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In-Class Online Activities

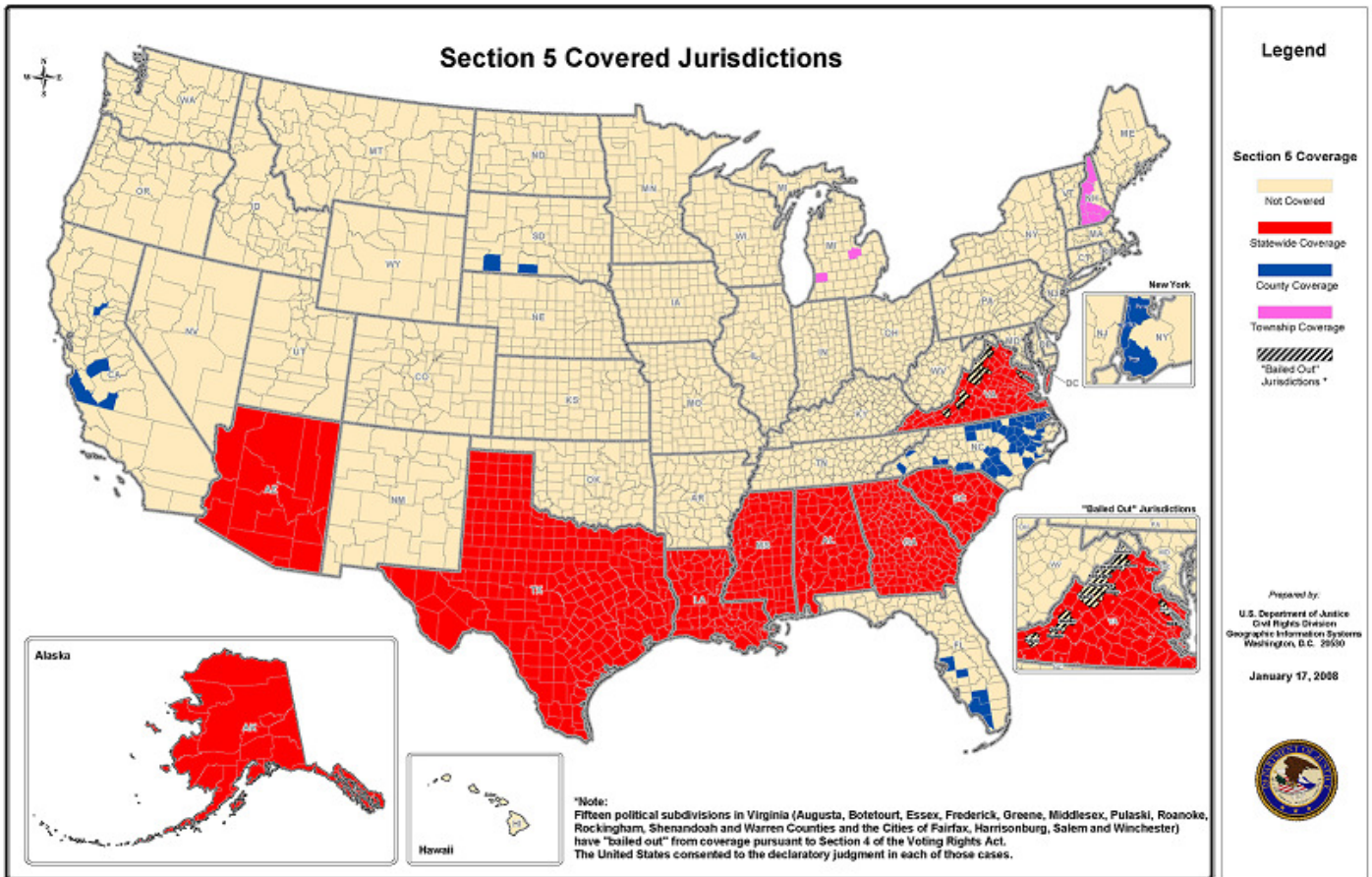
African American Civil Rights - The Voting Rights Act of 1965

Step 1 - Background

The National Voting Rights Act of 1965 outlawed discriminatory voting practices that had been responsible for the widespread disenfranchisement of African Americans in the United States. The Act prohibited states from imposing any "voting qualification or prerequisite to voting, or standard, practice, or procedure ... to deny or abridge the right of any citizen of the United States to vote on account of race or color." Specifically, Congress intended the Act to outlaw the practice of requiring otherwise qualified voters to pass literacy tests in order to register to vote, a principal means by which Southern states had prevented African-Americans from exercising the franchise.

The Act established extensive federal oversight of elections administration. According to Section 5 of the law, some "covered jurisdictions" -- states with a history of discriminatory voting practices -- must get "preclearance" by the United States Attorney General or the United States District Court for the District of Columbia before any attempt to change "any voting qualification or prerequisite to voting, or standard, practice, or procedure with respect to voting." In order to attain Preclearance, the district must show that a proposed voting change does not have the purpose and will not have the effect of discriminating based on race or, in some cases, discriminating against a "language minority group" (especially Spanish-speakers).

Below are the states covered by Section 5 of the Voting Rights Act of 1965.



After the passage of the Voting Rights Act, many southern legislatures moved to use redistricting to minimize the impact of African American voters. Specifically, states drew district lines that "cracked" or fragmented black populations, absorbing those communities into majority white districts. To counteract this, federal law has encouraged what is sometimes called **racial gerrymandering**, designed to increase minority representation in Congress. The 1982 amendments to the Voting Rights Act of 1965 encouraged the creation of legislative districts with predominantly African American or Hispanic American populations (**minority-minority districts**) by requiring states, when possible, to draw distinct lines that take account of concentrations of African American and Hispanic American voters.

1. Describe the Voting Rights Act of 1965. What was the purpose of the law? How did the law increase federal oversight of state election processes? Which of the law's stipulations, if any, do you find to be the most fair? Which, if any, do you find to be unfair? Why?
2. What generalization can you make about the states that are covered by Section 5 of the law?
3. Describe the 1982 amendment to the act. What does it stipulate? Why?

Step 2 - Play the Game

In Mission 4 of the [Redistricting Game](#), you assume the role of a state legislature attempting to comply with the 1982 amendment to the Voting Rights Act by creating a new majority-minority district. Click on the link to play the game, then answer the questions below.

1. What were the greatest challenges you faced in this mission?
2. What was the final outcome?

Capital Punishment

Step 1- The Constitution

Does the death penalty constitute a violation of liberties protected by the U.S. Constitution? The following are the relevant sections of the Constitution that relate to the debate over capital punishment.

5th Amendment: No person shall be held to answer for a capital, or otherwise infamous crime, unless on a presentment or indictment of a Grand Jury, except in cases arising in the land or naval forces, or in the Militia, when in actual service in time of War or public danger; nor shall any person be subject for the same offence to be twice put in jeopardy of life and limb; nor shall be compelled in any criminal case to be a witness against himself, nor be deprived of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor shall private property be taken for public use, without just compensation.

8th Amendment: Excessive bail shall not be required, nor excessive fines imposed, nor cruel and unusual punishments inflicted.

14th Amendment: Section 1. . . . nor shall any State deprive any person of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws.

1. What do you think was meant by the phrase in the 5th amendment, "due process of law"?
2. What is the difference between the 5th amendment and the 14th amendment? What do you think is meant by "equal protection of the laws"? Why do you think the 14th amendment was added to the Constitution immediately after the Civil War?
3. What do you think are examples of "cruel and unusual" punishment mentioned in the 8th amendment?

