

# Make An Impact!

**Benchmark:** SS.7.C.2.10 Examine the impact of media, individuals, and interest groups on monitoring and influencing government.

## **Clarifications/Objectives:**

- Students will identify the methods used by interest groups to monitor and/or influence the government.
- Students will identify the methods used by the media to monitor and/or influence the government.
- Students will evaluate the impact of media, individuals, and interest groups on the government.
- Students will identify and evaluate methods of influencing and/or monitoring government.

**Time:** One class period

## **Materials:**

- Make An Impact PowerPoint
- Handout A: Make An Impact! – Groups Impacting Government
- Handout B: Make An Impact! – Best Ways to Influence Government
- Handout C: Civic Bingo
- Computer
- Projector

## **Lesson Preparation**

- Review all handouts and PowerPoints
- Print and review the PowerPoint in “notes view”. The PowerPoint includes notes to guide the lesson.

## **Lesson Overview**

**Warm Up** by asking students how individuals can participate in government. This should be a review of Benchmark 2.2 addressing the responsibilities and obligations of citizens. The PowerPoint provides some key methods of civic participation that would have an impact on government.

**Distribute Handout A.** Students should complete the handout as the PowerPoint progresses. Differentiate between influencing the government and monitoring the government. Next, the PowerPoint will walk through different groups who influence and monitor government. On the slide addressing the role of individuals in influencing and monitoring government, have students identify which method of political participation they think is the most effective for influencing and monitoring government. Ask students to identify additional measures individuals could take to monitor government (watch news, contact elected officials, protest, etc.) Distinguish between direct or active methods of participation vs. indirect or more passive methods.

**Continue with the PowerPoint.** After interest groups are introduced, there is an opportunity for a quick research extension where they identify an interest group that aligns with an issue in which they are interested. This can be done as an in-class activity, an extension after the lesson, or homework. Throughout the PowerPoint there are examples of interest groups and media outlets. Have students identify current events/issues that relate to government they have seen in the media. Highlight some of the events/issues by asking students to identify the most effective media reports they have seen or read.

**Working individually**, students will need to evaluate each group - individuals, interest groups, political action committees, and media – to determine which group they think has the most impact on government. After they have individually answered this question, place them in small groups to discuss. Debrief as a class to see which group a majority of the class identified.

**Distribute Handout B.** Students should now evaluate methods of participation for effectiveness by selecting three methods of impacting government that they think are the most effective and explaining their response. Students should work individually and then discuss their selections in small groups.

**Check for Understanding** The final slide will include a question from the End of Course Exam Item Specifications book. Have the students independently write down their answer and ask student to explain how they made their decision.

### **Lesson Supplements/Extensions:**

- **Civic Bingo:** Have students bring home a copy of Civic Bingo (Handout C) and see which activities their parents or adult family members or friends have participated in.
- **Current Events:** Bring in copies of written articles addressing popular news items in the media to share with the class or highlight online resources they have located.
  - Why was this article/media effective?
  - Did they feel the reporting was fair and accurate?
  - Why or why not?
  - Have students identify what role they felt the media played in the reporting and if any other source or entity could have provided this information.
  - Finally, ask students to identify what measures individuals could take to monitor the activity or event (watch news, contact elected officials, protest, etc.) Distinguish between direct or active methods of participation vs. indirect or more passive methods.
- **iCivics Lesson:** Interest Groups
- **iCivics Lesson:** The Role of Media

Visit [www.icivics.org](http://www.icivics.org) to register for a free teacher account. FLREA is the state administrator for the iCivics program in Florida.

# Make An Impact!

## Groups Impacting Government

What does it mean to <b>influence</b> government?	
What does it mean to <b>monitor</b> government?	

	<b>What methods of influencing and monitoring the government are used by the following groups?</b>	<b>Illustration</b> Draw a symbol for each group that represents the impact they have.
<b>Individuals</b>		
<b>Interest Groups</b>		
<b>Political Action Committees (PAC)</b>		
<b>Media</b>		

**Based on what you have learned, which group from the list above do you think has the most impact on government and why?**

# Make An Impact!

## Which methods are the best ways to impact government?

Pick **three methods** you think are the best ways to impact government and explain your answer underneath each method you select.

\_\_\_ Voting

\_\_\_ Donating money to a cause or candidate

\_\_\_ Attending civic meetings

\_\_\_ Protesting a government action

\_\_\_ Petitioning the government (formally asking the government to do something)

\_\_\_ Running for office

\_\_\_ Joining an interest group or civic group

\_\_\_ Lobbying the government (persuading legislators to propose, pass, or defeat legislation or to change existing laws)

\_\_\_ Reporting about issues, problems, or policies and government institutions/officials

\_\_\_ Other – Is there something that is not on this list that you would add (write it in below!)

Ask people you know if they have participated in any of the following civic activities. Have them sign their name on the line provided in each square.

	<b>B</b>	<b>I</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>G</b>	<b>O</b>
<b>1</b>	Have you participated in a civil protest or marched for a cause?	Have you written a letter to the editor of your local newspaper?	Do you listen to or watch political talk shows?		Have you ever testified in a legislative hearing?
<b>2</b>		Have you ever worn a t-shirt with a political message?	Have you written a letter or called your member of Congress about an issue?	Have you written a letter or called your state legislator about an issue?	Have you ever signed a petition?
<b>3</b>	Are you a member of any special interest groups?	Do you watch televised political debates? (Ex: Presidential Debates)		Have you contributed money to a political candidate?	Have you ever worked on a political campaign?
<b>4</b>	Have you ever run for political office?	Have you ever participated in a Town Hall Meeting?	Have you ever contacted the media about an issue?	Do you keep aware of current issues and events? How?	Have you ever contributed money to a cause or special issue?
<b>5</b>	Do you vote?		Have you ever met with a government official?	Have you ever volunteered with a nonprofit organization?	Have you ever reviewed the voting record of your member of Congress?