

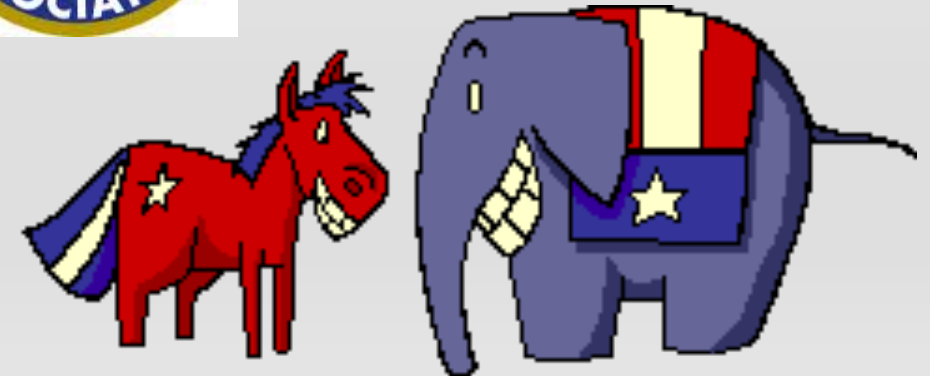
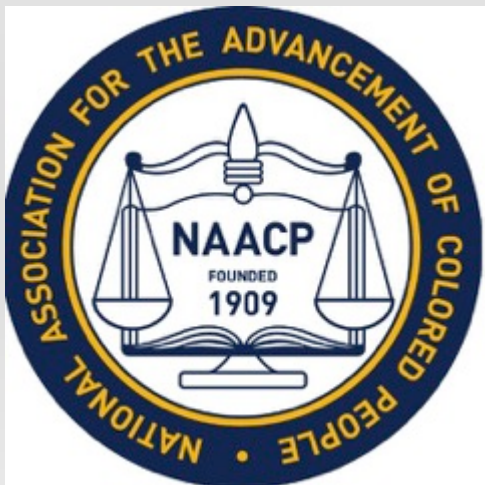
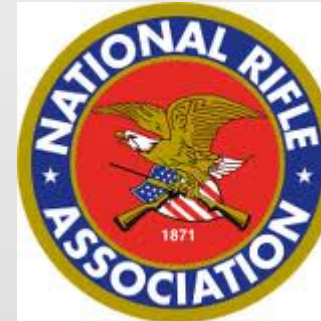
# Unit 6 – Linkage Institutions

## Lesson 6.3 – Interest Groups



# The Role of Interest Groups

- Interest group
  - Organization with shared policy goals entering the policy process to try to achieve those goals
- Interest groups are different from parties.
  - Political parties fight election battles; interest groups do not field candidates for office
  - Interest groups are policy specialists; political parties are policy generalists.



# Pluralist Theory

- Politics - competition among groups, each one pressing for its own preferred policies
- Groups will work together
- Public interest will prevail through bargaining and compromise



# Elite Theory

- Society divided along class lines - upper-class elite will rule, regardless of the formal niceties of governmental organization
- Not all groups equal
- Policies benefit those with money and power





# Hyperpluralism

- Groups are so strong that government is weakened.
- Groups control policy and prevent government from acting
- Difficulty in coordinating policy implementation
- Confusing and contradictory policies result from politicians trying to placate every group



# Top 25 Interest Groups

**TABLE 11.1**

The Power 25

1. National Rifle Association	14. National Education Association
2. American Association of Retired Persons	15. American Farm Bureau Federation
3. National Federation of Independent Business	16. Motion Picture Association of America
4. American Israel Public Affairs Committee	17. National Association of Broadcasters
5. Association of Trial Lawyers of America	18. National Right to Life Committee
6. AFL-CIO	19. Health Insurance Association of America
7. Chamber of Commerce	20. National Restaurant Association
8. National Beer Wholesalers Association	21. National Governors' Association
9. National Association of Realtors	22. Recording Industry
10. National Association of Manufacturers	23. American Bankers Association
11. National Association of Homebuilders	24. Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America
12. American Medical Association	25. International Brotherhood of Teamsters
13. American Hospital Association	