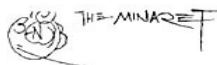
Step 2 - Read About the Death Penalty Debate

- [What is the Death Penalty? \(ProCon.org\)](#)
- [Map of Death Penalty States \(Amnesty International\)](#)
- [Methods of Execution \(ProCon.org\)](#)
- [Public Opinion of the Death Penalty Since 1937 \(Gallup\)](#)
- [Should the death penalty be banned as a form of punishment? \(BalancedPolitics.org\)](#)
- [Is the Death Penalty Unconstitutional? \(ProCon.org\)](#)
- [National Statistics on the Death Penalty and Race \(Death Penalty Information Center\)](#). Compare these figures with the [overall population of the United States](#).
- [The Death Penalty in Black and White: Who Lives, Who Dies, Who Decides \(Death Penalty Information Center\)](#): Makes the case that racism has led to higher capital convictions for minorities.
- [The Color of Death Row \(National Review\)](#): Argues that the apparent overrepresentation of minorities on death row is not indicative of racism.
- [Life in Prison Without Parole \(LWOP\) \(ProCon.org\)](#)

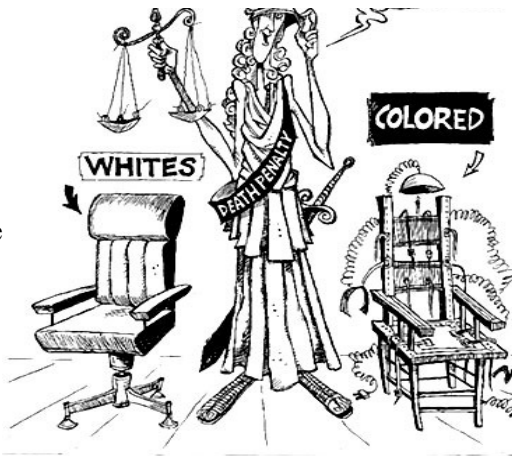
Step 3 - Writing Assignment

In a 2-3 page paper (1-inch margins, double-spaced, 12-point font), answer the question, "Does the death penalty violate the Constitution?" This homework assignment will be worth 25 points. Essays receiving high scores will include an introduction with a thesis statement, will be well organized, and will include ample evidence from all the readings above. Your reasoned argument should consider the following:

- In how many states is the death penalty legal? What is public opinion concerning the death penalty? Do these two considerations inform the central question? Why or why not?



- What methods of execution are used in the various states? Which is more popular? Which is least popular? Do you think that some are more "cruel and unusual" than others?
- Why do some argue that the death penalty violates the 5th amendment? The 8th amendment?
- Describe the role that race plays in the application of the death penalty. Why do some use this to argue that the death penalty violates the "equal protection" clause of the 14th amendment? Are African Americans and Hispanics on death row the victims of the *unequal* protection of the laws? Why or why not?
- Is life imprisonment more "constitutional" than the death penalty?



Interest Group Politics, Part II (Homework Assignment)

Use [this link to Open Source](#) to search for PAC activity by the groups below.

Economic Interest Groups

Corporations that Lobby

[ConAgra](#)

[Archer Daniels Midland](#)

[AT&T](#)

[Honeywell International](#)

[Microsoft Corp](#)

Business Associations

[National Beer Wholesalers Association](#)

[National Association of Manufacturers](#)

[U.S. Chamber of Commerce](#)

[Business Roundtable](#)

[National Frozen Pizza Institute](#)

[American Bankers Association](#)

Unions and Professional Organizations

[United Auto Workers \(UAW\)](#)

[Service Employees International Union \(SEIU\)](#)

[American Federation of Labor - Congress of Industrial Organizations \(AFL-CIO\)](#)

[American Federation of Teachers \(AFT\)](#)

[American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees \(AFSCME\)](#)

[Association of Trial Lawyers of America](#)

[American Medical Association \(AMA\)](#)

Equal Opportunity Interest Groups

Age

[American Association of Retired Persons \(AARP\)](#)

[Children's Defense Fund \(CDF\)](#)

Race and Ethnicity

[National Association for the Advancement of Colored Persons \(NAACP\)](#)

[League of United Latin American Citizens \(LULAC\)](#)

[Southeast Asia Resource Action Center \(SEARAC\)](#)

[Japanese American Citizens League \(JACL\)](#)

Gender and Sexual Orientation

[National Organization for Women \(NOW\)](#)

[EMILY's List](#)

[National Gay and Lesbian Task Force](#)

Public Interest Groups

Environmental Groups

[Sierra Club](#)

[Natural Resources Defense Council](#)

Consumer Groups

[Public Citizen](#)

[Consumers Union](#)

Religious Groups

[Christian Coalition](#)

[Anti-Defamation League](#)

Second Amendment Groups

[National Rifle Association \(NRA\)](#)

Reproductive Rights Groups

[National Abortion Rights League \(NARAL\)](#)

[Planned Parenthood](#)

[National Right to Life Committee](#)

[Operation Rescue](#)

Interest Group Politics, Part I (2/15/10)

The term *lobbying* comes from 17th century England, where representatives of special interests would meet members of the English House of Commons in the large anteroom, or lobby, outside the Commons floor to plead their cases. Interest groups do still contact lawmakers directly, but they no longer confine their efforts to chance meetings in the legislative lobby or to members of the legislature. Today, lobbyists target all branches of government, as well as the American people, using a multitude of strategies. There are two main types of lobbying: direct lobbying and indirect lobbying.

Direct Lobbying

Also known as "inside lobbying," direct lobbying is interaction with actual decision makers within government institutions. The following are some direct lobbying strategies employed by special interest groups:

Step 1 - Campaign Contributions

Contributions to Members of Specific Congressional Committees: This section will focus on contributions by special interests to members of Congressional committees. Why focus on committees? Read [this brief discussion](#) from the Center for Responsive Politics.

Click on <http://www.opensecrets.org/cmteprofiles/index.php>. In the House box, click on the "Agriculture" Committee link.

1. Read the "Overview" section, then click on and read the contents of the "Jurisdiction" section. What issues is this committee concerned with?
2. Return to the "Overview" section and look at the box entitled "Sectors Contributing to Members of this Committee, 2010 Election Cycle." Also access the "Members" and "Related Industries" section. This is a list of special interest groups from different industries that contribute to the campaigns of the members of the committee. What connections do you see here between the work of the committee and the industries that donate funds to its members?
3. How do you think donations from these special interest groups will influence the way they vote on legislation concerning those industries?

Political Action Committees (PACs): Read the ["What is a PAC?"](#) article from the Center for Responsible Politics.

4. Click on <http://www.opensecrets.org/pacs/toppacs.php> for the Top PACs in 2010. Who are they?
5. Click on <http://www.opensecrets.org/pacs/list.php>. Click on at least four of the links on that page, including "Labor." Note the parties to whom some of the sectors contribute. Now go up to the pull-down menu

labeled "Election Cycle" and go back a few years. Do these percentages change? Why?

6. Click on [Cash Flow: Congress Changes Hands — or Does It?](#) What can you learn about PAC contributions to Congresspersons in the two major parties?
7. Click on the following links to some of the most powerful PACs in the country. Why do you think these PACs have little or no web presence?
 - [American Crystal Sugar PAC](#) (information on Open Secrets; no stand-alone Internet site)
 - [Boeing PAC](#) (large aircraft company; information on Open Secrets; [PAC website](#) is password secured)
 - [Lockheed Martin PAC](#) (large aircraft company)
 - [United Parcel Service \(UPS\)](#)

Step 2 - Sponsored Travel: Access <http://www.opensecrets.org/travel/index.php> for a list of Congresspersons who take the most trips sponsored by special interest groups. Click on one of the names below and take a look at the kinds of trips taken by that member of Congress.

