

CIVIC EDUCATION ACTIVITY FOR NOVEMBER 4TH

CHAMPIONS FOR CHILDREN'S HEALTH STROLLER BRIGADE

GRADES 6-8

OBJECTIVES

Students will participate in the Champions for Children's Health Stroller Brigade to demonstrate their concern for the health of America's children.

Students will walk to key government buildings to observe their architecture and discuss the kinds of decision-making activities that are conducted inside the buildings.

Students will discuss the role of government in decisions that impact children's health.

Students will discuss how the U.S. government operates with three branches of government.

ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION*

Provide students with a map of the government buildings near the U.S. Capitol. With their teachers/group leaders, students will locate government buildings and do the following:

- Verify the location of the building on their map
- Record the name of the building
- Determine the governmental activities conducted inside the building and by whom
- Identify what branch of government the building represents
- Further examine the location of the building in comparison with other government buildings
- Record additional notes and significant comments or insights

VOCABULARY

- | | | |
|---------------------|--------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. Accountability | 13. Legislative | 24. Branches of Government |
| 2. Advocate | 14. Lobby | 25. Checks and Balances |
| 3. Article I | 15. Participation | 26. Government |
| 4. Authority | 16. Politics | 27. Haves and Have-Nots |
| 5. Bicameral | 17. Power | 28. Laws |
| 6. Bill of Rights | 18. Public Policy | 29. Mandates |
| 7. Citizens | 19. Representative | 30. Practice |
| 8. Civic Life | 20. Rights | 31. Privilege |
| 9. Common Good | 21. Senator | 32. US Constitution |
| 10. Congress | 22. Values | 33. Values and Principles |
| 11. First Amendment | 23. Bills | |
| 12. Laws | | |

*All materials for November 4th are available online for teachers to access and make copies for their students prior to the event.

CIVIC EDUCATION LESSON PLAN IN PREPARATION FOR NOVEMBER 4TH

Grades 6-8

FOCUS: **Citizenship, Public Policy, Principles and Values, U.S. Constitution, Bills, Laws, Branches of Government, Checks and Balances, Health Reform for Children, Congress**

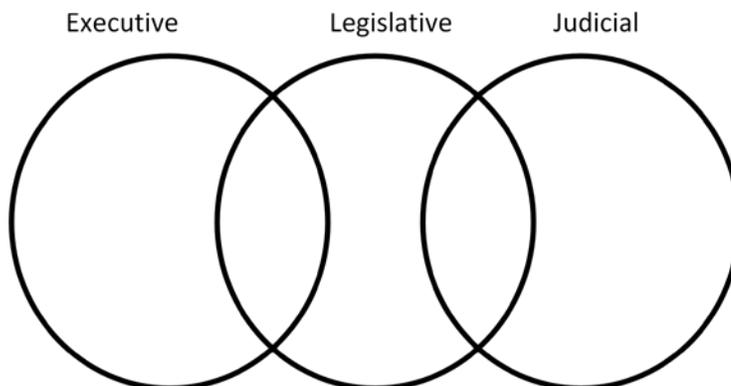
OBJECTIVES: **Students should be able to:**

- Distinguish the roles and functions of the three branches of government
- Demonstrate an understanding of how laws are made with emphasis on the Legislative Branch
- Demonstrate an understanding of the needs of children with regard to health care
- Describe the civic responsibility to participate in the American democratic process
- Be a voice for themselves and other children in the nation

SUGGESTED MATERIALS: Butcher or chart paper/writing paper /white paper/pencils /pens/poster board/construction paper/CDF Health Fact Sheets /markers/Bill of Rights

SUGGESTED TIME: 3 hours or more – may be completed over two days.

OPENING ACTIVITY: Discuss the roles of the three branches of government. Have students compare and contrast the roles of each of the three branches of government using a Venn diagram. Have students begin thinking about the citizen’s relationship to each branch of government on the local, state, and national level.



MAIN ACTIVITY:

Part I

Have students narrow their opening discussion and classify government activities according to the role of the Legislative Branch and the role of the Citizen. Pay particular attention to how the two entities influence the making of laws in the nation.

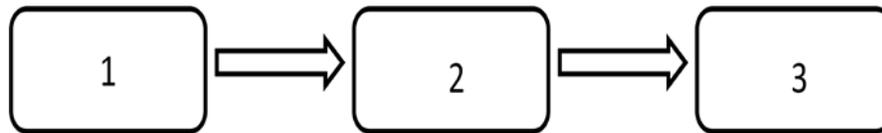
View School House Rock-How a Bill becomes A Law at:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mEJL2Uuv-oQ> and review “How a Bill Becomes a Law” in the Appendix

Divide students in 2 groups:

- Group 1: represent the House of Representatives
- Group 2: represent the Senate
- *Teacher serves as the voice of the citizens with ideas for a law

Create a large flow chart on which group members can write to document the law making process (see Appendix on “How a Bill Becomes a Law”).



