

**17.20: Introduction to the American Political Process**  
**Paper Assignment #3**  
**Due 11:00 AM on May 11<sup>th</sup>**

For this assignment, you should return to the piece of legislation you covered for the first paper assignment. For this 6 to 8 page paper I would like you examine the political environment surrounding the bill. Describe which political interests are involved in the consideration of the bill and detail the patterns of political mobilization surrounding your chosen piece of legislation. Which interest groups and social movements are involved in the political process? Have groups that you might think would be involved in the process not become involved? What interests are at the policymaking table, and which are shunted aside? What are the consequences of the types of groups that are involved in the policy process for the shape of public policy?

Some useful questions to consider as you describe the interests surrounding the bill might be:

- Return to your first paper. Where did your legislation come from? Who proposed the bill? What interest groups and other political actors were involved in its creation?
- Has similar legislation been considered before? Which interest groups supported that legislation? Which groups opposed the legislation? Do you expect to see similar patterns of support? Why or why not?
- Take a look at congressional hearings on your bill. Who is testifying? Are particular groups being called before Congress? What kinds of information are they providing to the Members of Congress? Look also at the legislative markup (if appropriate). What happened in the committee?

If you were not happy with the bill you chose for the first paper, you may change your bill for this third paper. Remember, however, that you will be taking on a great deal more work if you switch you bill – you will need to learn about the background of your issue and the particulars of the legislation.

**Some helpful links for information concerning this paper:**

1. Thomas: Legislative information on the Internet

<http://thomas.loc.gov/>

2. Congressional Quarterly (note: there are limits on the number of simultaneous users allowed, so you might have trouble getting access if others are trying to log on at the same time)

Access through VERA database – do a search for the journal “CQ”

3. For resources concerning the actions of lobbyists (which may or may not be helpful):

<http://www.lobbysearch.com/>

4. Washington Post Politics website

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/politics/>

5. The National Journal website

<http://nationaljournal.com/>

6. Additional links can be found on the Open Courseware website of Professor Stewart's "Congress and the American Political System" Course.

<http://ocw.mit.edu/OcwWeb/Political-Science/17-251Congress-and-the-American-Political-System-IFall2000/RelatedResources/index.htm>