8. List examples of some of the places he or she has traveled and for what purpose.
9. List some examples of the kinds of special interest groups that pay for their trips.
10. Click on the link for the Congressperson in the "Member" column. Click on "Committee Assignments." Investigate the committees of which he or she is a member by clicking on the "Jurisdiction" and "Subcommittee" tabs. Do you see any connection between the kinds of issues that form part of the committee's work and the special interest groups that pay for the Congressperson's trips? Explain.

Step 3 - Professional Lobbyists

Spending on Lobbyists: Click on <http://www.opensecrets.org/lobby/index.php>.

9. What do you notice about the total lobbyist spending and the number of lobbyists since 1998?
10. In the menu on the left-hand side of the page, click on the "Top Lobbying Firms" link. What are the lobbying firms that make the most money? Click on one of the firms. What kind of groups do they work for?
11. In the menu on the left-hand side of the page, click on the "Ranked Sectors" link. Click on the top three or four links in the "Ranked Sectors." What do you learn about each of the categories? What industries spend the most money lobbying the government?
12. Return to the "Ranked Sectors" link. Click on "Other." Click on the links you find there and scroll down to see some of the groups and the amounts they have spent on lobbying. Who are the biggest spenders? Who spends the least? What do you think these groups hope to accomplish?
13. Return to the "Ranked Sectors" link. Click on "Ideological/Single-Issue." Click on the links you find there and scroll down to see some of the groups and the amounts they have spent on lobbying. Who are the biggest spenders? Who spends the least? What do you think these groups hope to accomplish?
14. Can you draw some conclusions about the kinds of groups that spend the MOST amount of money

Who are these lobbyists?

15. Read and summarize "[The Road to Riches is Called K Street](#)"
16. Access <http://www.opensecrets.org/revolving/index.php>. What is the "revolving door"? In the menu on the left-hand side of the page, click on "Members." This gives you a list of members of Congress whose staff have gone on to work in lobbying firms. Click on one of the members, then click on 2-3 names of former staff members. Describe their employment histories. What did they do when they worked for the Congressperson? Where did they end up afterwards? Why do you think this is so common? Next, click on "Agencies" to get a list of lobbyists with histories working for the federal bureaucracy. Do the same as above.
17. Read and summarize "[While Candidates Decry Lobbying, Ex-Lawmakers Embrace It](#)"
18. Click to access an article entitled, "[The Max Baucus Health Care Lobbying Complex](#)," which is accompanied by [this graphic](#). What do you learn from this source?
19. Read "[Edison Electric Institute Lobbying to Weaken Toxic Mercury Standards](#)," about lobbying during the George W. Bush administration. Who is Tom Kuhn? Describe his influence in the presidential administration and federal bureaucracy. How did he achieve this level of influence?

Step 4 - Does Money Buy Influence?

In other words, does direct lobbying - especially campaign contributions - work?
 Read and summarize "[Lobbyists' Gifts to Politicians Reap Benefits, Study Shows](#)."

Step 5 - Lobbying Reform

Summarize the following attempts at lobbying reform in the federal government:

1. [Lobbyist Disclosure Act of 1995](#), passed by a Republican-led Congress
2. [Honest Leadership and Open Government Act \(2007\)](#), a revision of the Lobbyist Disclosure Act of 1995, passed by the Democratic majority.
3. [Obama Executive Order on Lobbying](#)

Read the following articles. Have the rules changes over the last few years led to waning influence of lobbyists? How will the *Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission* case impact the role of lobbyists and special interest groups? Give evidence from EACH of the articles to support your answer.

4. "[Who's Watching The Lobbyists?](#)"
5. "[Seeing the Ethics Rules, and Raising an Exception](#)"
6. "[Daschle's Problems: When Is a Lobbyist Not a Lobbyist?](#)"
7. "[Lobbyists Get Potent Weapon in Campaign Ruling](#)" (note: this refers to the 2010 Supreme Court case, *Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission*)

Indirect Lobbying - "Going Public" and "Grassroots" Activism

Indirect lobbying, in which the lobbyists use public opinion to put pressure on politicians to do what they want, is one of the most powerful and fastest-growing kinds of lobbying. Indirect lobbying strategies include "going public," using media like television, radio and the Internet to promote an issue. It might also include "grassroots" activism, or the mobilization of ordinary citizens throughout the country to contact their representatives and express support of a group's position.

1. Read "[Progressives Try Some Airwaves Persuasion](#)" about Americans United for Change, a liberal special interest group sponsoring an **issue advocacy** ad campaign to pressure Democratic Senator Harry Reid to include a public option in the healthcare reform bill. Click on the links to view the television ad and listen to the radio ad. What is the message of the ads? What strategies are being used to promote the issue? Is the ad persuasive?
2. The following web links illustrate "grassroots" activism in response to the health care reform bills pending in Congress.
 - Read [this article](#) about the involvement of conservative interest groups in last summer's health care town hall meetings. Back home from a recess in August, U.S. Congresspersons held public meetings to discuss the proposed health care reform legislation. What did these groups do to try and influence the legislation?
 - Check out [this web page](#) from Freedom Works, a conservative group involved in the fight against proposed healthcare legislation. Also view this "[Health Care Action Kit](#)" put together by the group. In what ways does the organization suggest people can impact government action?
 - Another group involved in the conservative fights against health care reform is the conservative [Americans for Prosperity](#). Check out their [YouTube page](#) and access some of the videos. How do they reflect "grassroots" activism?
3. Explore the websites of the following special interest groups. Be sure to visit the "About Us" page for each site, and look around to learn and write about a) the issues with which the organization is concerned, b) the strategies it deploys to push its agenda, and c) the kinds of information provided for the public.
 - [Numbers USA](#)
 - [The American Association of Retired Persons \(AARP\)](#)
 - [Move On](#)
 - [U.S. Chamber of Commerce](#)
 - [National Rifle Association \(NRA\)](#)
 - [Common Cause](#)
 - [American Bankers Association \(ABA\)](#)
 - [International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers \(IBEW\)](#)
 - [NARAL Pro-Choice](#)

Campaign Financing (1/25/10)

Step 1 - Introduction

Read [this article](#), which appeared last year in the *Atlanta Journal Constitution*. Although it has to do with state legislators, it reflects concerns that are common at the national level as well. Summarize the article on a separate sheet of paper.

Step 2 - Campaign Finance Basics

Examine the table below and the information that follows, then answer the questions.

Campaign Finance Contribution Limits, 2009-2010 **

	To each candidate or candidate committee per election	To national party committee per calendar year	To state, district & local party committee per calendar year	To any political action committee or PAC per calendar year ^[1]	Special Limits

Individual may give	\$2,400*	\$30,400*	\$10,000 (combined limit)	\$5,000	\$115,500* overall biennial limit: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$45,600* to all candidates • \$69,900* to all PACs and parties[2]
National Party Committee may give	\$5,000	No limit	No limit	\$5,000	\$42,600* to Senate candidate per campaign[3]
PAC (multicandidate)[4] may give	\$5,000	\$15,000	\$5,000 (combined limit)	\$5,000	No limit
PAC (not multicandidate) may give	\$2,400*	\$30,400*	\$10,000 (combined limit)	\$5,000	No limit

Footnotes

* These contribution limits are increased for inflation in odd-numbered years.

** Contribution limits established by the Federal Elections Campaign Acts (FECA) (1972). Limits may change per election cycle. Limits are enforced by the Federal Election Commission (FEC).

1 A contribution earmarked for a candidate through a political committee counts against the original contributor's limit for that candidate. In certain circumstances, the contribution may also count against the contributor's limit to the PAC. [11 CFR 110.6](#). See also [11 CFR 110.1\(h\)](#).

2 No more than \$45,600 of this amount may be contributed to state and local party committees and PACs.

3 This limit is shared by the national committee and the Senate campaign committee.

4 A multicandidate committee is a political committee with more than 50 contributors which has been registered for at least 6 months and, with the exception of state party committees, has made contributions to 5 or more candidates for federal office. [11 CFR 100.5\(e\)\(3\)](#).

