

Final Paper

Political Science 367.01 and Political Science 367D01

Legislatures and Interest Groups

Due Thursday, March 8, 2001

Rauch suggests to us that our democratic system is, at its core, at the whim of special interests. He argues that our government's construction, perpetuation, and the transactions it encourages between citizens and government tends towards "demosclerosis."

In this paper, we want you to critically examine Rauch's argument by using what you have learned this term. Using the readings and our class discussion, indicate how the system is designed. What about our system makes it prone to the idiosyncrasies Rauch points out?

Second, analyze whether or not the system is balanced—is Rauch correct in saying that groups stifle government? Or is it more appropriate to say that government stifles itself?

Finally, (and perhaps most importantly) discuss an appropriate fix for the system. Is government truly doomed to eventually grind to a halt? If this is the case, tell what we need to do to keep government alive and productive. If not, tell us how we might prevent this eventual stagnation. Is campaign finance reform the key? Or should we look elsewhere?

Your papers should be between 12 and 15 pages long and should make extensive use of the readings and discussions (or class chats). As usual, it is essential to correctly provide citations.