**Subject area/course**: Social Studies/U.S. Government

**Grade level/band**: 11-12

**Task source**: Educational Policy Improvement Center (EPIC)

**Who Should We Ask?**

**STUDENT INSTRUCTIONS**

1. **Task context**:

Groups of people constantly ask the national government to address issues in their local, state or national community. These groups may seek help with immigration issues or they may want to modify laws that regulate credit cards. Whatever their issue, there is a seemingly endless number of interest groups seeking the attention of the national government. Sometimes, interest group requests are met with quick decisive assistance, and other times they seem to be ignored. Usually, the key to having a request heard by the federal government lies in asking the appropriate branch of government.

As an active and interested citizen, it helps to understand the specific powers of each branch – the Judicial, the Executive, and the Legislative – when advocating for public policy positions. In this task, you will write a proposal for an interest group of your choice, detailing which branch of government is the best target for your group’s efforts.

First, select an issue and a relevant interest group to research. Find as much information as you can on the group’s policy goals or objectives: what are they trying to accomplish?

Using this information, you should put together a proposal to the interest group, indicating which branch of government they should try to influence and why that branch would be the best to provide the desired policy solution. In this proposal, you should explain not only why you are recommending one branch, but you should also explain why the other two branches are not optimal for attaining the policy desired.

Make sure that you clearly explain the goals of the interest group and evaluate the ability of each of the three branches of government to address your interest group’s objectives. You will want to explain not only the powers of each branch of government but also the forces that may influence it as well. So, for example, if you decide the bureaucracy or a specific agency would be the best target for your interest group, then you would need to address the role of the President in guiding, and that of Congress in funding, that agency. Would Congress continue to fund the agency if they did as your interest group suggests? Would the President permit them to?

1. **Final product**:

After selecting and researching an issue you are interested in as well as an interest group whose focus is that issue, write a 5 to 6 page paper that explains which branch of government your chosen interest group should attempt to influence, in order to have the best chances of affecting public policy. Write a proposal to the interest group, suggesting the branch of government the group should approach regarding their policy objectives and explain why each of the other branches is not the best choice.

Your paper should:

* Address competing views.
* Use discipline‐specific vocabulary.
* Be well organized, coherent, and logical.
* Support your position with evidence from your research.
* Employ standard English grammar and usage.
* Cite your sources correctly in the text of your paper and create a Works Cited page using MLA format or another style that your teacher selects.

**Additional Information**

1. **Knowledge and skills you will need to demonstrate on this task:**

* Knowledge of the basic organizational make-up, objectives, and political strategies of one interest group seeking federal assistance of some sort.
* A knowledge of all three branches of the federal government, their corresponding bureaucracies, and how these might affect, help or thwart your interest group.
* Document analysis skills that include an ability to cite textual evidence, make inferences and evaluate a source's point of view.
* Argumentative writing skills that require a use of evidence to support claims, explain complex reasoning, and justify proposed courses of action.

1. **Materials needed:**

Base your research on appropriate and valid sources. Make sure to use balanced and unbiased sources for information concerning the policy issue you have chosen – this means you will need to use more than just Internet sites for this component of the paper. Information on the policy objectives of specific interest groups will be readily available on their web sites. Handout A should help you see how best to analyze sources for this task. Discuss your answers to the questions in Handout A with your instructor.

1. **Time requirements:**

This task should take two to three weeks to complete.

1. **Scoring:**

Your work will be scored using the College and Career Ready (CCR) Task Bank Scoring Rubric. You should make sure you are familiar with the language that describes the expectations for proficient performance.