

How a Bill Becomes a Federal Law

Based on the Annenberg Classroom Video “How a Bill Becomes a Federal Law”

Developed by Linda Weber

Leonore Annenberg
Institute for Civics

www.annenbergclassroom.org

Summary

The process of how a bill becomes a federal law is more than a series of linked steps. It is the fundamental way people in a democracy get involved and work through their elected officials to meet needs and solve problems to benefit themselves and other Americans. Through this lesson, students will learn about the dynamic process of federal lawmaking and how it relates to them.

About the Video

In the video, “How a Bill Becomes a Federal Law,” Representative Pete Sessions (R) of Texas meets with a class of high school students to talk about the lawmaking process from his experience in the House of Representatives. Senator Dianne Feinstein (D) of California is interviewed and provides additional insights and information about how decisions are made. Throughout the video, both members of the 110th Congress respond to questions from the students.

The narrator describes a bridge-repair scenario that leads to a bill for the viewer/listener to follow and relate to what Congressman Sessions and Senator Feinstein have to say about the process of a bill becoming a law.

Notes and Considerations

- This lesson presumes that students have been introduced to the lawmaking process and have a basic understanding the vocabulary and concepts related to the legislative and executive branches of government.
- Understanding how a bill becomes law requires that teachers teach so students can learn both content and process knowledge. Consequently, instruction and learning takes more time. Therefore, this lesson recommends a 5-session implementation. However, suggestions are provided for reducing the number of sessions from 5 to 3 if the class has a good foundation of understanding related to the legislative process.
- Because learning is more meaningful through connections, a study of the process that a bill goes through to become law is an ideal way to help students understand the relevance of what they are learning.

Snapshot of Lesson

Grades: Middle School

Subject Focus: Civics/Government

Estimated Time: 5, 50-min. sessions; options for 3- 4 sessions

Day 1—Follow the Paper Trail

Day 2—Video & Study Questions

Day 3—Video Follow-Up Activity: One from Many

Day 4—Video Follow-Up Activity: Messages Beyond Words

Day 5—A REAL Review; Lesson Quiz

Alignment to National Standards for Civics and Government

Materials/Equipment Needed:

- Video: “How a Bill Becomes a Federal Law” (20 minutes)
- Paper and pencil
- Variety of materials to make charts and diagrams
- Computer with Internet connection and projector for class viewing

Lesson Materials Included:

- Student’s Video Study Guide with follow-up activities
- Teacher’s Video Guide with follow-up activities, notes, answers, and directions
- H.R. 3311 legislation and information
- Lesson Rubric
- Lesson Quiz

Supporting Resources Included:

- Congressional Committees
- Legislative Process
- Standards-level Alignment to National Standards for Civics and Government

TOPICS

- Constitutional authority
- Responsibilities of government
- Functions of Congress
- Legislative process
- Shared powers (Legislative and Executive Branch)
- Roles and responsibilities of American citizens
- Democratic principles and values
- Civic dispositions
- Systems thinking

NATIONAL STANDARDS

Document: *National Standards for Civics and Government* (1994) Center for Civic Education
<http://www.civiced.org/index.php?page=stds>

Grades 5-8 Organizing Questions

The national content standards for civics and government are organized under five significant questions. The following outline lists the high-level organizing questions supported by this lesson.

- I. What are civic life, politics, and government?
 - A. What is civic life? What is politics? What is government? Why are government and politics necessary? What purposes should government serve?
 - C. What are the nature and purposes of constitutions?
 - D. What are alternative ways of organizing constitutional governments?

- II. What are the foundations of the American political system?
 - A. What is the American idea of constitutional government?
 - B. What are the distinctive characteristics of American society?
 - C. What is American political culture?
 - D. What values and principles are basic to American constitutional democracy?

- III. How does the government established by the constitution embody the purposes, values, and principles of American democracy?
 - A. How are power and responsibility distributed, shared, and limited in the government established by the United States Constitution.
 - D. Who represents you in local, state, and national governments?
 - F. How does the American political system provide for choice and opportunities for participation?

- V. What are the roles of the citizen in American democracy?
 - B. What are the rights of citizens?
 - C. What are the responsibilities of citizens?
 - D. What dispositions or traits of character are important to the preservation and improvement of American constitutional democracy?
 - E. How can citizens take part in civic life?

Note: A more detailed standards-level alignment related to these questions can be found in the Supporting Resources section of this lesson plan.

OUTCOMES

Knowledge, skills, and dispositions

Students will . . .

1. Identify and explain the sequential steps in the federal lawmaking process.
2. Identify and explain the knowledge, skills, and dispositions that ordinary citizens and government officials need for the legislative process to work.
3. Recognize democratic values and principles in the lawmaking process.
4. Identify impediments to effective lawmaking.
5. Determine the importance of negotiation and compromise for arriving at consensus.
6. Explain how the quality of life in the U.S. is ultimately the responsibility of the people through the kinds of laws that are made and passed.
7. