

Political Science 367.01

Lecture 4 Outline:

Goals of Legislators and Interest Groups

I. Defining the goals of Interest Groups

- A. Primary goal is to EXIST
- B. What do groups do to keep going?
- C. How does a group provide purposive benefits?

II. Access and Influence

- A. Access: being part of the game
- B. Influence: having an impact on the choice made by a legislator

Conclusion #1: Interest Groups must have access in order to give purposive benefits.

III. Defining the goals of Legislators

- A. Reelection, Good policy, institutional power
- B. Are these goals independent of each other?

IV. Uncertainty in making choices

- A. Reelection – what will be the electoral consequences of this decision?
- B. Legislative Process – what bills will matter and when?
- C. Policy Performance – what will the effect of the bill be?

Conclusion #2: Legislators need information in order to make good legislative decisions.

V. Information that interest groups provide

- A. Constituency preferences
- B. Legislative process
- C. Policy performance – 2 sources: rank and file members and research team.
- D. Useful information is costly information

Conclusion #3: Interest groups are able to collect the costly information that legislators need.

Big Conclusion: Legislators need costly information to reduce their uncertainty and make rational decisions. Interest groups need access to legislators to deliver the purposive benefits that allow them to exist. Interest groups can collect the needed information to gain access to legislators. Thus, successful groups are able to persist because they gain access and legislators are better off because they gain the information they need.