POL.USC10-test US Political Parties, Pressure Groups and Campaign Finance: Test Pack

Total Marks

EDEXCEL 9PL0 · about 15 minutes

Name: _____ Date: ____ / ____ / _____

Answer ALL questions. Short answer questions may be answered in note form unless a full sentence is requested. For levels-marked questions, write a well-structured, developed response using accurate political knowledge, named examples and precise terminology. Time guidance: 75 minutes for the whole pack.

1 Define a Political Action Committee (PAC) in the context of US campaign finance and party politics.

(Total for Question 1 is 1 mark)

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2 Give two legally distinct types of Political Action Committees used in US elections, naming each type.

(Total for Question 2 is 2 marks)

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3 State the year and the United States Supreme Court case that loosened restrictions on independent political spending by corporations and unions.

(Total for Question 3 is 1 mark)

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4 Explain the term 'dark money' as used in discussions of US campaign finance and give one consequence for transparency.

(Total for Question 4 is 4 marks)

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5 State two major internal factions within the contemporary US Republican Party and give one policy stance for each faction named.

(a) State one faction within the Republican Party and a policy stance associated with it. **(2)**

(b) State a second faction within the Republican Party and a policy stance associated with it. **(2)**

(Total for Question 5 is 4 marks)

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6 Explain two methods US interest groups use to influence public policy beyond direct donations, naming each method and its mechanism. Use examples where appropriate.

(a) Explain lobbying by professional lobbyists as a method of influence and its mechanism. **(2)**

(b) Explain grassroots mobilisation and media campaigning as a method of influence and its mechanism. **(2)**

(Total for Question 6 is 4 marks)

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Mark scheme · POL.USC10-test US Political Parties, Pressure Groups and Campaign Finance: Test Pack

Question 1

a concise definition identifying a PAC as an organisation that pools campaign contributions to donate to candidates, parties or other committees **B1**

Answer: A PAC is an organisation that pools contributions from members or donors to make donations to political candidates, parties or other political committees, subject to legal contribution limits.

Question 2

names one valid type, e.g. 'connected PAC' or 'leadership PAC' cao **B1**

names a second valid type, e.g. 'non-connected PAC' or 'super PAC' cao **B1**

Answer: Any two of: connected PAC; non-connected PAC; leadership PAC; Super PAC.

Question 3

Citizens United v Federal Election Commission, 2010 cao **B1**

Answer: Citizens United v FEC, 2010.

Question 4

defines 'dark money' as political spending by groups that do not disclose their donors **B1**

identifies a typical vehicle, e.g. certain nonprofit organisations such as 501(c)(4) social welfare groups **B1**

states a consequence for transparency, e.g. voters and regulators cannot trace funding sources **B1**

further development of consequence, e.g. it can hide corporate or foreign influence and weaken accountability **B1**

Answer: Dark money refers to political spending by organisations, often 501(c)(4) nonprofits, that are not required to disclose their donors; this reduces transparency because voters and regulators cannot trace who is funding adverts or campaigns, which can allow corporate, wealthy individual or foreign-linked influence to be hidden and weaken public accountability.

Question 5

(a) names one faction, e.g. fiscal conservatives/establishment conservatives/Trump-aligned populists/evangelical social conservatives **B1**

(a) gives a correct policy stance associated with that faction, e.g. fiscal conservatives favour tax cuts and deregulation **B1**

(a) Answer: Example: fiscal conservatives, who favour lower taxes, deregulation and reduced public spending; or Trump-aligned populists, who favour restrictive immigration policy and trade scepticism.

(b) names a second faction distinct from the first **B1**

(b) gives a correct policy stance associated with that faction **B1**

(b) Answer: Example: evangelical social conservatives, who prioritise socially conservative policies such as opposition to abortion and support for religious liberty measures.

Question 6

(a) identifies lobbying by professional lobbyists who provide information, draft legislation and persuade legislators **B1**

(a) explains the mechanism, e.g. supplying technical expertise, arranging meetings with policymakers and shaping bill wording to favour group interests **B1**

(a) Answer: Professional lobbyists influence policy by providing legislators and staff with expertise, research and draft text, arranging meetings and hearings, and persuading decision makers to adopt or amend legislation in ways favourable to the interest group.

(b) identifies grassroots mobilisation and media campaigning, e.g. organising voter contact, protests, or advert campaigns **B1**

(b) explains the mechanism, e.g. shaping public opinion and pressuring elected officials by demonstrating electoral consequences or mobilisation capacity **B1**

(b) Answer: Grassroots mobilisation uses phone banks, door-knocking, petitions and protests to show elected officials there is popular support or opposition; media campaigning places adverts and op-eds to shape public opinion and pressure policymakers by signalling electoral consequences.

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