SS.7.C.2.10 Benchmark Clarification 3: Students will evaluate the impact of media, individuals and interest groups on the government.

The media has a major impact on influencing and monitoring the government. Many times, the media serves as a watchdog, keeping an eye on the government and reporting on what the government does.

Interest groups have a major impact on influencing the government as well. These groups form to support a specific issue and work in large numbers to get their issue recognized by the government. A political action committee (PAC) is one type of interest group that works to raise money for a particular candidate who supports their issues. Also, interest groups may hire lobbyists, who meet with lawmakers to try to get their support for a bill that would benefit the issue the PAC supports.

Individual citizens impact the government. Simply by carrying out one of their most important civic responsibilities – voting – individuals play a major role in changing the government. Whether it is voting a candidate in or out of office, or voting in favor of or against an amendment to the Florida Constitution, citizens change the government during every election. Voting is one of the most important parts of a democracy.

**citizen** - a legal member of a state and/or country

**democracy** - a system of government in which political power is held by the people

**interest group** - a group of people who are concerned with a particular issue and who try to influence legislators to act in their favor, also known as a special interest group

**lobbyist** - a person who participates in activities in order to influence government officials

**media** - plural form of the word “medium,” refers to various means of communication. For example, television, radio, newspapers and the Internet (web) are different types of media. The term can also be used to describe news organizations as a whole group.

**political action committee** - an independent political organization that promotes the cause of a particular interest group, usually through raising money and campaigning to elect candidates who support the group’s views

**watchdog** - a person or group who acts as a protector or guardian