5 A federal candidate's authorized committee(s) may contribute no more than \$2,000 per election to another federal candidate's authorized committee(s). [2 U.S.C. 432\(e\)\(3\)\(B\)](#).

Questions

1. How much can an individual contribute to a political candidate?
2. [Click here to learn more about PACs](#). How much can an individual contribute to a PAC?
3. What is the total amount an individual may give every two years?

4. How much can a PAC give directly to a candidate?

Step 3 - How much do candidates spend?

1. Access the webpage at <http://www.opensecrets.org/pres08/totals.php?cycle=2008>. What do you notice about the amount of money contributed to and spent by presidential candidates in the last thirty years?
2. Access <http://www.opensecrets.org/pres08/expenditures.php?cycle=2008>. At the top is a pie graph offering a break-down of the money spent by presidential campaigns in 2008. Examine the graph, then scroll down to the table below. What were the top three expenses of political campaigns?

Step 4 - How much do candidates receive in contributions?

1. Access <http://www.opensecrets.org/pres08/index.php?cycle=2008>. This page charts the amounts raised by the campaigns of the six candidates in the general presidential election of 2008.
 - a. How much did Obama raise? How much McCain raise? Do you think there's any connection between Obama's victory and the amount of money he was able to receive from donors?
 - b. In general, how much did other candidates receive in comparison to the Democratic and Republican candidates?

Step 5 - Who contributes to political campaigns?

1. Access the webpage at <http://www.opensecrets.org/pres08/donordems.php?cycle=2008>. This page breaks down contributions to presidential candidates by dollar amount. In the drop-down menu, click on "Number of \$200 + Contributors," "Number of \$2,300 + Contributors" and "Number of \$4,600 + Contributors." What do you notice? Who received a higher number of smaller (\$200) donations? Larger donations?
2. Go to <http://www.opensecrets.org/pres08/sectors.php?cycle=2008>, which breaks down contributions – from PACs and individual donors – by economic sector.
 - a. Begin with "Agribusiness." First, click on the "Agribusiness" link just above the graph. Then click on the "Background" tab. This will take you to <http://www.opensecrets.org/industries/background.php?cycle=2008&ind=A>, which is a description of the sector. What kinds of businesses make up this sector?
 - b. Return to the "Agribusiness Sector Totals to Candidates" page. What political party did this sector favor? What candidate was favored by this sector? How much did they contribute to that candidate?
 - c. In the pull-down menu, click on "Finance/Insurance/Real Estate." First, click on the "Finance/Insurance/Real Estate" link just above the graph. Then click on the "Background" tab. This will take you to <http://www.opensecrets.org/industries/background.php?cycle=2008&ind=F>, which is a description of the sector. What kinds of businesses make up this sector?
 - d. Return to the "Finance/Insurance/Real Estate" page. What political party did this sector favor? What candidate was favored by this sector? How much did they contribute to that candidate?
 - e. In the pull-down menu, click on "Labor." The labor sector is composed of unions of workers like the AFL-CIO (the American Federation of Laborers). What political party did

this sector favor? How much did they contribute to Barack Obama? To John McCain? Why do you think there is such a big difference?

f. Who are these “bundlers”? Click on <http://www.opensecrets.org/pres08/bundlers.php?id=N00006424> and <http://www.opensecrets.org/pres08/bundlers.php?id=N00009638> to compare the amounts of money Obama and McCain received from “bundlers.” Who received more money from “bundlers”? How much did lobbyists bundle in contributions to John McCain? Obama?

g. Political Action Committees (PAC). Click on <http://www.opensecrets.org/pacs/toppacs.php?Type=C&cycle=2008> to find out how much money was donated by PACs to candidates in 2008. Compare and contrast contributions to Democrats and Republicans.

Step 6 - The Legal Framework (Part I)

1. The **Federal Election Campaign Act (FECA)**, begun in 1971, was strengthened in 1974 following the Watergate Scandal involving Richard M. Nixon. This law has been amended several times since. The law established a new federal agency, the **Federal Elections Commission (FEC)** (follow [this link](#) and read about the Federal Elections Commission). It also established certain restrictions on campaign financing. [Click here](#) to view the limitations as they currently exist.
 - a. What does the FEC do? How is membership in the commission determined?
 - b. Describe the disclosure rules established by FECA.
 - c. Describe the kinds of contributions and expenditures that are prohibited by FECA.
 - d. How does FECA limit the campaign activities undertaken by corporations and unions? What do you think is the purpose of these limitations?
2. *Buckley v. Valeo* (1976) ruled on the constitutionality of the Federal Election Campaign Act. Read the [summary of the case in Oyez.org](#). What was the constitutional question? How did the Court rule? How did the Court distinguish between campaign contributions and campaign spending?

Step 7 - "Issue Advocacy" (An Introduction)

1. The following commercials were broadcast during the last several presidential campaigns. However, they were not paid for by either of the major party candidates, but rather by other organizations established to influence politics. Watch the videos. Are they different from the examples of the campaign ads you viewed recently?
 - ["Child's Play" \(2004\) by Moveon.org](#)
 - ["Any Questions?" \(2004\) by Swiftboat Veterans for Truth](#)
 - ["Life: Imagine the Potential" \(2008\) by CatholicVote.com](#)
 - ["Born Alive" \(2008\) by BornAliveTruth.org](#)

Campaign Advertisement (1/19/10)

Step 1 - Introduction

Examine the following famous television campaign advertisements:

- ["Peace, Little Girl" \(a.k.a. "Daisy"\) \(Lyndon B. Johnson campaign, 1964\)](#)
- ["Morning in America" \(Ronald Reagan campaign, 1984\)](#)
- [William Horton Ad \(1988\)](#)

For each of the two ads, answer the following questions: Describe what you see in the

advertisement. What kind of music (if any) is being played? What else did you notice? What is the mood of the advertisement? How is that mood set? Is the advertisement effective? Why or why not?

Step 2 - Types of Campaign Ads

Following are a few strategies used by producers of campaign ads. Use the [A Guide to Campaign Advertisements](#) worksheet to write a definition for each type of ad and identify techniques used. Then watch each of the examples and analyze for effectiveness.

Testimonial - endorsements from celebrities and other well-known people. Example: Michael Jordan's endorsement of Bill Bradley for President; Senator Warner's endorsement of George Allen for Senate; any local celebrity or well known community leader's public endorsement of a candidate for office. **Videos:** [Jordan](#) | [Mattingly](#) | [Huckabee](#) | [McCaskill](#)

Mudslinging - often referred to as "attack ads," the TV, radio and print advertisements make assertions about the opponent in a variety of unflattering ways. Name-calling and/or groundless assertions about one candidate by his/her opponent. This advertising strategy is used by a candidate primarily to create a negative impression of one's opponent. This strategy may backfire and create a negative impression of the candidate who is responsible for the creation of the negative ad if used excessively, or in a manner that is perceived as false, deceptive, "tasteless" or "going too far."

