

Student Handout: The Role of Interest Groups in the Supreme Court Confirmation Process

Activity 3, Part B

Name _____

Date _____

Part A Directions: In this activity you will look at various activist groups who play a role in influencing the Supreme Court confirmation process. To get a greater understanding of their position on the issues, go to the website of the group you were assigned, review their mission and purpose by clicking links like “Who we are” or “About ___” or “Mission Statement.” Review the information and summarize the organization’s position on various issues likely to be considered in the Supreme Court confirmation process by answering the questions below. Organize your presentation following these questions.

- Free Congress Foundation <http://www.freecongress.org/>
- Alliance for Justice <http://www.allianceforjustice.org/>
- Eagle Forum <http://www.eagleforum.org/>
- Family Research Council <http://www.frc.org/>
- NARAL <http://www.naral.org/>
- People of the American Way <http://www.pfaw.org>
- Americans United for Separation of Church and State <http://www.au.org>
- Moveon.org <http://www.moveon.org>

Questions for presentation:

1. Summarize the mission of the organization. How would you “label” this organization?
2. What are its positions on some of the issues surrounding the Supreme Court confirmation process (abortion, federalism, gay rights, physician assisted suicide, free speech, foreign policy, affirmative action, separation of religion and government, the environment and other topics)? To find this, type in the term into the organization’ search engine.
3. Describe what kind of Supreme Court justice might this group be looking for and how they hope the justice would rule on some of these topics?
4. How would you look for bias among the facts and information presented by this group?

Part B Directions: Working in your new groups, find out information on the current Supreme Court nominee. Sources to consider are listed below. Follow the guidelines below to construct your presentation and determine how the nominee would be evaluated from the point of view of the interest group.

- Provide a brief biography on the nominee, including his or her current position, education, and other legal or political experience.
- A brief summary of the potential nominee’s opinions on important issues like the ones listed in question 2 above.
- Review the mission of your assigned interest group and its stand on some of these issues.
- How do you think the interest group might feel about this nominee? Would they recommend or reject their confirmation to the Supreme Court? Explain your reasons.

Sources for Investigation

OYEZ U.S. Supreme Court Multimedia <http://www.oyez.org/oyez/frontpage>

On the Issues <http://www.issues2000.org/Court/Court.htm>

FindLaw <http://findlaw.com>