

How Groups Try to Shape Policy

- **Lobbying:** Professional lobbyists attempt to persuade lawmakers to act on behalf of their group.
- The more helpful a lobbyist is, the more power he or she has with a politician.
- Lobbyists serve as policy experts in their interest area, act as consultants who advise legislators on how to approach policy issues and debates, mobilize support for politicians during reelection, and suggest innovative policy ideas.

- **Electioneering:** Interest groups endorse a candidate who supports their interests and work to get that candidate elected.
- The groups encourage people to vote for the candidate and help finance the candidate's campaign through **PACs**.
- Congressional candidates have become largely dependent on PAC money, and most PAC money goes to **incumbents** rather than challengers.
- **Litigation:** Interest groups use lawsuits to change policies that have already gone through the legislative process.
- Even the threat of a lawsuit may be enough to influence policymaking.
- Groups can file *amicus curiae* **briefs** to state their side in a court case and to assess the consequences of the decisions the court might make.
- Groups can also file **class action lawsuits**—suits on behalf of a larger group in the electorate.
- **Mobilizing public opinion:** Interest groups try to influence the public because they know that politicians' careers depend on public opinion.
- Groups cultivate a positive image of themselves in the eyes of the public and they encourage public participation to advance interests from the point of view of the constituency.