# Ineffectiveness of Large Groups

- Potential group: All the people who might be interest group members because they share a common interest
- Actual group: The part of the potential group consisting of members who actually join
- Collective good: Something of value that cannot be withheld from a group member (Clean air, higher minimum wage, competitive wages & benefits)

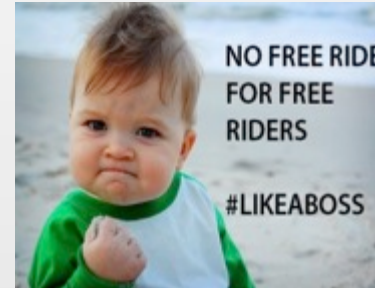




# Interest Group Problems

- Free-Rider Problem

- Some people don't join interest groups because they benefit from the group's activities without officially joining.



- Olson's Law of large groups:

- The larger the group, the further it will fall short of providing an optimal amount of a collective good.
- Overcome Olson's law by providing selective benefits: Goods that a group can restrict to those who pay their annual dues

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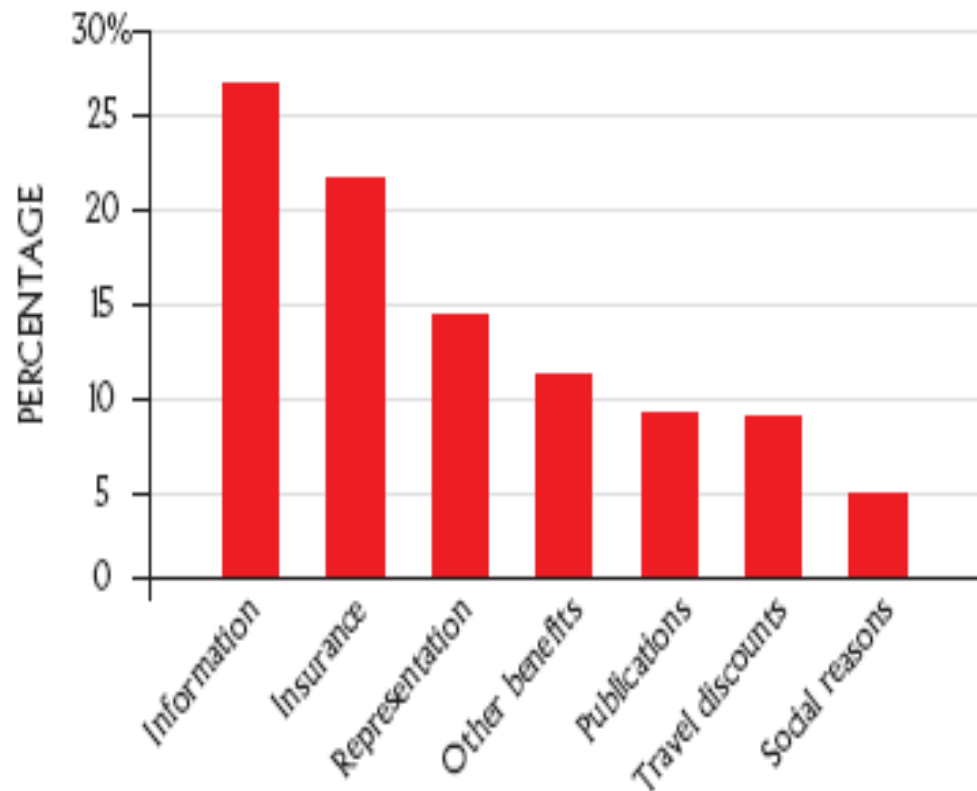




