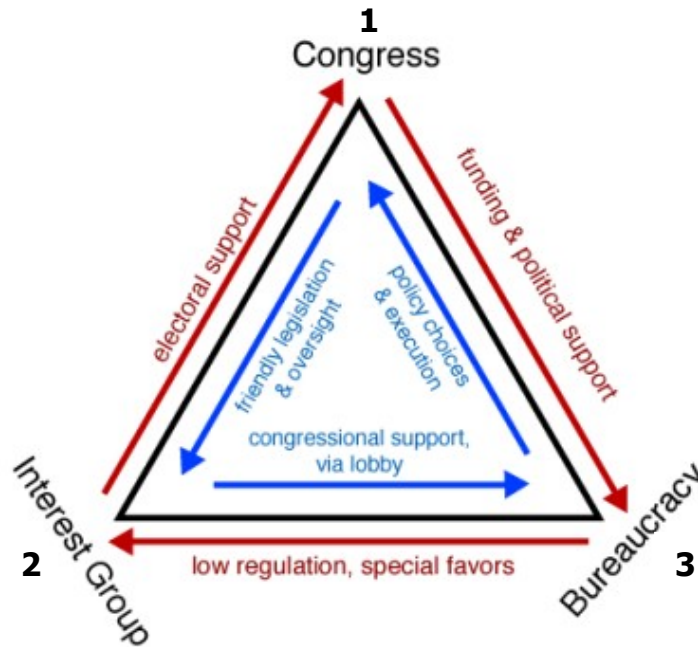


## IRON TRIANGLES

**Definition:** A close relationship among special interests, congressional committees and the bureaucracy.



- 1) Congressional Committee (e.g. House & Senate Committees on Veterans' Affairs)
- 2) Interest (Pressure) Group (e.g. American Legion and other Vet groups)
- 3) Bureaucratic Agency (e.g. Dept. of Veterans' Affairs)

An iron triangle is a political community amongst 3 very powerful players in the political process.

This community can have very extensive collective power if all 3 sides of the triangle want the same thing:

- They can be said to have an iron grip on public policy
- They become a policy-making community

**Case Study:** The Highway Beautification Act - one of the aims was to remove billboards from all federal roads.

Members of the relevant Congressional Committee, Federal Highway Administration officials and Business lobbyists (for advertisers and businesses who used such advertising space) carefully worked together and changed the bill to present the public with 2 choices:

- Leave the 9000 billboards where they were
- Spend \$18 million on removing them

**In effect, they changed the Highway Beautification Act into a billboard protection law.**