**Research Paper Instructions**

The body of the paper must be at least 6 pages (double spaced, 12-point font) and include level 1, 2, and 3 headings as appropriate and necessary. In addition to the body, you must include a separate title page and reference page. Do not submit an abstract with this assignment.

Do not write the paper without carefully studying the related presentations. To achieve more than a passing grade, you must demonstrate a mastery of the presentations and factual information and incorporate those ideas into your paper. Naturally, stylistic points such as grammar and spelling will be considered in grading. Your paper must adhere to the current APA formatting guidelines. Doing the minimum amount of work does not guarantee a perfect score.

**Topic:** Becoming an Informed Voter – Researching Your Pennsylvania Congressional Delegation

The research paper has 2 steps. First, you will analyze the background of your congressional district and your U.S. Representative. Second, you will analyze the political background of your state and 1 of your U.S. Senators. You may choose which senator to study; however, if one senator is newly elected and does not have interest group ratings, study the other one. Note that these are United States Representatives and Senators. Do not use members of your state legislature.

Begin by reviewing the presentation on “Becoming an Informed Voter.” The example of Congressman Bob Goodlatte of Virginia is used. If you have a newly elected representative in Pennsylvania who has not yet received interest group ratings, get the interest group ratings of a representative from a neighboring district.

After reviewing the presentation, the first part will deal with your congressional district and congressman; the second part will deal with your state and senator. As explained in the presentation, interest group scores may be found at [Vote Smart](http://www.votesmart.org/).

A helpful source to find information for this paper is [*The Almanac of American Politics*](https://ebookcentral-proquest-com.ezproxy.liberty.edu/lib/liberty/detail.action?docID=5594123) by Richard E. Cohen and James A. Barnes.

Use the current APA format to properly format this essay as you will be required to use formal writing with level 1, 2, and 3 headings as necessary to address and elaborate on each of the following questions in paragraph form:

* What is the recent political history of your district and state?
* How has your state and congressional district voted in recent presidential and congressional elections?
* Can your district or state be considered to be leaning Republican or Democrat?
* Are the political parties relatively even, or does one party dominate the elections?
* Does your district have a long tradition of supporting one party, or has it been changing in recent years?
* How did your representative and senator come to power? (Thoroughly describe their backgrounds.)
* How do the interest groups - ADA, ACLU, ACU, and CC (or FRC) - rate your Pennsylvania representative and senator? (Note: If the Christian Coalition score is not available, you may substitute the Family Research Council score. Include the exact scores from each of these groups. The rationale for this is explained in the presentation.)
* Based on these ratings, would you classify your representative and senator as conservative or liberal? Justify your answer.

**Do not submit your paper in the form of a series of questions and answers**. Organize this information into a standard research paper (paragraph form with level headings) utilizing the current APA format. There is a Research Paper template provided for your use. Consult the grading rubric to make sure that all the necessary information has been included.