibuster allows members to speak for as long as needed to postpone a vote on a certain bill. The framers gave the Senate this power because there are less of them and it a smaller meeting setting. Since their are fewer of them, they are less likely to have a long list of items that must be brought about.

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2006 SCORING COMMENTARY

Question 1

Overview

This question was intended to test student knowledge and understanding of two similar but distinct linkage organizations in the United States political system. Specifically, the question asked students to distinguish between the fundamental goal of political parties and the fundamental goal of interest groups and to articulate the ways in which these two entities sometimes interact.

Sample: 1A

Score: 5

In part (a) the response earned 1 point for correctly identifying the fundamental goal of interest groups as seeking to have their “interests . . . implemented by the federal government.”

In part (b) the response earned 1 point for correctly identifying the fundamental goal of political parties as seeking to “get their people elected.”

In part (c) the response earned 1 point for describing monetary contributions as one way interest groups help political parties achieve the goal of getting their candidates elected. The response earned the second point for describing how interest groups endorse a party’s candidates and help the party achieve its fundamental goal, stating that interest groups engage in “advertising a particular issue and associating it with that [party’s] candidate.”

In part (d) the response earned 1 point for explaining how financial contributions to political parties also help the interest groups achieve their goal of influencing government since the contributions help to ensure that the interest groups “have their views heard and interests protected.”

Sample: 1B

Score: 3

In part (a) the response incorrectly identifies the fundamental goal of interest groups and therefore did not earn a point.

In part (b) the response earned 1 point for correctly identifying the fundamental goal of political parties as seeking “to control the presidency, House/Senate majority, and the Supreme Court.”

In part (c) the response earned 1 point for describing endorsements (“associating”) as one way that interest groups support political parties. The response earned the second point for describing how interest groups support political parties by giving them money.

In part (d) the response does not explain how political parties can help interest groups achieve their fundamental goal and therefore earned no point.

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Question 1 (continued)

Sample: 1C

Score: 1

In part (a) the response does not correctly identify the fundamental goal of interest groups and therefore did not earn a point.

In part (b) the response earned 1 point for correctly identifying that the fundamental goal of political parties is to change the policy-making process “by attempting to gain different government positions.”

In part (c) the response does not describe how interest groups support the fundamental goal of political parties and therefore did not earn any points.

Since part (c) did not earn any points, no points could be earned in part (d). Although the response mentions the idea of “passing legislation,” the question required that the response link the explanation to forms of support described in part (c).

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Question 2

Overview

This question was intended to examine student knowledge and understanding of Social Security, an important public policy issue in United States government and politics.

Sample: 2A

Score: 6

In part (a) the response earned 1 point for defining an entitlement program as a program from which “beneficiaries automatically receive [*sic*] money if they meet certain basic requirements.”

In part (b) the response earned 1 point for identifying the primary source of revenue for the Social Security program as “taxes paid [*sic*] by current employees and employers in America to the Social Security Fund.”

In part (c) the response earned 1 point for identifying one threat to the future of the Social Security program should the trends depicted in the chart continue: “the Social Security program could be paying out more money to beneficiaries than it earns in tax revenue, possibly causing the Social Security program to go bankrupt.”

In part (d) the response earned 1 point for describing one demographic trend that threatens the future of Social Security: “the increasing number of senior citizens, and the not-increasing number of workers.” The response earned 1 point for explaining how the demographic trend is responsible for the threat identified in part (c): “the number of workers who fund Social Security are [*sic*] not increasing at such a huge rate.”

In part (e) the response earned 1 point for explaining how one of the trends in the chart would change if the age of eligibility for Social Security were raised: “the money being paid in could be raised, and the money being paid out could be lowered.”

Sample: 2B

Score: 3

In part (a) the response did not earn a point for the definition because there is no reference to the mandatory nature of entitlements or to eligibility requirements.

In part (b) the response earned 1 point for identifying the primary source of revenue for the Social Security program: “the Social Security tax that everyone who works is required to pay.”

In part (c) the response earned 1 point for identifying one threat to the future of the Social Security program should the trends depicted in the chart continue: “the level of income falling in relationship to the level of expenditure.”

In part (d) an “increase of early retirements” is erroneously described as a demographic trend. Since no demographic trend is accurately described, the explanation point was not earned.

In part (e) the response earned 1 point for explaining how any one of the trends in the chart would change if the age of eligibility for Social Security were raised: “the amount of money paid out would decrease [*sic*].”

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Question 2 (continued)

Sample: 2C

Score: 2

In part (a) the response did not earn a point for the definition because there is no reference to the mandatory nature of entitlement programs.

In part (b) the response did not earn a point because the statement “The primary source of revenue for S.S. is tax dollars” is too vague.

In part (c) the response earned 1 point for identifying one threat to the future of the Social Security program should the trends depicted in the chart continue: “our government will be shelling out more money than what is coming in.”

