

# Pros and cons of interest groups essay

[Business](#), [Company](#)



An interest group is an organized group of people who share the same goals and constantly try to influence the direction of public policy. Interest groups include but are not limited to professional associations, labour unions and intergovernmental unions. The membership of interest groups varies from hundreds to millions. The ideas and views represented by interest groups are often a representation of the interests of citizens. In the United States of America, the interest groups often exist because of the weakness of the political system in which the legislative and the executive branch operate as separate entities. In the recent times, there is an increased access to the internet resources which allows the interest groups to publicize their causes. The American `tradition also promotes the freedom of expression, speech and the right to assemble which allows various views to be represented. The existence of interest groups can be good for society but it is not without its demerits.

Interest groups can also give money to a politician in order to advance their cause. Given that money is one of motivations that keep legislators going, it is easy for the legislators to incline their position to match that of the interest group. There are several interest groups in countries like the USA hence a politician could receive donations from several interest groups. Ultimately, in a nation like USA the quality of policies that is passed by the legislature is impaired and swayed by the wealthy.

Interest groups are a forum for advocating for democratic space and the enhancement of the freedom to expression and the right of assembly. Most interest groups have local branches that join up to form national umbrella organizations. At the local level, citizens can be organized in order to rise up

against issues of interest such as gun control, tobacco advertisement and the like. The local interest groups can then join up to form a national association that can be a powerful tool to influence the policies in a given country. This can particularly be of use in instances where the regime is oppressive thus implements policies that are detrimental to the citizens. For instance, the oppressive regime of Hosni Mubarak in Egypt was ended by the collective action of the citizens who were spurred by interest groups.

Interest groups are often inclined to one side of argument in the advancement of the causes they support. Rallying masses behind a cause that is based on a one sided argument can be the spark behind acts of violence or hatred among the citizens. For instance, the Ku Klux Klan was a movement that was borne out of a lopsided tenet which advanced white supremacy. They had branches all over the nation; in cities, states and nationally. These organizations would later become a tool for the perpetration of hatred towards other races in the United States of America.

Interest groups are often non-profit organizations that depend on the financial support of donors in order to carry out their activities. When the interests represented are for the general good of the public such as advancement of ethical HIV/AIDS policies at the work place, they can serve as a venue for donors to influence the society in a positive manner.

However the lack of financial muscle hence the overdependence on donors can be a demerit for the interest group. Business corporations often have a strong influence over the direction that the government takes given that they remit taxes to the government and they make investments that are beneficial to the government. Therefore the government has to extensively

consult with the business sector before they pass a legislation that will have an impact on the business climate. The businesses can therefore decide to fund interest groups in order to sway the position of the government. For instance, tobacco legislation is a hot button issue given that the tobacco companies make massive profits. It is not uncommon for tobacco companies to fund interest groups in order to advance their cause. The National Rifle Association receives funding from arm dealers which to some extent influences their position on gun control laws.

There is sharp inequality in regard to access to the government by the interest groups. The liberal nature of democracy and free market capitalism are the reason behind the inequality in the access to the government. The interest groups that are funded by elite businesses and corporations therefore have much clout as compared to those that are not. The interest groups can therefore be a tool for the distortion of democracy by championing for the implementation of policies that are unpopular. The government policies are shaped to a large extent shaped by the activities of interest group that remain politically active. For an interest group to remain politically viable, the interest groups have to a constant source of finances in order to have activities throughout the year and to place their adverts in the media. Businesses therefore work hard to fund interest groups hence by extension sway government policies to their advantage. The financial elite can therefore have an undue influence on the policies that are affected by the government.

In the recent times, interest groups have been termed as tools that are utilized by businesses and serve the political elite. The interest groups are

funded by the businesses in order to effectively carry out their activities and also run campaigns in the media. In order to influence the decisions that will be made by the political class, the interest groups often have to give gifts and donations to the political class. The citizens who are ultimately affected by the government policies are therefore not adequately represented in the equation although they bear the brunt of the policies that are passed by the government. The interest groups have also been viewed as a representative of the interests of the middle class and the upper class while ignoring the poor. This is because the middle class and the upper class often have money to contribute to the causes of interest groups.

In conclusion, interest groups are powerful force of influencing the political system in a given country. However, the undue influence of businesses cannot be ignored as a factor in activities of the interest groups. It is important for the interest groups to articulate their position objectively and find alternative sources of finances in order to effectively carry out their role.

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