



# Addressing Public Policy

Domestic Policy



# Defining Domestic Policy

- Policy is a specific course of action that government takes to address a problem
- Domestic Policy includes all government laws, planning and actions involving internal issues of national importance, including:
  - Health care
  - Poverty
  - Crime
  - Environment
  - Education
  - Immigration



# Types of Public Policy

- **Distributive Policy:** Benefits all groups in society
  - Such as Social Security or Medicare, National Parks, national defense, education funds
- **Redistributive Policy:** Taking resources away from one group (usually in the form of taxes) to distribute to another group
  - Ex. Wealth redistribution programs such as Head start, welfare; redistribution of income
  - Zero-Sum Games: Rob peter to pay Paul; one loses resources equivalent to one who gains resources
- **Counter Distributive Policy:** Takes resources away from ALL groups to solve a common problem;
  - Ex. Place restriction on high pollution vehicles to improve air quality
  - Utilize a cost/benefit analysis to see if change makes sense



# Citizens and Public Policy

- Public policy does not take place in a vacuum; political process engages citizens, interest groups, political parties, legislators, judges, and other government institutions
- Citizens are nervous about participating due to complexities; but there are ways
  - Voting
  - Joining interest groups/Contributing to a PAC
  - Writing letters/Sending e-mails
  - Confronting legislators about actions/voting records
  - Running for office
- Most successful when it involves clear ideas for alternative policies



# Policy Issues: Health Care

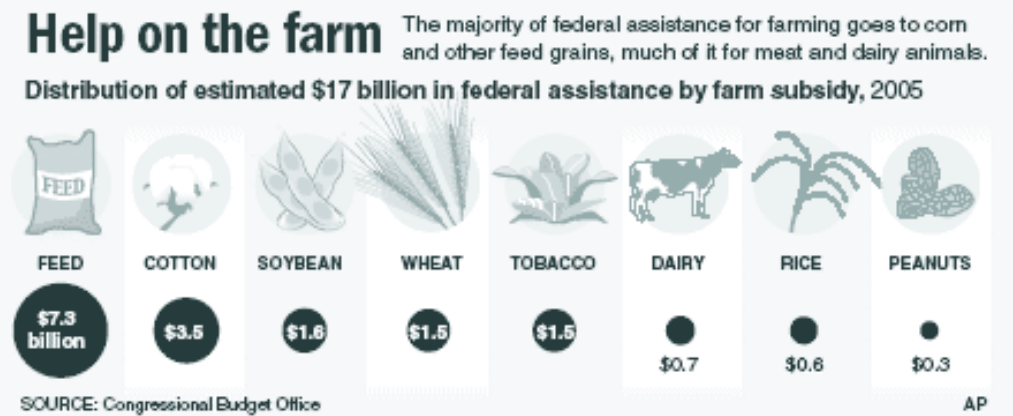
- Rising Cost of Health Care
  - Advanced technology costly
  - Government provides 1 in 3 Americans with health care coverage
    - Millions still uninsured
- Medicare
  - Federal health insurance for elderly and disabled
- Medicaid
  - Health insurance for low-income families
- National Health Insurance
  - Goal of insuring uninsured
    - Affordable Care Act, 2012





# Policy Issues: Poverty and Welfare

- Income transfers/Wealth Redistribution
  - Transfers of income from some individuals in the economy to other individuals
    - Generally done by way of the government using taxation
- Basic Welfare
  - Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC)
  - Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF)
- Supplemental Security Income (SSI)
- Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC)
- Farm Subsidies
- Homelessness





# Policy Issues: Social Security

- Social Security is social insurance, not a welfare program
- Participants pay into Social Security but then can begin drawing from it once they turn 66
  - Compulsory to pay into system
  - Aging population placing stress on Social Security program
- Allows for financial security late in life





# Policy Issues: Immigration

- Continued immigration influx
  - More than a million people a year immigrate to this country.
- Minority groups will constitute the “majority” of the U.S. by 2060
- Positives of immigration
  - Offsets low birthrate, aging population
  - Provides workers in jobs Americans do not want





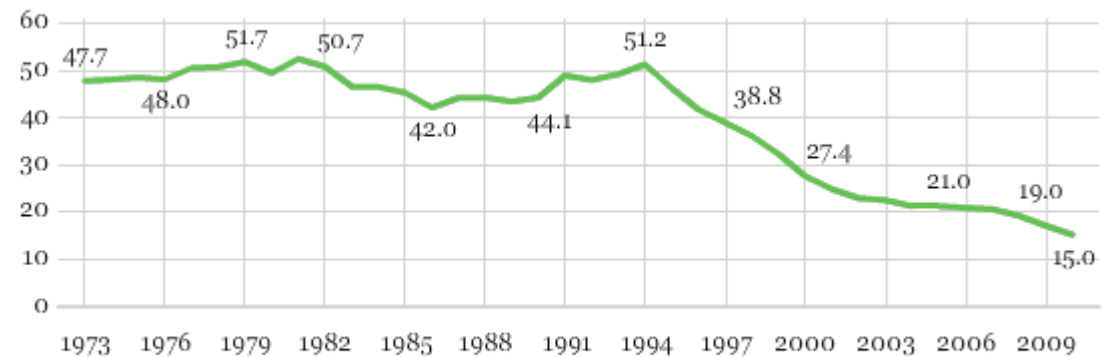


# Policy Issues: Crime

- Crime in American History
  - Crime control model: controlling crime
  - Due process model: attaining justice
  - Continuous tug-of-war between two models
- Congress taking larger role in criminal justice policy
  - New issues: racial profiling, rendition, drugs, terrorism
- USA has highest incarceration rate per capita among major nations

*U.S. Violent Crime Rate, U.S. Justice Department Statistics, 1973-2010*

Number of victims per 1,000 population aged 12 or older



Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics

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# Policy Issues: The Environment

- Environmentalism – Seeks to protect the natural environment by conserving and protecting the natural resources
  - The National Environmental Policy Act (1969) – Required government agencies to consider environmental implications
  - Clean Air Act (1990) – Improved on act of 1963, required stricter guidelines on emissions and urban areas
  - Clean Water Act (1972) – Regulated pollution discharge into water systems
- Still debate in government over effects of Climate Change





# Policy Issues: Social Issues

- Question of government legalization of Abortion
  - Roe v. Wade – 1973
  - Allowed for access to abortions based on the principles of privacy as part of Due Process Clause of 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment
- Marriage Equality
  - Obergefell v. Hodges – 2015
    - Upheld equal rights of marriage as guaranteed by the 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment
- Third Gender
  - Directive by President Obama requiring schools to offer facilities for students identifying as third gender as part of Title IX