# What Makes an Interest Group Successful?

**FIGURE 11.2**

## The Benefits of Membership in the American Association of Retired Persons

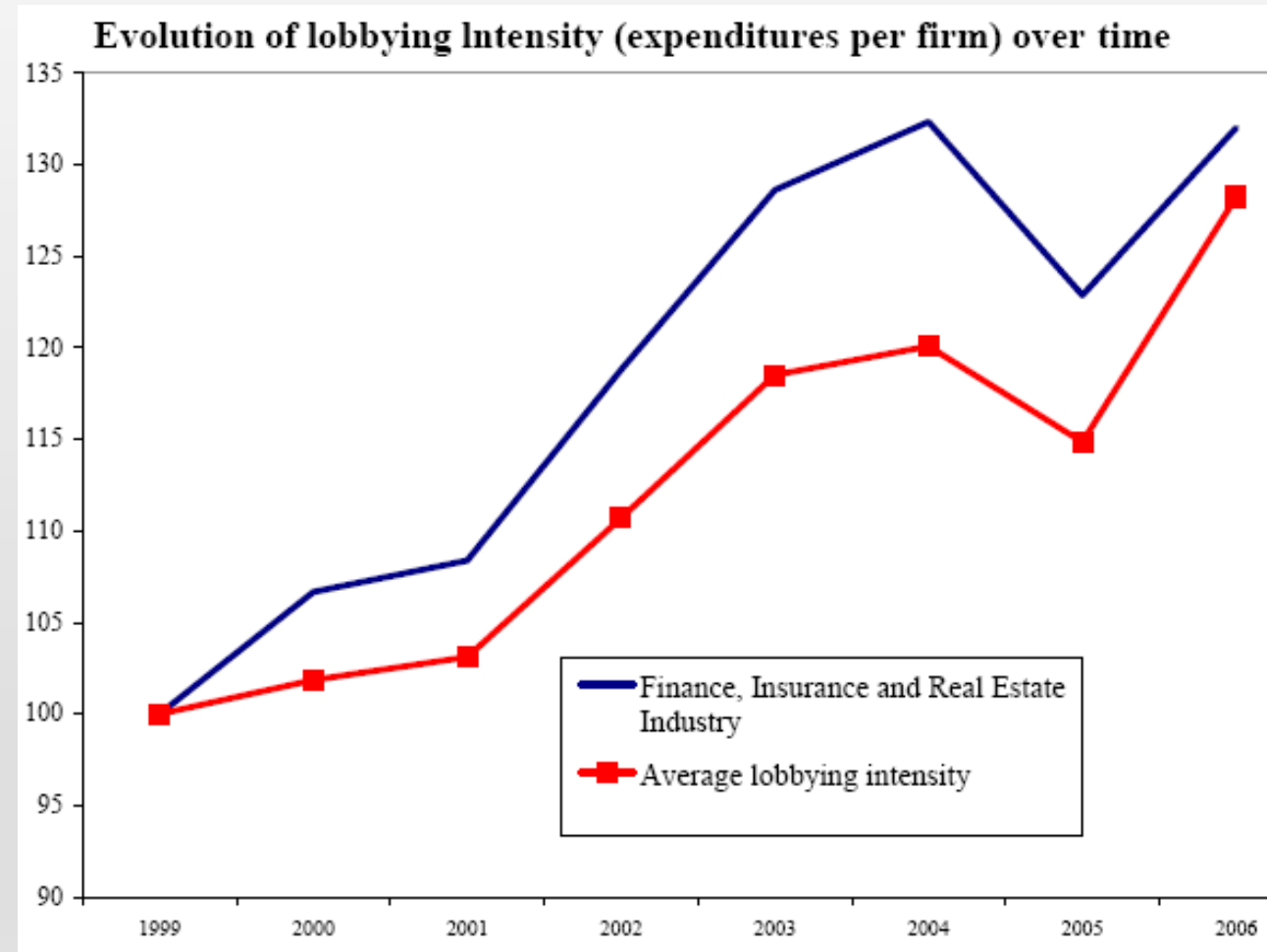


This chart illustrates the answers given by a sample of members of the American Association of Retired Persons when they were asked why they had joined the organization.

Source: American Association for Retired Persons.