Videos: [Mikulski](#) | [Gingrich](#) | [Anti-Kerry](#) | [Bush \(Note: Can you spot the subliminal message?\)](#)

Transfer - Use of popular symbols to create a positive connotation for the candidate or the use of negative or controversial symbols to create a negative connotation of one's opponent. **Example:** Positive: Ads that feature pleasant music, beautiful outdoor country or rural scenery, happy families, playful children, successful teams or businesses etc. Negative: Talking about an opponent's record with ominous music in the background, using black and white photos, visually shocking images such as oil spills, home foreclosure, car accidents, prison bars etc. Images of one's opponent in slow motion causing the eye's to blink slowly, thereby giving the impression of disinterest, laziness and/or intoxication. **Videos:** [Newport Cigarette Ad](#) | [Pepsi Ad](#) | [Fife](#) | [Forbes](#) | [Original Apple "1984" Ad](#) and [Obama "1984" Ad](#)

Card stacking - Use of statistics, often in a one-sided manner; the omission of information that is crucial to drawing an informed and balanced conclusion. **Example:** 95% of citizens surveyed support Mrs. Jones for City Council; "Time after time, my opponent voted against legislation that would have supported new jobs in our community." **Videos:** [Hardee's Ad](#) | [Macintosh Ad](#) | [Bumbers](#) | [White](#)

Plain Folks - An attempt by a candidate to appeal to the average voter as just "one of the people." **Example:** Lamar Alexander in 1996 wearing his trademark red and black-checked shirt. Any candidate ad where he or she appears with no jacket or suit, shirtsleeves rolled up and/or wearing a sweater. Usually doing everyday task such as shopping at the supermarket or walking down a street or "visiting" with neighbors. Another technique that fits this category is one where the candidate does not appear in the ad, but "average" people on the street stop to talk about the candidate. The negative version of this would be "man on the street" interviews where the interviewees are critical of the opponent. **Videos:** [Lehey](#) | [Mikulski](#) | [Snowe](#) | [Brown](#)

Glittering Generalities - Usually the first type of ad used in a campaign, these spots are designed to introduce a candidate to the voters. Needless to say, like any introduction, these types of ads are almost always very positive. Designed to leave the viewer with a very good first impression. This ad type uses very vague words and phrases that have a positive effect on the viewer and appeal to a variety of interests. **Example:** Ads use images and phrases that are virtually impossible not to like such as: "Working for your family," "Building a Bridge To The Future," "Saving Our Schools" "Improving America" "Saving Social Security" "Building One America" etc. The images are usually of a perfect world with happy families and children in pleasant surroundings on sunny days with blue skies or images of the candidate hard at work, sleeves rolled up, actively engaged in conversation

with people in a "responsible" business environment. **Videos:** [McDonald's commercial](#) | [Castle](#) | [Kennedy](#) | [McCain](#)

Bandwagon - Similar to card stacking, this is an attempt to convey a sense of momentum and to generate a positive "everybody's doing it so you should too" mentality. **Example:** Voice-overs in commercials stating "Polls show Robert Stone leading in the race for the United States Senate." Large groups of people greeting a candidate or carrying signs in support. Group testimonials and/or corporate endorsements such as: "Endorsed by the National Association of Retired Persons," or "Endorsed by the National Education Association." **Videos:** [McDonald's ad](#) | [Eisenhower](#)

Contrast Ad - Juxtaposing positive images of one's candidacy with negative images of the opponent in the same ad. **Example:** Split screens with Hillary Clinton in color moving at regular speed and her opponent Rick Lazio in black and white moving in slow motion. Images of two candidates on screen as a voice over denounces the opponent followed by a red X appearing over the opponent's face. **Videos:** [McKernan](#) | [Paulas](#)

Step 3

With a partner, access the [Stanford University Political Communication Lab website](#) and examine at least 5 ads from 2008 AND other election years (navigate using the menu on the left). Take notes, using the questions below as a guide. Each student should have a set of notes on a separate sheet of paper to be turned in.

- Summarize the ad.
- Does the ad fit one of the categories above?
- Describe the language and tone of the ad(s). Is the narrator a male, female, or the candidate? How do language and tone shape the overall message?
- How do words, images, color, music, camera angles, lighting, people, and symbols contribute to the message of the ad? Do you think they are effective?
- What is the goal of each ad? What is the candidate trying to accomplish with his or her message?
- Did this ad influence you? Did you learn from it? How did it appeal to you? How would you change it to make it more effective?

Federalism (1/12/10)

On a separate piece of paper (you may also work on a word processor if you prefer), write or type the answers to the questions below. Be sure to label each of the questions.

I. The Results of Federalism, Part I - States as "Laboratories"

"It is one of the happy incidents of the federal system," Justice Louis D. Brandeis wrote in 1932, "that a single courageous state may, if its citizens choose, serve as a laboratory; and try novel social and economic experiments without risk to the rest of the country." Following are examples of pioneering and at times inventive actions taken by state governments - with plenty of support as well as opposition from state residents - all

- Universal Health Insurance:** Describe the Massachusetts health care reform law of 2006.
- Higher Education:** What is the HOPE scholarship? How does it work?
- Same-Sex Marriage:** Same-sex marriage has become legal in a handful of states, including [Massachusetts \(November, 2003\)](#), [Connecticut \(October, 2008\)](#), and [Vermont \(April, 2009\)](#). Skim the three news stories and discuss the differences between the methods by which same-sex was legalized in these states.
- Environmental Laws:** Read [this recent editorial](#) from the *New York Times*. What is the author urging Congress to do?

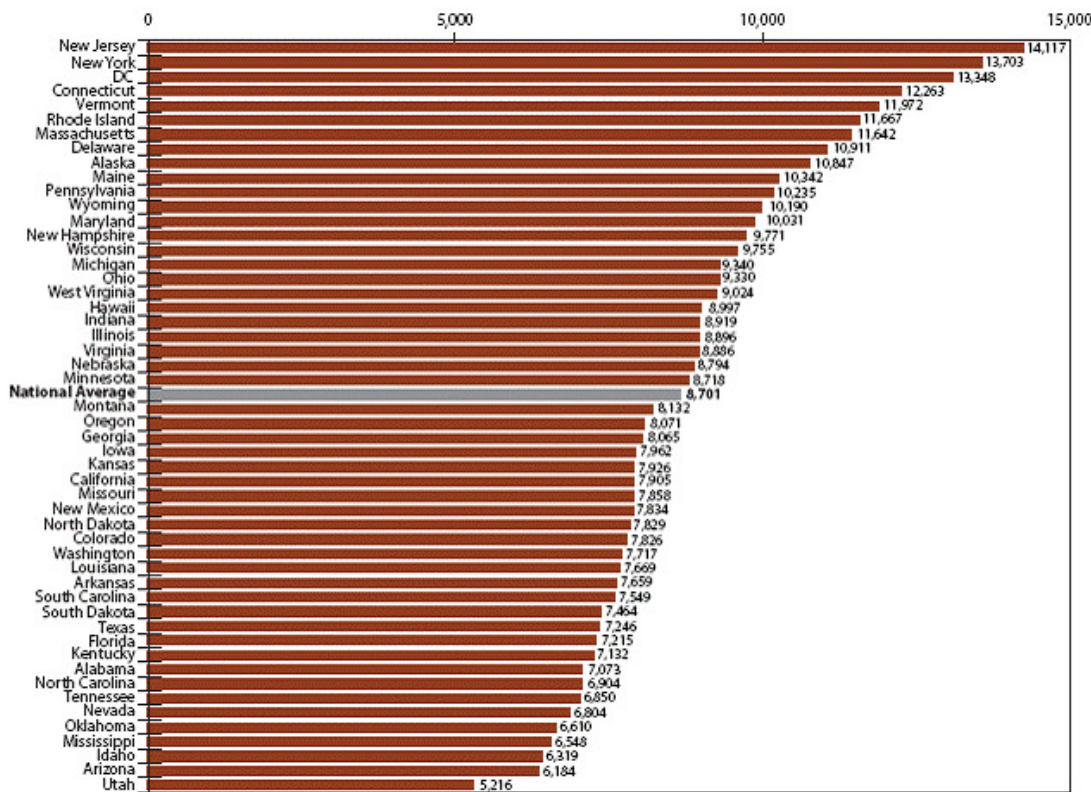
II. The Results of Federalism, Part II - Differences Between States

A) Education: As you can see from [this graph](#), relatively little money for public education comes from the federal government on average. Most funding for public schools comes from state and local governments. [Click here](#) for a table demonstrating the differences between the states with respect to the funding formula. 1) In which state is local government responsible for the largest share of spending on public education? The smallest share? How does Georgia compare to the national average?

