**Interest Group Webquest**

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| **Part 1: Different interest groups****Open “Interest Group Links,” and look at the following categories: Think Tank, Business/Labor/Professional, Environmental, Public Interest.  Choose two organizations from different categories to research. Answer the questions below about EACH of the two groups you chose.****Group #1 Name:**What is the group's purpose/mission?What are some of the major issues that concern the group? (Focus on current political/government issues, and try to be specific)In what ways does the group try to influence the policy process and gain access to the three branches of government, or different levels of government?  How is the group funded? What political ideology does the group seem to be most aligned with?**Group #2 Name:**What is the group's purpose/mission?What are some of the major issues that concern the group? (Focus on current political/government issues, and try to be specific)In what ways does the group try to influence the policy process and gain access to the three branches of government, or different levels of government?  How is the group funded? What political ideology does the group seem to be most aligned with?**Part 2: Funding and PACs****Directions: In this part, you will explore** the controversies of interest groups and their actions. For much of this activity, you will be utilizing the resources of [www.opensecrets.org](http://www.opensecrets.org/). **I. Which Industry Supports Which Political Party?** 1. Based on the data in this chart, make a list comparing the top [**5 industries**](http://www.opensecrets.org/industries/mems.php?party=A&cycle=2012) that gave the most to each of the following political parties in the 2012 election cycle. Next to the name, list the amount they donated to that party.

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| Industries that supported the Democrats | Industries that supported the Republicans |
| 1.2. 3. 4.5. | 1.2. 3. 4.5. |

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 2. Research the [Health Services/HMO (insurance) industry](http://www.opensecrets.org/industries/indus.php?ind=H03++&goButt2.x=8&goButt2.y=10&goButt2=Submit). Read the background information about the industry. A. Who are the [top three contributors](http://www.opensecrets.org/industries/contrib.php?ind=H03&cycle=2012) to federal candidates and parties (2012)? B. Who are the [top four members of Congress](http://www.opensecrets.org/industries/summary.php?ind=H03&recipdetail=M&sortorder=U&cycle=2012) that received contributions from this industry? C. What [trends](http://www.opensecrets.org/lobby/indusclient.php?lname=H03&year=2010) do you observe about this industry’s spending on lobbyists since 1990? **II. Lobbying** 3. What [trends](http://www.opensecrets.org/lobby/index.php) do you observe in the number of lobbyists **and** the amount of money spent on lobbying? 4. Make a list of the [top five interest group spenders](http://www.opensecrets.org/lobby/top.php?showYear=2012&indexType=s) so far in 2012—include the amount of money they have spent on lobbying so far.5. Describe the function of the interest group that has spent the most money on lobbying thus far in 2012 (you will need to use outside resources) 6. Make a list of the [top three lobbying firms](http://www.opensecrets.org/lobby/top.php?showYear=2012&indexType=l) thus far in 2012 (based on money received for their services). Include how much money they have received thus far.7. Read this [article](http://www.theonion.com/articles/american-people-hire-highpowered-lobbyist-to-push%2C18204/?utm_source=recentnews) that satirizes the lobbying industry and the US government     A. Summarize this article in 3 sentences or less.     B. What message is the author trying to convey?**III. The Revolving Door:** 8. Explain the meaning of the phrase “[revolving door](http://www.opensecrets.org/revolving/index.php)”. 9. Look at the employment history of [Trent Lott](http://www.opensecrets.org/revolving/rev_summary.php?id=70566), why do you think he was hired to become a lobbyist? 10. Look at the employment history of [Tom Daschle](http://www.opensecrets.org/revolving/rev_summary.php?id=34118). How does he fit the profile of someone who has been utilized the ‘revolving door’? 11. What are the pros & cons of the “revolving door”? **IV. Political Action Committees (PACs):** 12. Briefly explain the function of [PACs](http://www.opensecrets.org/pacs/pacfaq.php)13. Make a list of the [top five PACS in 2012](http://www.opensecrets.org/pacs/toppacs.php?Type=C&cycle=2012) —include the amount of money the PAC spent. 14. What are [Leadership PACS](http://www.opensecrets.org/pacs/industry.php?txt=Q03&cycle=2008)? 15. Make a list of the [top five Leadership PACS in 2012](http://www.opensecrets.org/pacs/industry.php?txt=Q03&cycle=2012) —include the amount of money the PAC spent. **Part V is not mandatory. If you have time in class, complete for extra credit.****V. 527 Groups:** 16. Explain the [purpose](http://projects.publicintegrity.org/527/default.aspx?act=faq) of 527 groups. 17. [Why](http://www.opensecrets.org/527s/basics.php) are these groups called ‘527s’? 18. In 2008, in what two [categories](http://www.opensecrets.org/527s/527cmtes.php?level=E&cycle=2008) did 527s spend much of their money? Hypothesize why 527s spend much of their money in these two categories. 19. Watch this political [advertisement](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wsTXhhCxveg). How can you tell this ad was created and paid for by a 527 organization? 20. Watch this [video clip](http://vsx.onstreammedia.com/vsx/newshour/search/NHPlayer?assetId=83133&ccstart=0&pt=0), followed by [this clip](http://vsx.onstreammedia.com/vsx/newshour/search/NHPlayer?assetId=83134&ccstart=0&pt=0)  Go [here](http://www.pbs.org/newshour/video/search_results.html?q=crashing+the+party&submit=Search) and in the search tab - click "2000-2007" and search "527s".  The segments are titled "Crashing the Parties: Background" and "Crashing the Parties: Discussion"A. How did the ‘McCain-Feinfold Law’ help increase the spending on 527s? B. What types of ‘things’ can 527s say/advocate?

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