

SS.7.C.2.10

Examine the impact of media, individuals, and interest groups on monitoring and influencing government.

SS.7.C.2.10 Benchmark Clarification 4: Students will identify and evaluate methods of influencing and/or monitoring the government.

There are several different methods that individuals, the **media**, and **interest groups** use to influence and/or monitor the government. Individuals can use their right to vote to change the government. The media can act as a **watchdog** to investigate and report on the government. Interest groups can hold meetings and write petitions to try to influence the government. All of these people and groups are important members of a democratic society. They keep an eye on the government and hold its leaders accountable for what they do.

It is hard to know how effective each method is. This is because individuals, the media, and interest groups affect each other in their efforts to monitor and influence the government. The media may focus their attention on a specific issue or campaign, which will attract public attention and may influence how people vote. Interest groups may spend money on an expensive public information campaign that also may influence how people vote and whether they will contribute money to the interest group.

Government leaders usually pay more attention to groups with a higher voting rate than they do to people who don't vote often. Also, interest groups that spend a lot of money through their **political action committees** usually have a strong influence on who gets elected.

interest group – a group of people who are concerned with a particular issue and who try to influence legislators to act in their favor, also known as a special interest group

media - plural form of the word “medium,” refers to various means of communication. For example, television, radio, newspapers and the Internet (web) are different types of media. The term can also be used to describe news organizations as a whole group.

political action committee - an independent political organization that promotes the cause of a particular interest group, usually through raising money and campaigning to elect candidates who support the group's views

watchdog - a person or group who acts as a protector or guardian



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