**Political Parties and Interest Groups**

**Study Guide**

1. **What is the primary goal of major parties**? nominate candidates for public office TO WIN ELECTIONS
2. **What types of minor (or third party) political parties are there?**

Ideological, single-issue, splinter, economic protest

1. **What typically happens to third parties?** They usually don’t last very long (they fade away). Third-party candidates usually have to get thousands of signatures on petitions just to be listed on the ballot. SO they usually don’t make the cut. But sometimes they play a SPOILER role in an election, or if they are lucky, they get their main topics adopted by a major political party for their use in campaigns.
2. **Why do we have a “two party” system?** Single member districts, plurality voting, election laws favor two party systems (and the two major parties make these rules)
3. **What are some major activities of political parties?**

Finding and nominating candidates, campaigning, inform and inspire voters (even if the information isn’t always unbiased), raising money for their candidates, serving as a watchdog in government (when they don’t control it), governing, raising important issues (in their platforms)

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1. **What is the primary goal of an interest group? How do they achieve this goal?** They want to influence public policy to support their issue
2. **What types of interest groups are there?**

Economic, single-issue/cause, public interest

1. **What are some key functions of interest groups? (how do they help link voters to the government?)**

Lobbying, campaign donations through PACs, grassroots movements, protesting, informing the public, litigation (using the courts), informing the public, forming alliances with Congress, testifying in front of Congress, providing information for congressmen

1. **What is the primary goal of specific interest groups? How do they achieve this goal?**

NRA- #1 Goal: to promote and protect 2nd Amendment Rights

#1 Tactic: Lobbying, Campaign Contributions, Informing the public

AARP- #1 Goal: enhance the quality of life for all as they age

#1 Tactic: Lobby, Inform the public, community service

ACLU- American Civil Liberties Union

#1Goal: defend and preserve the individual rights of Americans

#1 Tactic: COURTS - litigation (lawsuits & represent defendants) and amicus curiae briefs