# Interest Group Intensity

- Single-Issue groups: Groups that focus on a narrow interest and dislike compromise.
- Groups may focus on an emotional issue, providing them with a psychological advantage. (think guns after a mass shooting)
- Intensity encourages non-conventional means of participation, i.e.—protests



## Interest Group Finances

- Not all groups have equal amounts of money.
- Monetary donations usually translate into access to the politicians.
  - Phone call, meeting, political support
- Wealthier groups have more resources—and presumably more access

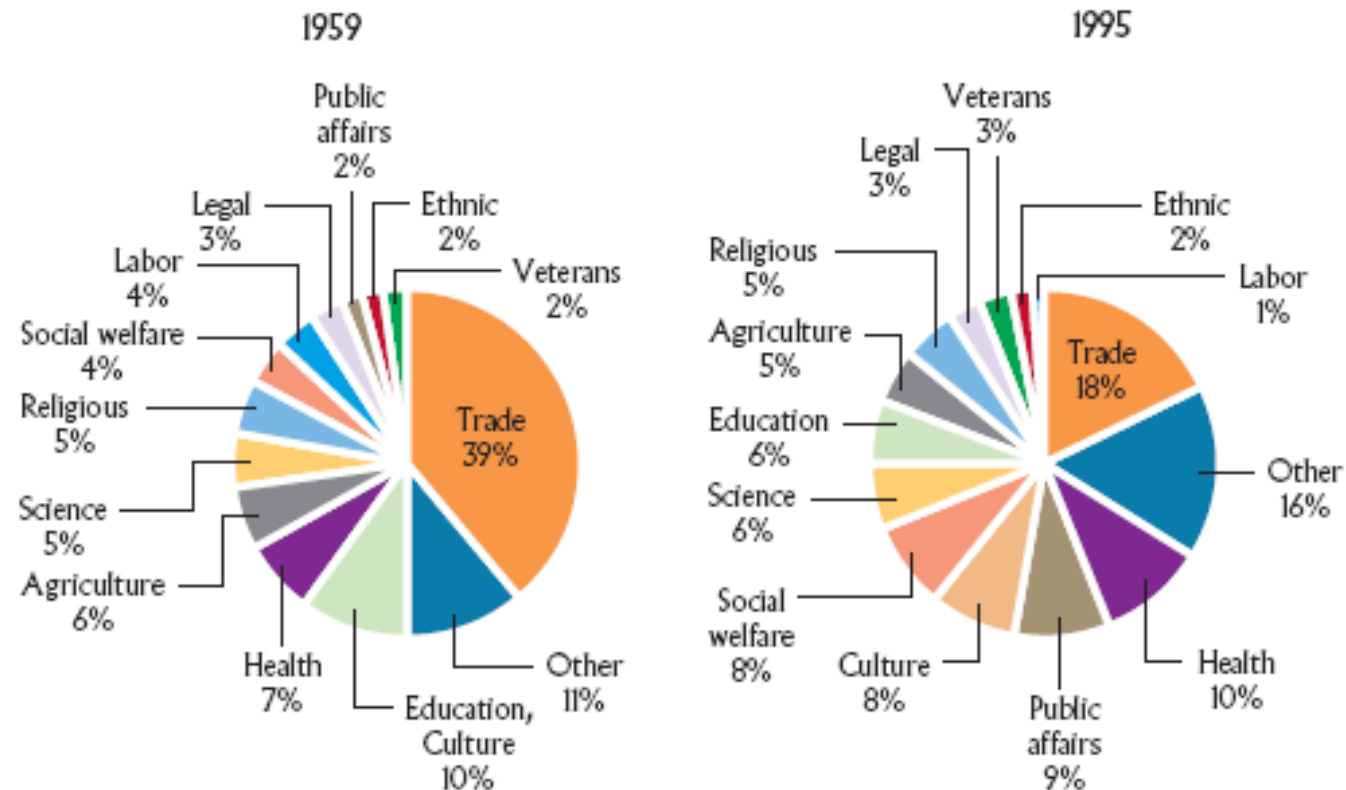


# The Interest Group Explosion

**FIGURE 11.3**

## Associations by Type

The following two pie charts illustrate how the interest group world has become more diverse since the late 1950s.



Source: Data from Frank R. Baumgartner and Beth L. Leech, *Basic Interests: The Importance of Groups in Politics and in Political Science* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1998), 109.



# Interest Groups #1

