

GOVT 2306 Texas Government - Public Policy in Texas (Sample)

Study Guide



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SAMPLE

Questions

- 1. Which of the following is a potential result of successful policy feedback?**
 - A. Increased public trust in government**
 - B. Complete elimination of previous policies**
 - C. Heightened resistance to change**
 - D. Decreased voter turnout**
- 2. How is gay adoption described in Texas?**
 - A. Gay couples who wish to adopt must be legally married**
 - B. Texans are allowed to adopt without consideration of their sexual orientation**
 - C. Single individuals, regardless of their orientation, cannot adopt**
 - D. Only married heterosexual couples can adopt**
- 3. What is a key factor influencing the effectiveness of policy feedback?**
 - A. The size of the governmental budget**
 - B. The clarity and consistency of existing policies**
 - C. The political affiliation of lawmakers**
 - D. The location of the policy implementation**
- 4. How do state constitutions generally differ from the federal constitution in context to public policy?**
 - A. State constitutions do not affect public policy**
 - B. State constitutions often include more specific provisions related to local governance**
 - C. State constitutions are only amendable by federal approval**
 - D. State constitutions are more general and less detailed**
- 5. What does the term "legal permanent residents" refer to?**
 - A. Individuals who have a temporary visa**
 - B. Individuals who have entered the U.S. without documentation**
 - C. Individuals who possess Green Cards**
 - D. Individuals awaiting citizenship**

- 6. Which of the following methods do Texas state and local governments use to support and attract business?**
- A. Increased regulatory oversight**
 - B. Tax abatements**
 - C. Strict environmental regulation**
 - D. Corporate subsidies**
- 7. What is a commonly used tool for policy analysis in Texas?**
- A. Stakeholder interviews**
 - B. SWOT analysis**
 - C. Cost-benefit analysis**
 - D. Focus group discussions**
- 8. According to a 2018 report, for every dollar Texas spends on public services, how much revenue does it receive from taxes paid by undocumented immigrants?**
- A. \$.86**
 - B. \$1.21**
 - C. \$.90**
 - D. \$1.00**
- 9. What was the effect of the Hopwood decision in Texas?**
- A. It ended affirmative action practices at the University of Texas law school**
 - B. It allowed Texas state schools to tailor affirmative action practices to their specific situations**
 - C. It ended affirmative action practices in Texas state schools**
 - D. It forced Texas schools to reduce the number of minority students accepted through affirmative action programs**
- 10. How does public opinion polling impact Texas public policy?**
- A. It serves as a method for regulating state agencies**
 - B. It provides insights into public sentiment for policy adjustments**
 - C. It creates mandatory laws for public compliance**
 - D. It establishes social equity standards**

Answers

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1. A
2. B
3. B
4. B
5. C
6. B
7. C
8. B
9. C
10. B

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Explanations

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1. Which of the following is a potential result of successful policy feedback?

- A. Increased public trust in government**
- B. Complete elimination of previous policies**
- C. Heightened resistance to change**
- D. Decreased voter turnout**

The correct answer, increased public trust in government, stems from the concept of policy feedback, which refers to the ways in which existing policies can shape the political landscape and influence public perceptions. When policies are effectively implemented and yield positive results for citizens, individuals tend to feel more satisfied with the government and its actions. This satisfaction can lead to increased public trust, as citizens see evidence that government policies are addressing their needs and improving their lives. Successful policy can demonstrate the responsiveness and effectiveness of government, strengthening the relationship between the state and its citizens. In contrast, options that involve the complete elimination of previous policies, heightened resistance to change, or decreased voter turnout typically reflect negative interactions with policy and governance rather than positive feedback loops that reinforce trust. Thus, successful policy feedback is most likely to result in an increase in public trust.

2. How is gay adoption described in Texas?

- A. Gay couples who wish to adopt must be legally married**
- B. Texans are allowed to adopt without consideration of their sexual orientation**
- C. Single individuals, regardless of their orientation, cannot adopt**
- D. Only married heterosexual couples can adopt**

In Texas, the legal framework surrounding adoption does not prohibit individuals based on their sexual orientation. This means that same-sex couples and individuals are permitted to adopt children. The legislation supports the idea that all Texans, irrespective of whether they are part of a same-sex relationship or not, can pursue adoption. This inclusive policy aims to ensure that the best interest of the child is the primary consideration in adoption cases, rather than the sexual orientation of the prospective adoptive parents. The other options suggest limitations that are not present in Texas adoption law, reinforcing the principle of equality and non-discrimination in the adoption process. Texas adoption law emphasizes that the qualifications for adoption focus on the ability of the prospective parents to provide a stable and loving home, rather than their marital status or orientation.

