











Advocacy groups have distinct benefits and limits

Advocacy groups and their regulations

| |  Contribution Limit |  Must Disclose Donors? |  Can Coordinate with Candidate? |  Can be Primarily Political? |  Can Expressly Tell Voters Who to Vote For? |  Regulator |
|----------------------|--|---|--|---|--|---|
| Traditional PACs | \$5,000 per year | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | FEC  |
| Super PAC | Unlimited | ✓ | ✗ | ✓ | ✓ | FEC  |
| 501(c)(4) Non-profit | Unlimited | ✗ | ✗ | ✗ | ✗ | IRS  |
| 527 Non-profit | Unlimited | ✓ | ✗ | ✓ | ✗ | FEC  |

Source: Bloomberg Politics, July 31, 2015; OpenSecrets.com: Center for Responsible Politics.

Advocacy groups engage differently in the campaign field

Types of advocacy organizations by level of campaign engagement

| Advocacy Group | Explanation | Most Common Types of Groups | Level of Campaign Engagement |
|------------------------------------|--|--|--|
| 501(c) Groups | Tax-exempt nonprofit organizations, 29 different types, which can engage in varying amounts of political activity depending on the type. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 501(c)(3) – groups that operate for religious, educational, charitable, scientific reasons • 501(c)(4) – civic leagues, social welfare organizations, local associations of employees • 501(c)(5) – labor, agricultural, horticultural organizations • 501(c)(6) – business leagues, chambers of commerce, real estate boards | Some - political engagement is allowed, as long as it doesn't interfere with the organizations primary purpose but organizations cannot engage in political campaign activities |
| 527 Group | Tax-exempt group that raises money for political activities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Political parties • Candidates • Committees | High – this group is heavily focused on campaign activities |
| PACs (Political Action Committees) | Raises and spends money contributions for the purpose of electing or defeating candidates | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business-represented PACs • Labor-represented PACs • Ideological interest PACs | High – this group is heavily focused on campaign activities |
| Super PAC | Independent political action committees that make no contributions to candidates or political parties | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business-represented Super PACs • Labor-represented Super PACs • Ideological interest Super PACs • Individual Super PACs | High but indirect – this group participates in the campaign field by independently supporting races |

Source: Center for Responsive Politics, "Types of Advocacy Groups," Open Secrets, 2015; National Journal Research, 2015.