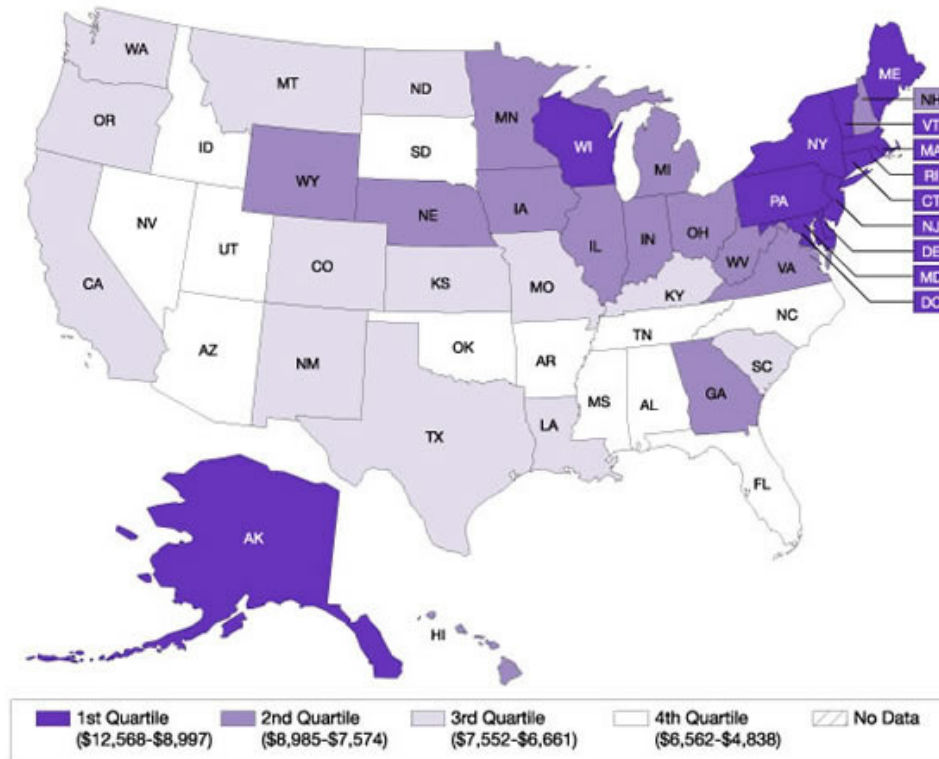
Money from local governments comes in large part from property taxes. The amount a family owes in property taxes is calculated as a percentage of the value of their home. It therefore follows that more affluent school districts collect more in property taxes and thus have more local money to spend on education.

Examine the figures below. 2) What states spend more on education? Do some regions spend more than others?

FIGURE 1. STATE-BY-STATE TOTAL CURRENT EXPENDITURES PER PUPIL, 2004-2005



SOURCE: Snyder, Dillow, and Hoffman (2008).



B) Criminal Law: Making and enforcing laws can be troublesome under federalism. Different penalties for the same crime can make it difficult to gauge the consequences of one's behavior across states. Access a [map of differing state laws regarding marijuana possession](#), published by an organization working toward legalization of marijuana. 1) Examine the marijuana laws of at least five states and jot down what you find. 2) Discuss the differences between these laws. What do you think accounts for these differences? 3) What might be the result of criminal laws that vary widely from state to state?

C) Variations in Citizenship Rights: Federalism often permits variations in citizenship rights from state to state. For example, until the passage of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, African Americans were subjected to legal discrimination in southern states. Before the ratification of the 19th amendment in 1920 guaranteeing women the right to vote, many states had passed laws permitting women's suffrage.

Gay Americans today do not have the same rights in all localities of the United States. Many states have passed "defense of marriage" laws or amendments to their constitutions restricting state governments from allowing same-sex marriages and/or "civil unions" (partnerships that carry much of the same legal recognition as marriage). Access this [map detailing marriage rights in the different states](#). Click on some of the states on the map. 1) How do gay rights differ among those states?

III. The Results of Federalism, Part III - DOMA and the Federal Marriage Amendment

Article IV, Section 1 of the Constitution provides for "Full Faith and Credit" among the states, meaning that is normally expected to honor the "public Acts, Records, and Proceedings" of every other state. So, for example, if two people are married in Texas - marriage being regulated by state law - Missouri must recognize that marriage even though the couple was not married under Missouri law.

In 1996, Congress passed, and President Bill Clinton signed, the **Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA)**, which declared that gay couples married in states that allowed same-sex marriage would not be eligible for the federal benefits, such as Medicare and Social Security, normally available to spouses. States would also *not* have to recognize a same-sex marriage even if were

legal in another state. The Supreme Court has yet to decide whether the law violates the "full faith and credit" clause of the Constitution.

In 2004, President George W. Bush threw his support behind the proposed **Federal Marriage Amendment (FMA)** to the U.S. Constitution. The amendment, which has *not* passed the first step in the amendment process, would limit marriage in the United States to unions of one man and one woman. Read [this 2004 speech by Bush](#) describing his support of the amendment. a) What does Bush mean when he condemns the work of "activist judges"? b) Why is the Federal Marriage Amendment needed, in his opinion? c) Given what you know about conservatives' views of the balance between federal and state power, why is Bush's stance surprising?

The PBS Online NewsHour asked various experts "What role - either through laws or constitutional amendments - could the federal government play in defining marriage and civil unions?" Read *only* the [responses to this question](#) by Brad Sears, Andrew Koppelman, Thomas Kohler, and Gary Buseck. d) What are their opinions of DOMA and the FMA?

Read this [ABC news blog report](#) from the 2008 presidential campaign describing the differences of opinion between Republican presidential nominee John McCain and his running mate, Sarah Palin, over the issue of a federal marriage amendment. e) Why does the blogger say that John McCain opposes a federal anti-gay marriage amendment despite being against same-sex marriage? f) Why does the blogger suggest that Palin's reasoning for her support for a federal marriage amendment is contradicted by her stance on *Roe v. Wade*?

g) Does the federal government have the power to make a uniform marriage law that applies to all the states? Should it wield that power? What are arguments for and against allowing the states to make that decision for themselves?

The Federal Judicial System - The Nuts and Bolts (12/1/09)

In this activity, you will learn/review basic information about the federal judicial system. *In your own words*, write the answers to the questions below on a separate sheet of paper with your name on it.

Begin with "[Understanding the Federal Courts](#)," a page on the official web site of the federal court system. Follow the links in the top right from "The Constitution and the Federal Judiciary" through "United States Judges." Also access this description of the [Federal Court of Appeals](#) and the [Supreme Court](#) in the GA Tech Federal Court Concepts site, as well as [this federal judicial system map](#) in the Federal Judicial Center website. Finally, read this [description of Supreme Court procedures](#).

1. How does the Constitution promote an independent judiciary?
2. In what section of the Constitution is the federal judicial system described? What portions of the system are explicitly established by the Constitution? What about the rest of the system?
3. How do a) Congress and b) the executive branch impact the judicial system?
4. Describe the structure of the federal judicial system and the responsibilities of its different parts.
5. "Jurisdiction" is the right or authority of a court to hear a certain kind of case. Describe the jurisdiction of the federal court system, generally.
6. "Original jurisdiction" is the right to hear a case for the first time, while "appellate jurisdiction" is the power of a court to review decisions and change outcomes of decisions of lower courts. Which levels of the federal judicial system have original jurisdiction? Appellate? Both? Explain.
7. Why are Federal Courts of Appeal known as "circuit courts"?
8. If you commit a federal crime in Roswell, in which federal district court would your case be heard? If you were convicted and wished to appeal, which federal court of appeals would hear your case?
9. The Constitution establishes a dual court system consisting of a federal and state courts. How does the federal court system compare to the state system?
10. Complete the [flow chart](#) on the last page of this handout and print it out.

