

CIVIC EDUCATION ACTIVITY FOR NOVEMBER 4TH

CHAMPIONS FOR CHILDREN'S HEALTH STROLLER BRIGADE

GRADES 9-12

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 how the U.S. government operates with three branches of government.

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

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 4 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 9-12

FOCUS: **Citizenship, Public Policy, Principles and Values, US Constitution, Bills, Laws, Branches of Government, Checks and Balances, Health Care Reform Bill for children, Congress**

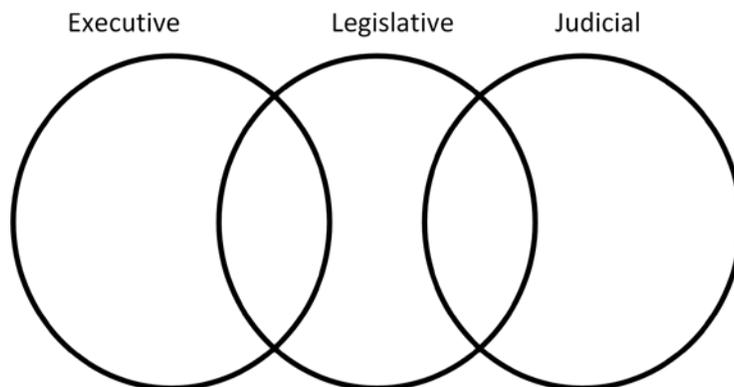
OBJECTIVES: **Students should be able to:**

- 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/Internet copy of how a bill becomes a law/markers/Bill of Rights

SUGGESTED TIME: 4 hours – may be completed over two days.

OPENING ACTIVITY: Discuss the roles of the 3 branches of government. Have students compare and contrast the roles of the 3 branches of government using a Venn diagram. Then have students begin thinking about the Citizen’s relationship to the branches of government on local, state, and national levels.



MAIN ACTIVITY:

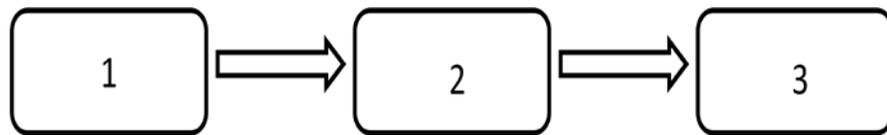
Part I

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 groups and have groups research the path of the current health reform debate. Determine where the debate is in the legislative cycle. Outline the process of health reform to date using a flow chart.



Have groups review current events and other print and non-print media on various perspectives regarding health care reform. Examine the position of the Children’s Defense Fund. Groups must assess the various positions regarding the nation’s health care discussion and communicate findings on a bar graph.

Recommendations for discussion:

- What are the major health care reform positions being advocated in Congress? What populations or groups support each of these positions?
- What are your thoughts on these different health care reform positions? What are your reactions to this process?
- Respond to the Children’s Defense Fund’s demand for comprehensive, affordable and simple health care benefits for all children to be included in any health reform bill passed by Congress.
- Share your thoughts on the process we use in America to create laws for all citizens. Where are we in the process with regard to health care reform? Why do you think this is so?
- Based on your knowledge of the law making process, hypothesize the next steps Congress will take regarding health care reform.

- Who do you think has the most power in the development of laws? Explain.
- How integral is the role of citizens 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 now as a citizen to ensure health care reform addresses the needs of all children?
- Considering millions of children face bureaucratic barriers as they try to access health care in America, what are your thoughts on the policies and values advanced by advocates for and against real health care reform for all children?
- What does it mean to describe citizens as “haves” and “have-nots”?

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

Have students share their reactions to the November 4th activities.

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 children in America. Have students write Opinion Editorials or Letters to the Editor for their school paper, their local paper, online media networks, etc. to urge others to be advocates for all children in the health care reform discussion. Letters/Op-Eds should:

- Address the three principles that should be included in any health reform bill under consideration.
- Discuss the significance of the Stroller Brigade
- Target an audience and make a call to action
- Share a story highlighting how a lack of one or more of the principles has impacted the life of the author or someone close to them.

CLOSING: Have students list how a person can be a Champion for Children’s Health. Have students discuss strategies they can implement to get others to become Champions for Children’s Health.

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 their 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 write an essay paralleling the civic engagement of children in Birmingham, AL in 1963 with their civic engagement at the Stroller Brigades across the nation in 2009.

APPENDIX

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.