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POL 231: Assignment 8: Interest Group Ratings of Members of Congress Due: April 18

Various interest groups track the voting of members of Congress by selecting bills that apply to their subject area. For example, an environmental group may select a bill on water pollution standards. The interest group then designated either the "yes" or "no" vote on this bill as favoring the interest group's preference. The interest group adds up the number of times a member of Congress votes in its favor across a number of bills. The interest group then assigns a percentage score to each member. A member who receives a 100% score always voted in the direction that the interest group preferred. A member who receives a score of 0 never voted in accord with the interest group. Scores across a number of interest groups can give us a description of the voting pattern of different members of Congress.

Project Vote Smart, a nonpartisan group, has collected many of these interest group ratings and placed them on its webpage at http://www.vote-smart.org/index.htm. At this site, on the left-hand column, select "Interest Group Ratings." Select the state of Arizona from the scroll-down menu and click "Go." Click on "Congress." We will compare the ratings of two Republican members of Congress from Arizona (Shadegg, Kolbe) with two Democratic members of Congress from Arizona (Pastor, Grijalva).

There are lots of interest group ratings and they are organized under various categories, e.g., "Abortion," or "Budget, Spending and Taxes."

Fill out the chart on the next page and then answer the following question.

1. How would you characterize the voting record of John Shaddegg? Of Jim Koble? Of Ed Pastor? Of Raúl Grijalva?

2. What is the major factor that explains the differences in voting patterns of these four members of Congress?

Category:				
Interest Group	Shadegg	Kolbe	Pastor	Grijalva
Abortion:				
2005 NARAL Pro-Choice America	0%			
Budget, Spending and Taxes:				
2005 National Taxpayers Union	79%			
Business and Consumers:				
U.S. Chamber of Commerce				
Civil Liberties:				
2003-2004 American Civil Liberties				
Union (ACLU)				
Civil Rights:				
2005 National Association for the				
Advance of Colored People (NAACP)				
Civil Rights:				
2004 National Council of La Raza				
Conservative:				
2004 American Conservative Union				
Environmental Issues:				
2005 League of Conservation Voters				
Gun Issue:				
2004 National Rifle Association				
Labor:				
2004 AFL-CIO				
Liberal:				
2005 Americans for Democratic Action				