The White House and the Federal Bureaucracy (11/16/09 - 11/19/09)

Step #1: In your groups, follow the instructions on [this handout](#) to prepare a presentation to the class about your assigned federal bureaucratic entity. Some resources you might use include:

- The databases available through the [AHS Media Center website](#), especially E-Library and the Gale Virtual Reference Library.
- Individual websites at "[Government Departments and Agencies](#)" (USA.gov).

The Executive Office of the President

- [The White House Office](#) (Chief of Staff, Communications Director, Press Secretary, Director of Speech Writing, Office of Political Affairs)
- [Office of Management and Budget](#) (OMB)
- [Office of National Drug Control Policy](#)
- [Council of Economic Advisers](#)
- [National Security Council](#) (NSC)

The Cabinet

- [Department of Defense](#)
- [Department of State](#)
- [Department of Justice](#)
- [Department of Homeland Security](#)
- [Department of Housing and Urban Development](#) (HUD)
- [Department of Health and Human Services](#)

Independent Agencies

- [Central Intelligence Agency](#) (CIA)
- Social Security Administration (SSA)
- [Equal Opportunity Employment Commission](#) (EOEC)
- [National Endowment for the Arts](#) (NEA)
- National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH)
- [National Science Foundation](#) (NSF)

Regulatory Boards and Commissions

- [Federal Communications Commission](#) (FCC)
- [Food and Drug Administration](#) (FDA)
- [Securities and Exchange Commission](#) (SEC)

Government Corporations

- Federal Crop Insurance Corporation
- [Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation](#) (FDIC)
- National Railroad Passenger Corporation (Amtrak)
- [United States Postal Service](#) (USPS)

Step #2: Use [this worksheet](#) to explore the federal bureaucracy.

Executive Orders (11/12/09)

1) Read a [description of executive orders here](#).

- What are executive orders? How are they different from acts of Congress?
- Where does the president derive his or her authority to issue executive orders?

2) Go to the [American Presidency Project website](#) to access the texts of the following significant executive orders:

- Executive Order 9066 (Franklin D. Roosevelt, 1942)
- Executive Order 9981 (Harry Truman, 1948)
- Executive Order 11246 (Lyndon B. Johnson, 1965)
- Executive Order 1305 (Barack Obama, 2009)

For each of the executive orders above, answer the following questions:

- What does the executive order do?
- In order to address potential controversy, many executive orders describe the source of the president's power to issue that particular order. Do these executive orders do this? Explain.

3) Choose any five executive orders from the [American Presidency Project website](#). Describe each of the orders. How significant is each one in comparison to those above?

4) Read about President Truman's [Executive Order 10340 and the Youngstown Sheet and Tube Co. v. Sawyer case](#).

- What actions did the executive order authorize? Why?
- What was the Supreme Court's decision in the case?
- How does this case demonstrate "how strong Presidents can try to expand the powers of the office" and "the Supreme Court can act to preserve the separation of powers inherent in the U.S. constitutional system"?

5) Begin reading the selection from Mayer, *With the Stroke of a Pen* (hard copy distributed earlier this week). Finish for Monday.

"Going Public" - The President's Bully Pulpit (11/11/09)

1) Tour the official [White House website](#), including the ["Issues" section](#). What appears to be the purpose of the website? How does the website content support the President's role as legislator in chief? How does it support the President's "permanent campaign"? Give specific examples to support your answer.

2) Visit the *LA Times* [POTUS Tracker](#) website. This is a list of the president's daily activities, organized by issue topic. Use the filters on the left to isolate "Health Care." The largest box is July, which was the President's busiest with respect to health care legislation. Click on the month of July. Describe the different kinds of activities in which the President was engaged in the month of July with respect to health care?

3) Click here to see the [results of a Whitehouse.gov search for the words "health care."](#) On the right, you can filter the results by type. Explore the results by clicking on different types. Be sure to look especially at the results under "Video/Audio" and watch a few minutes of one or two videos. What are the different ways that the President delivers his message?

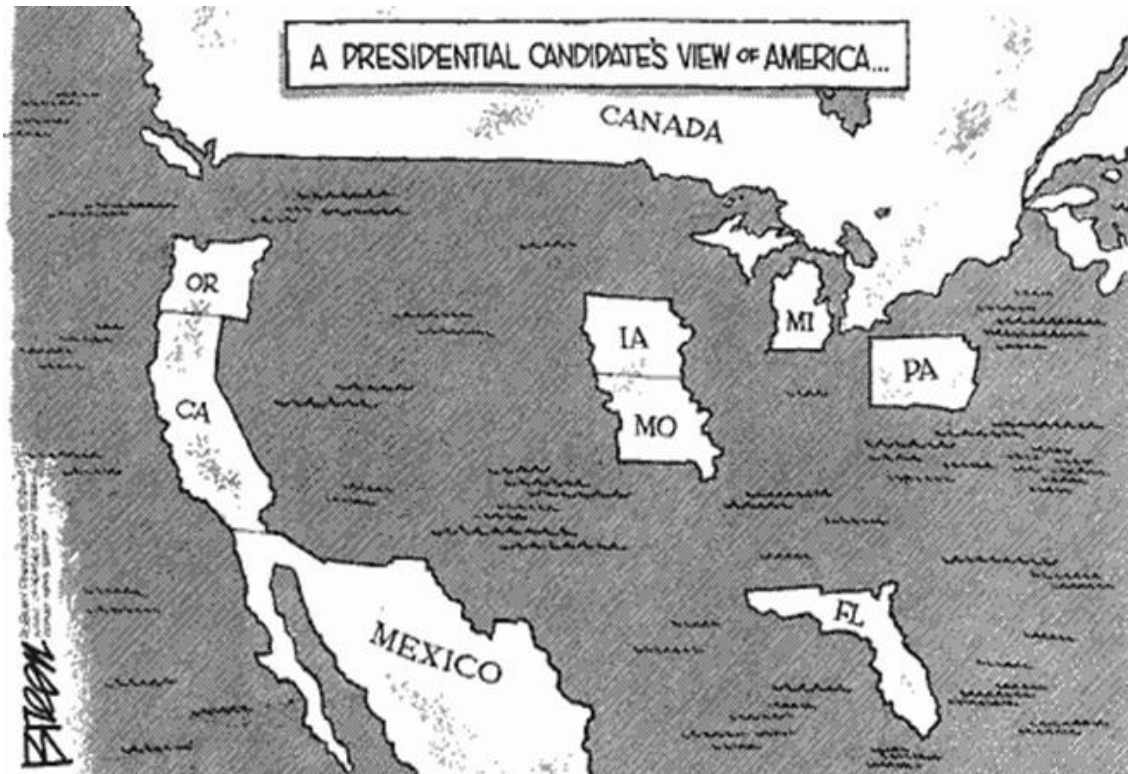
4) Visit the [Health Insurance Reform Reality Check](#) and the [White House Blog](#) sites on the [Whitehouse.gov](#) site. Describe some of the features of the site. How is the President using new media to do the old work of the bully pulpit?

5) If time permits, view part of [Obama's speech to Congress in February, 2009](#). What is the purpose of the speech?

The Electoral College (10/26/09)

Answer the questions on [this handout](#) as you follow the steps below.

Step 1: Examine the political cartoon below and answer the questions on the worksheet.



