

General Certificate of Education
June 2005
Advanced Level Examination



GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS
Unit 5 The Politics of the USA

GOV5

Tuesday 28 June 2005 Morning Session

In addition to this paper you will require:
an 8-page answer book.

Time allowed: 1 hour 30 minutes

Instructions

- Use blue or black ink or ball-point pen.
- Write the information required on the front of your answer book. The *Examining Body* for this paper is AQA. The *Paper Reference* is GOV5.
- Answer **Question 1** and **one** other question.

Information

- The maximum mark for this paper is 80.
- Mark allocations are shown in brackets.
- You will be assessed on your ability to use an appropriate form and style of writing, to organise relevant information clearly and coherently, and to use specialist vocabulary, where appropriate. The degree of legibility of your handwriting and the level of accuracy of your spelling, punctuation and grammar will also be taken into account.

Advice

- You are advised to read through the examination paper before you attempt the questions.
- You are advised to spend the same amount of time on each question.

Answer **Question 1** and **one** other question.

Each question carries 40 marks.

- 1 Study the extract below and answer parts (a) to (c) which follow.

Pressure Groups

The US political system has always been open to the influence of pressure groups. It has provided a positive environment in which organisations promoting a diverse range of interests and causes can develop and flourish. The political culture has encouraged pluralism and group politics as legitimate forms of political expression. The relative weakness of political parties as national organisations also creates opportunities for pressure group participation and activity.

During the 1960s and 1970s there was substantial growth in pressure group activity resulting in an explosion of groups lobbying in Washington, including promotional, cause and single-issue groups campaigning over questions such as abortion, gun control and gay rights. The US has also seen an increase in the number of public interest groups specialising in areas such as environmental protection.

Pressure groups themselves have become increasingly sophisticated in the ways they seek to influence the political process. Innovations in technology have opened up new opportunities. New electronic methods of communication can be used to energise grass-roots support to accompany traditional lobbying activities in Washington.

Many pressure groups are also active at election time. The number of *political action committees* (or PACs) increased dramatically in the 1980s and some groups offer forms of help such as endorsements or campaign workers. Other pressure groups have increasingly used issue advertising in the run up to elections whereby they can spend money unregulated by campaign finance laws.

What factors affect the degree of influence that pressure groups wield in the American political system, and why are some organisations more successful than others in achieving their goals? Many different variables are significant. As the number of pressure groups has increased in Washington and in state capitals, the competition to be heard and to maintain the interest of policy-makers has become more intense.

Source: adapted from A GRANT and E ASHBEE, *The Politics Today Companion to American Government* (Manchester University Press) 2002

- (a) Explain the term *political action committees* (PACs) used in the extract. (8 marks)
- (b) Using the extract and your own knowledge, account for the growth of pressure group activity since the 1960s. (12 marks)
- (c) Consider the reasons for the variable influence and success of pressure groups within the US political system. (20 marks)

Answer **either** Question 2 **or** Question 3 **or** Question 4.

- 2 'Two broad coalitions of interests, beliefs and values with more differences within than between.' Evaluate this view of US political parties. *(40 marks)*
- 3 'Too long, too expensive, too dominated by media image whilst failing to select the best candidate for the job.' Critically assess this view of presidential primary elections in the USA. *(40 marks)*
- 4 'One of the continuing paradoxes of US voting behaviour is the willingness of many voters to split their ticket.' Consider the causes and effects of such electoral behaviour. *(40 marks)*

END OF QUESTIONS

THERE ARE NO QUESTIONS PRINTED ON THIS PAGE