1. Allow each group 5 minutes to review its primary responsibilities with regard to the development of laws. The teacher will introduce an idea for a law (something that would impact the entire classroom) so each group can begin to establish its position, as well as determine who will sponsor and introduce the idea as a bill.
2. Present the idea to the group representing the House of Representatives.
3. Present the idea to the group representing the Senate.
4. Allow the students representing the two chambers of the Legislative Branch to begin the process of moving the proposed idea through the cycle of becoming a law.
5. Have students continue to refer to the steps on how a bill becomes a law.
6. Once the groups have sent the bill to the Executive Branch, be sure to review the steps documented by the students.

Recommendations for discussion:

- Share your reactions to this process?
- How was this process similar to the development of school, local, state, and national laws? How did it differ?
- Who do you think have the most power in the development of laws? Explain.
- How integral is the role that citizens play in the development of laws? Explain.
- How have you used your rights and power as a citizen to influence laws? Do you plan to utilize your power more or less? Explain.

- What is your civic responsibility while you participate in the *Champions for Children’s Health Stroller Brigade* as the health care reform bill is discussed and furthered defined?
- What can you do today as a citizen to ensure the health care reform bill addresses the needs of children?

PART II (suggested activity following November 4th Champions for Children’s Health Stroller Brigade)

Have students share their reactions to the experiences on November 4th.

Have students recall and discuss the three principles (affordable, simple and comprehensive health benefits) for which they advocated in the health reform debate that help all the children in America. Divide students into 3 groups. Have each group present on one of the principles. Each group presentation should include:

- An outline or description of the meaning of the principle assigned to their group
- Three facts about the principle
- An illustration or other visual to represent the principle
- A story highlighting how the principle has impacted the life of a person or child they know or have read or heard about

CLOSING: Allow groups to present their work.

EXTENSIONS: ***To continue the learning process, extension activities can be used in after school settings, student groups, and as special take home projects.***

Have students develop a newsletter for parents and others in the school highlighting the November 4th experience. Include: headlines about the day, ways to get involved, stories and responses, and photos.

Have students discuss their roles as young citizens with regard to health reform for all children. Students can view “*Mighty Times: The Children’s March*” documentary to better understand how children were engaged in civic activities in 1963.

Have students design a survey form to use to determine what factors should be included in discussions about the nation’s health care reform debate. Students should refer to print and non-print media as resources. Once the surveys are conducted and the data recorded, the results can be communicated through a bar graph.

Have students review current events on various perspectives on health care, including the position of the Children’s Defense Fund. Students should compare and contrast the perspectives for further group discussion.

How a Bill Becomes a Law

From: <http://www.socialstudiesforkids.com/articles/government/howabillbecomesalaw.htm>

Part 1: How It Starts

An American federal law begins as an idea. Someone, somewhere has an idea for a law. That person tells someone else, who tells someone else, who tells someone else... It's nice to tell other people about what your idea for a law is, but only when you tell your congressperson do you really start the process rolling.

If your congressperson thinks that your idea has a good chance of becoming a law, then he or she promises to sponsor it. This means that he or she will support it and speak out in favor of it, in Congress and in public. Once your idea has support from a member of Congress, it's on the fast track to success.



First, your congressperson introduces your idea as a bill. The bill is sent to the right committee. (Example: If your idea has to do with farming, the bill will go to the Agriculture Committee.) The members of the committee discuss the bill and then vote on it. If they approve it, then the bill goes to the full house of Congress. (Note: A bill can begin in either the Senate or the House of Representatives. In our example, the bill begins in the House.)



So, your bill has been approved by the Agriculture Committee. It goes to the full House. All 435 members of the House discuss it, debate it, and then vote on it. One more than half of the members have to approve it. In the House, this is 218. If they approve it, then the bill goes to the other house of Congress, the Senate. If the House doesn't approve the bill, they may either send it back to the committee it came from or abandon it.

Part 2: How It Ends Up

Now, let's say that your bill has passed the House. It now goes to the Senate, first to the right committee. In the Senate, this is the Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry Committee. Then, the process repeats. This committee discusses it, then votes on it. If they approve of the bill, then it goes to the full Senate. All 100 Senators discuss it, debate it, then vote on it. If 51 Senators vote in favor of the bill, then it passes and goes to the President to sign.



If the President signs the bill, it becomes a law. If he doesn't like it, he can veto it and send it back to Congress. Both houses of Congress then have three choices:

- They can change the bill so it is more to the President's liking;
- They can agree that the bill will never be passed and let it go;
- They can vote to override the President's veto.

For this last thing to happen, they need to have two-thirds of the members of both houses vote to override. In the Senate, this is 67. In the House, this is 290. If either house fails to get to that number, then the President's veto stands and the bill will not become a law.



Good news for you: The Senate passed your bill, and the President has signed it. Your bill is now a law.