

MR. SCHNEIDER GOES TO WASHINGTON QUESTIONS FOR STUDENTS

THE FILM:

Why did Mr. Schneider make Mr. Schneider Goes to Washington?

What was even more disturbing to Mr. Schneider than Senator Hollings' candor about the influence of money in Washington?

Why was Mr. Schneider so disappointed that Senator McCain refused to be interviewed for this film?

What role should documentary filmmaking play in society?

LOBBYING & SPECIAL INTERESTS:

Where did the term "lobbying" originate and what does it mean?

What does a lobbyist do?

How many registered lobbyists are there in Washington? How many lobbyists are there for each member of Congress?

Name three industries that are among Washington's biggest givers.

Are all interests represented the same in Washington? If not, how do certain interests overpower others?

Is lobbying very influential in Washington? Why or why not?

GOVERNMENT:

How has the United States Government changed since its earliest days? Is this a good thing?

Is a larger government more prone to corruption? If so, why?

Why does Congressman Leboutillier believe air conditioning was so destructive to American democracy?

POLITICIANS:

What is it about being a member of Congress that attracts people to run for office?

Name two members of Congress who went down the wrong track? What did they do?

Is the influence of money in Washington limited to politicians who receive bribes? If not, who else is vulnerable to this influence?

How much money did Senator Hollings have to raise for his 2006 re-election campaign?

What percentage of candidates who out-spend their opponents win the election? Is this a problem? If so, why?

What advantages does an incumbent member of Congress have over his or her challenger? What challenges, if any, does this pose for a representative democracy?

What is the "Hook and Bullet" event? Why did Mr. Schneider poke fun at it? Why were homeless people used in the "Hook and Bullet" reenactment?

Should making fundraising calls be among a Member of Congress' responsibilities?

If members of Congress don't like dialing for dollars why do they still do it?

Can a member of Congress make a fundraising call from his or her office?

How much time does a member of Congress usually spend raising money? Is this a good or bad use of his or her time?

How many days of the week do members of Congress spend taking care of the peoples business? What are they doing when they are not legislating?

Can members of Congress only raise money in their state?

Should members of Congress be allowed to raise money outside of their districts or states? Why or why not?

Should members of Congress be more concerned about representing the public interests or private interests? Why?

Do public interests take a back seat to private interests? If so, provide an example of how money affected a decision of Congress.

Why did Senator McCain think Americans were apathetic about campaign finance reform?

Did Congressman Weller lie about why he was in Las Vegas? If so, why?

POLITICAL ADVERTISING:

Where are most campaign funds spent?

What is a swing voter? What percentage of the population do they represent?

What percentage of campaign funds goes to media?

Why is advertising so important to politicians?

If voters claim they don't like negative ads, why do candidates still use them? Why or why not are they effective?

Why, sometimes, is a small voter turnout better for a particular candidate?

How do candidates defend their use of negative ads?

Who deregulated the news media in the 1980's?

How did Jack Oliver of the RNC justify how much is spent on political advertising?

CAMPAIGN FINANCE REFORM:

How long has it been since the first campaign finance reform legislation, the naval appropriations act, was enacted?

What significant 1970's political event created the mood to "change everything that is rotten in America?" What campaign financing legislation came out of this political climate?

What is the most recent campaign finance reform legislation to be passed by Congress?

What is the BCRA? Name the four sponsors of the legislation.

Why are most members of Congress resistant to changing the way elections are financed?

Who is the un-noted hero of BCRA? Why is his contribution considered to be more courageous than the other sponsors?

How much money can a particular decision of Congress mean for an industry or special interest?

Was BCRA successful in reducing the influence of money in Washington? Why?

What are 527 groups? Did they have a positive or negative affect on BCRA?

What is the FEC? When was it established? What are its responsibilities? Is the FEC considered to be an effective government agency?

What is a loophole? Give an example of a loophole that pertains to campaign financing or lobbying legislation.

Who is Jack Abramoff and what did he do?

Did the Abramoff scandal affect lobbying and campaign finance reform? Why?

What is public financing? How can it reduce the influence of money in Washington?

What is Buckley vs. Valeo? How does its decision impact campaign finance reform?

Should political contributions be considered free speech? Defend your position.

What are three solutions to the influence of money in Washington?

AMERICAN APATHY:

In the 2004 elections there were 200 million eligible voters. How many didn't vote?

What percentage of Iraqis voted in their 2005 election?

What is apathy? Are Americans apathetic about their government? What are the two main reasons people don't vote?

Does voting really matter? Why or why not?

What role did the Michael Jackson trial play in the film?

Why is the news media important in a society?

What is a public interest obligation? Should the broadcast news media be required to deliver on such an obligation? Why or why not?