3. What is a key factor influencing the effectiveness of policy feedback?

- A. The size of the governmental budget**
- B. The clarity and consistency of existing policies**
- C. The political affiliation of lawmakers**
- D. The location of the policy implementation**

The effectiveness of policy feedback is significantly influenced by the clarity and consistency of existing policies. When policies are clearly defined and consistently implemented, they establish a solid foundation for future actions and responses from both policymakers and the public. Clear policies facilitate understanding among stakeholders about expectations, roles, and responsibilities, making it easier for them to provide feedback based on their experiences and outcomes. Consistent policies also ensure that feedback mechanisms are reliable since stakeholders can accurately assess and compare their experiences over time. In contrast, unclear or inconsistent policies can lead to confusion, misinterpretation, and varying levels of engagement from stakeholders, ultimately diminishing the effectiveness of feedback processes. This clarity enables legislators and policymakers to gauge the impact of existing policies on citizens and make informed adjustments based on the feedback received. The other aspects, such as budget size, political affiliation, and policy location, while they can play a role in shaping policy environments, do not directly address the foundational aspect of feedback effectiveness tied to how well policies are articulated and upheld.

4. How do state constitutions generally differ from the federal constitution in context to public policy?

- A. State constitutions do not affect public policy**
- B. State constitutions often include more specific provisions related to local governance**
- C. State constitutions are only amendable by federal approval**
- D. State constitutions are more general and less detailed**

State constitutions often include more specific provisions related to local governance, which differentiates them from the federal constitution. This specificity allows states to address a wide variety of local issues that are directly relevant to their distinct populations and governance structures. For instance, state constitutions may outline procedures for local elections, the establishment and powers of local governments, and regulations tailored to the unique needs of local jurisdictions. The federal constitution, on the other hand, provides a broad framework for government and typically addresses issues at the national level, allowing for a uniform set of laws across the country. It does not delve into the local nuances that state constitutions often tackle. This characteristic of state constitutions enhances their relevance in shaping public policy, as they can directly influence how governance is carried out at various levels within the state, catering to specific local needs and contexts.

5. What does the term "legal permanent residents" refer to?

- A. Individuals who have a temporary visa**
- B. Individuals who have entered the U.S. without documentation**
- C. Individuals who possess Green Cards**
- D. Individuals awaiting citizenship**

The term "legal permanent residents" refers specifically to individuals who possess Green Cards. These residents have been granted authorization to live and work in the United States on a permanent basis. This status allows them to enjoy many rights similar to those of U.S. citizens, with certain exceptions, such as voting in federal elections. Legal permanent residents typically have made a significant commitment to the country, often through processes like sponsorship by a family member or employment. Other options describe different immigration statuses that do not equate to legal permanent residency. Temporary visa holders (the first choice) are in the U.S. for a limited time and do not have permanent resident status. Individuals who have entered the U.S. without documentation (the second choice) are undocumented immigrants and also do not hold legal permanent residency. Lastly, individuals awaiting citizenship (the fourth choice) may be in the process of applying for citizenship but may or may not have legal permanent resident status at the time, often depending on their circumstances. Therefore, possessing a Green Card is the defining characteristic of legal permanent residents.

6. Which of the following methods do Texas state and local governments use to support and attract business?

- A. Increased regulatory oversight**
- B. Tax abatements**
- C. Strict environmental regulation**
- D. Corporate subsidies**

Texas state and local governments often utilize tax abatements as a means to support and attract businesses. Tax abatements involve the reduction or elimination of taxes for specific companies or industries, incentivizing them to set up or expand their operations in Texas. This method is appealing to businesses as it reduces their operational costs, thereby making the state an attractive location for investment and job creation. By offering tax abatements, state and local governments aim to stimulate economic growth, enhance local employment opportunities, and promote overall community development. This strategy is particularly effective in competitive landscapes where states vie for new businesses, as it demonstrates a pro-business environment to potential investors. In comparison, while regulatory oversight and strict environmental regulations may ensure that businesses operate within safe and responsible guidelines, they could also deter new investments. Corporate subsidies, on the other hand, can be complex and sometimes contentious, requiring substantial government funding and carrying potential scrutiny regarding their effectiveness. Thus, tax abatements serve as a direct, strategic approach that aligns with the fiscal interests of both the government and the business community.

