

American government



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Lecturer: Presentation: Introduction The American government deals with complex issues at the local, state and federal level. The process of policy formulation involves the three levels of government. According to CliffsNotes (2011), public policy refers to actions taken by government or its decisions intended to solve problems and improve quality of life for its citizens. It's a struggle in government over who gets what and is in form of laws, Supreme Court decisions, executive agreements, established rules, procedures and practices. Gerston (2004) notes that the public agenda changes as public priorities and values shift hence policy making is a continuous process. It involves identification of issues, policy formulation, implementation, evaluation and termination. Problem Identification Problems are identified through various ways. Organized interests play a major role in identifying problems. They act as source of information for formulation and advocacy of policy ideas (Gerston, 2004). The labor movements and unions are instrumental in helping to identify workers plight. They highlight the workers problems such as poor working conditions, unfair wages, basic work safety and fight against child labor. They influence the workers to strike hence making their problems known to the policy makers. The United Mine Workers of America (UMWA) managed to establish collective bargaining in American industries in the 20th century. Gershon (2004) acknowledges the fact that triggering mechanisms are the starting point for public policy questions. These mechanisms are unpredictable and impact on peoples lives. For example the current welfare system of America was prompted by the great depression which left millions of people unemployed and without a source of income thereby prompting the president Roosevelt to declare entitlement to

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government assistance for those affected. Globalization also has prompted debate about outsourcing and many other problems that arise. The elected officials also play crucial role in identifying problems. They criticize existing ineffective policies and lobby for support from public and other officials to change the policy. For example the corporate welfare is criticized by many liberalists as it assists the wealthy instead of helping the poor. The president can also identify a problem and make directives to solve it. For example president Obama's fight for poverty and improvement of opportunities for poor families across America (White house, 2011). The media plays crucial role by giving information to the public and making policy makers aware of existing problems which need attention.

Policy Formulation and Adoption

The issues identified are scrutinized and the important ones become part of public agenda. Some problems occur once and hence are solved permanently while others are complex hence temporary solutions are sought and the problems keep reemerging. The congress is in a position to place the issues on the agenda, discuss them and offer solution by passing legislations. The executive or President also promotes the agenda directly to the public to avoid rejection by reluctant policy makers through televised addresses, press conference and strategic meetings. The courts also set the agenda by decisions made by judges. The Supreme Court makes various rulings which become policies to be followed(CliffsNotes, 2011). For example it had declared the Wagner Act unconstitutional but later reversed the decision in 1937 allowing for negotiations between employees and employers. Interest groups bring together leaders and experts to discuss problems and reach consensus on policies addressing the problem.

Implementation

The implementation of policies is done by government

entities. New regulations and enforcement procedures may be developed to enhance implementation. Evaluation and Termination The advocates of a policy, opponents and interest groups consider the consequences of a decision after implementation by analyzing data or public reaction to the policies (Cockrel, 199). If a problem is identified, the process of formulating a policy begins again until a proper solution is made. Some policies have positive and negative consequences like taxation system and globalization issues hence need weighing the benefits and costs to formulate better policies. References CliffsNotes. com (2011). “ The Policymaking Process”. Retrieved 29 January, 2011 from [http://www.cliffsnotes.com/study-guide/The-policymaking-process.topicArticleId-65383 articleId-65551. htm](http://www.cliffsnotes.com/study-guide/The-policymaking-process.topicArticleId-65383%20articleId-65551.htm) Cockrel, J. (1997). Public Policy Making in America. University of Kentucky Cooperative Extension Service. Gerston, J. (2004) Public Policy Making: Process and Principles (2 ed). New York: M. E Sharpe, Inc. White House (2011). “ Poverty’ . Retrieved 29 January, 2011 from <http://www.whitehouse.gov/issues/poverty>.