In part (d) the response did not earn any points because the demographic trend described is too vague: “One demographic trend that threatens social security is our national population and what percentage of that population is eligible for social security.” Since no correct demographic trend is described, the explanation point was not earned.

In part (e) the response earned 1 point for explaining how any one of the trends depicted in the chart would change if the age of eligibility for Social Security were raised: “the money paid out would go significantly down.”

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Question 3

Overview

This question was intended to test student knowledge and understanding of the discretionary power delegated by Congress to bureaucratic agencies in the implementation of federal law.

Sample: 3A

Score: 6

In part (a) the response earned 1 point for correctly explaining why Congress gives federal agencies policy-making discretion in executing federal laws: “if the agency did not, then Congress would be swamped.” The second point was earned for correctly explaining that agency personnel “are experts on the topic, compared to Congress.”

In part (b) the response earned 1 point for correctly identifying the policy area of the Federal Communications Commission (FCC): “monitoring and regulating television and airwaves.” A second point was earned for giving one specific example of how the FCC exercises that discretion: the agency has the authority to “filter out what is obscene” and “levy fines.”

In part (c) the response earned 1 point for correctly describing one way in which Congress ensures that federal agencies follow legislative intent: “Congress can cut the funding.” The second point was earned for correctly describing a second way Congress ensures that federal agencies follow legislative intent: it “controls agencies . . . with [the] ability to dissolve [*sic*] them.”

Sample: 3B

Score: 4

In part (a) the response earned 1 point for correctly explaining why Congress gives federal agencies policy-making discretion in executing federal laws: “agencies are experts in their field.” The response does not correctly explain a second reason.

In part (b) the response earned 1 point for correctly identifying the policy area of the Environmental Protection Agency: “The EPA is in charge of protecting the environment.” The second point was earned for giving one specific example of how the EPA exercises that discretion: the agency has the authority to “put restrictions on how much pollution could be made by cities.”

In part (c) the response earned 1 point for correctly describing one way in which Congress ensures that federal agencies follow legislative intent: “controlling the funding that each agency receives [*sic*].” The response does not correctly explain a second reason.

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Question 3 (continued)

Sample: 3C

Score: 2

In part (a) the response does not correctly explain any reasons why Congress gives federal agencies policy-making discretion in executing federal laws and therefore earned no points.

In part (b) the response earned 1 point for correctly identifying the policy area of the Federal Communications Commission (FCC): the agency “exercises power over radio, television, and the internet.” A second point was earned for giving one specific example of how the FCC exercises that discretion: “regulating profanity and vulgarity on television.”

In part (c) the response does not correctly describe any way in which Congress ensures that federal agencies follow legislative intent and therefore earned no points.

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Question 4

Overview

The intent of this question was to gauge student understanding of the theoretical arguments and rationales for the bicameral structure of the United States Congress and to examine their knowledge of the distinctive powers granted to each chamber.

Sample: 4A

Score: 6

In part (a) the response earned 1 point for stating that the two houses of Congress were created to prevent “tyranny of the majority.” The second point was earned for stating that the reason the framers created a bicameral legislature “was to slow the legislative process itself” and to make sure the process is “exhaustively deliberated.”

In part (b) the response earned 1 point for stating that the House of Representatives has the unique power “to introduce fiscal pieces of legislation.” A second point was earned for explaining that the reason the framers gave this power to the House is that its “representatives are based on population.”

In part (c) the response earned 1 point for stating that the Senate has the unique power to confirm United States Supreme Court nominees. The second point was earned for the explanation that the Senate was given this power because it represents the states equally.

Sample: 4B

Score: 3

In part (a) the response earned 1 point for discussing one of the framers’ reasons for creating a bicameral legislature: to settle the dispute over the Virginia Plan and the New Jersey Plan. The Great Compromise entailed a House of Representatives based upon population and a Senate based on equal representation of the states. The response does not attempt to discuss a second reason and therefore did not earn the second point.

In part (b) the response earned 1 point for identifying one power unique to the House of Representatives: it can impeach the president. The response offers no explanation and therefore did not earn the second point.

In part (c) the response earned 1 point by identifying one power unique to the Senate: the power to try an impeachment and remove a president from office. The response offers no explanation and therefore did not earn the second point.

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Question 4 (continued)

Sample: 4C

Score: 1

In part (a) the response discusses checks and balances but it does not provide a correct discussion of why the framers created a bicameral legislature and therefore earned no points.

In part (b) the response earned 1 identification point for stating that the House of Representatives has “the power to originate [*sic*] all bills relating to money.” The response does not provide a correct explanation of why this power was given specifically to the House and therefore did not earn the second point.

In part (c) the response does not correctly identify a constitutional power unique to the Senate and therefore did not earn the identification point. Since the response does not correctly identify a unique power, it did not earn the explanation point.