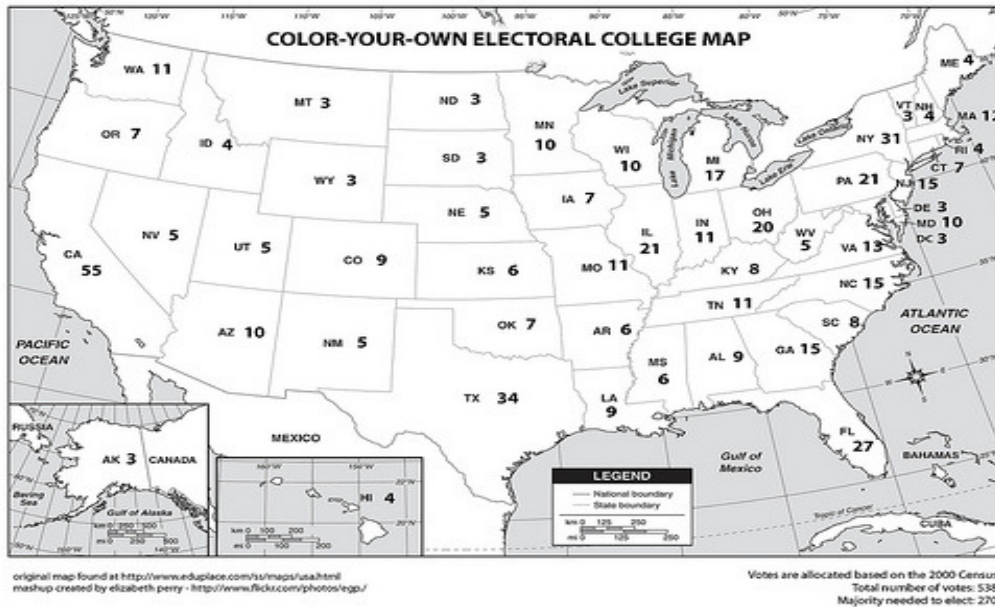
Step 2 : Read the "[Electoral College Nuts and Bolts](#)" and answer the questions on the handout.

Step 3: Access [this webpage](#) containing information about how electors are chosen in each state. Be sure to scroll down to the bottom and read the information contained there.

Step 4 : [Access the "Faithless Nine" page](#) and answer the questions on the worksheet.

Step 5: Read article on the Dept. of State website, "[When the Electoral Vote and the Popular Vote Differ](#)" and answer the questions on the worksheet.

Step 6: Examine the map below. Then answer the questions that follow.



- How many possible electoral votes are there?
- How many electoral votes are needed in order to win a presidential election?
- Name the three states with the greatest number of electoral votes.
- Name the three states with the least number of electoral votes.
- What is the fewest number of states necessary to win an election (you might have to use a calculator)?

Step 7: Access the [Presidential Election State Voting Trends](#) web page, then answer the questions below.



- According to the numbers, which regions tend to vote Democratic?
- According to the numbers, which regions tend to vote Republican?
- According to the numbers, which regions tend to be "toss-ups" or "swing states" or "battleground states"?
- If you were John McCain in 2008, how would you have used this information when campaigning? Which regions would you try to focus on? Why?
- If you were Barack Obama, how would you have used this information in 2008? Which regions would you try to focus on? Why?

Have a look at [this map of swing states in 2008](#). Why are they considered swing states?

Step 8: Access the [Federal Representation 2002 - 2010](#) page. Note that it is sortable.

- In which state (not D.C.) does a single vote in the presidential election (and the Senate) count the most?
The least?
- How much does your vote count in Georgia compared to the largest and the smallest states?
- Is this unfair?

Step 9: Examine the electoral maps on [this web page](#). What are these maps attempting to show?

The Structure of Congress (10/13/09)

- [House of Representatives Leadership Information \(Office of the Clerk\)](#)
 - [Office of the Speaker of the House \(click on "About Nancy Pelosi"\)](#)
 - [Office of the Majority Leader \(click on "About the Leader"\)](#)
 - [House Majority Whip \(click on "About the Whip"\)](#)
 - [Senate Leadership](#)
 - [Senate Organizational Chart](#)
 - [Officers and Staff of the Senate](#)
 - [Senate Majority and Minority Leaders and Party Whips](#)
-

The Advantage of Incumbency - Role of Redistricting (10/2/09)

Step 1: Examine [the page containing maps of Congressional districts](#).

- What are Congressional districts?
- How many districts does Georgia have?
- In which district is Alpharetta in?
- What is unusual about the shape of the districts in California, North Carolina and Illinois?
- What do you think accounts for these shapes?

Step 2: Read "[The Redistricting Game: Background and Instructions.](#)"

- What is apportionment?
- What is reapportionment or redistricting, and how often is it done?
- What are the rules governing redistricting, and who has defined these rules?
- Who typically oversees the process of redistricting?
- What is partisan gerrymandering?

Step 3: Play [Mission 2 of the Redistricting Game](#).

Members of Congress - Who are They? (9/29/09)

Step 1: Answer the questions [in this survey](#). Share your answers with your partner.

Step 2: Use [this table](#) to gather information about the demographics of Congress. Follow the steps below to access the data you will need. For a good statistical sample, you should analyze at least 10-12 Representatives and 8-10 Senators.

1. Access the website, [Who Runs Gov](#). At random, access the profiles of members of the House of Representatives and the Senate. You can also access the Project Vote Smart website for similar information.
2. Go to the website, [Open Secrets](#). Click on the Congressperson for whom you gathered data in step 1, click on "Other Data," and scroll down for personal finance information.

How do Congressional demographics compare to the country at large? In other words, how representative is Congress? Once you have completed your chart, you can check some of your data by [accessing this page](#).

Is it necessary for representatives to share demographic backgrounds with their constituents?

Step 3: Examine the following data:

1. [Timeline of female U.S. Senators](#) (scroll down to the bottom of the page)
2. [Women in the House of Representatives](#)

3. [Women in the House of Representatives \(by party\)](#)
4. [Black Members in Congress](#) (scroll down to pages CRS-55 to CRS61)
5. [Map of Black-Americans Representatives and Senators by State](#)

When did significant numbers of women begin to serve in Congress? What do you think accounts for the timing? Why is 1992 often known as the "Year of the Woman" in national politics? Why are many more women elected as Democrats than Republicans?

How has African American representation changed over time? When did significant numbers of African Americans begin to serve in Congress? What do you think accounts for the timing?

Why do you think there are more minority and women Representatives than Senators?

Step 4: Read the article, "[Not all Lawmakers are Millionaires.](#)"

Step 5 : Access the website of the [Congressional Black Caucus](#) and listen to or read the transcript of the National Public Radio segment, "[Black Congressional Leaders Address Health Care, Economy.](#)" Consider the questions below:

- What is the Congressional Black Caucus?
- When was the organization founded?
- How large is the organization?
- What is the mission of the Black Caucus?
- What is the current political state of the Black Caucus?

Forms of Government Activity (9/2/09)

Choose two regions of the world (Western Europe, Eastern Europe, Central America, South America, the Caribbean, North Africa, Sub-Saharan Africa, South and Central Asia, Southeast Asia, East Asia, the Middle East). For each region, choose 5-6 countries close to each other. Use the [CIA World Factbook](#) to determine each government's political system and the Heritage Foundation's [Index of Economic Freedom](#) to determine its economic system. On a sheet of paper to be turned in write down your findings. Be sure to describe in detail how you determined the nature of each country's political and economic system. In other words, what details would you point to in support of your determination? Did you notice mostly differences or similarities between the countries within each region you examined? Explain.



Important Links

- [AP Government Classroom Blog](#)
- [College Board AP Government and Politics Page](#)
- [Alpharetta High School Web Page](#)
- [Mr. Fernandez Home Page](#)