7. What is a commonly used tool for policy analysis in Texas?

- A. Stakeholder interviews**
- B. SWOT analysis**
- C. Cost-benefit analysis**
- D. Focus group discussions**

Cost-benefit analysis is a widely employed tool for policy analysis in Texas, as it allows policymakers to evaluate the economic implications of various policy options. This approach involves comparing the anticipated costs of a policy with its expected benefits, providing a clear framework for assessing the viability and effectiveness of different initiatives. By quantifying the positive and negative outcomes, policymakers can make informed decisions based on which option yields the greatest net benefits for the public. In addition to offering a systematic way to assess policies, cost-benefit analysis plays a crucial role in justifying proposals to stakeholders, including lawmakers and the public. This analytical technique is particularly important in contexts where resources are limited and efficiencies must be maximized, making it a central element in the governance and budgeting processes in Texas. Other tools like stakeholder interviews, SWOT analysis, and focus group discussions certainly provide valuable insights in the policy development process. However, they tend to focus more on qualitative data rather than the economic valuations that drive most governmental decision-making and resource allocation. This distinguishes cost-benefit analysis as a primary tool in the landscape of Texas policy analysis.

8. According to a 2018 report, for every dollar Texas spends on public services, how much revenue does it receive from taxes paid by undocumented immigrants?

- A. \$.86**
- B. \$1.21**
- C. \$.90**
- D. \$1.00**

The assertion that Texas receives \$1.21 in tax revenue from undocumented immigrants for every dollar spent on public services has its roots in research indicating that undocumented residents contribute significantly to the state's economy through various forms of taxation, including sales tax, property tax, and other fees. This contribution is noteworthy in understanding the fiscal implications of immigration in Texas, often challenging the perception that undocumented immigrants are solely a burden on public resources. The \$1.21 figure includes a comprehensive look at how these individuals participate in the economy, often paying taxes yet not directly benefiting from many public services due to their immigration status. This dynamic illustrates a net positive impact on the state's finances, reinforcing the argument for a nuanced understanding of immigration's role in public policy discussions in Texas. The findings suggest that the presence of undocumented immigrants, while sometimes a polarizing topic, brings substantial revenue to the state's coffers, which can be vital for funding public services that benefit all residents.

9. What was the effect of the Hopwood decision in Texas?

- A. It ended affirmative action practices at the University of Texas law school**
- B. It allowed Texas state schools to tailor affirmative action practices to their specific situations**
- C. It ended affirmative action practices in Texas state schools**
- D. It forced Texas schools to reduce the number of minority students accepted through affirmative action programs**

The Hopwood decision had a significant impact on affirmative action practices within Texas state universities. In 1996, the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals ruled in *Hopwood v. Texas* that the University of Texas Law School's affirmative action policy was unconstitutional, effectively prohibiting the use of race as a factor in admissions. This decision was pivotal because it established a precedent that led to the systematic dismantling of affirmative action policies within Texas public universities. As a direct result of this ruling, affirmative action practices were curtailed, and many state schools in Texas were effectively required to disregard race as a criterion for admissions decisions. The ruling sparked a considerable debate about race, equity, and access to education, influencing not only Texas policies but also shaping discussions on affirmative action nationwide. Thus, the decision fundamentally changed the landscape of how Texas state schools could approach admissions and diversity initiatives.

10. How does public opinion polling impact Texas public policy?

- A. It serves as a method for regulating state agencies**
- B. It provides insights into public sentiment for policy adjustments**
- C. It creates mandatory laws for public compliance**
- D. It establishes social equity standards**

Public opinion polling significantly impacts Texas public policy by providing insights into the attitudes, beliefs, and preferences of the population regarding various issues. This information is crucial for policymakers and elected officials as they seek to address the needs and concerns of their constituents. When polling data reflects a strong public sentiment on an issue—such as healthcare, education, or environmental regulations—policymakers can use this information to justify or adjust their policies, ensuring that they align with the views of the electorate. This responsiveness helps maintain public trust and can lead to greater political support for specific initiatives or reforms. The role of public opinion polls is also evident in elections, where candidates often gauge voter sentiment to shape their platforms and campaign strategies, ultimately leading to policies that are more reflective of the will of the people. By understanding what the electorate values, legislators can prioritize their efforts more effectively.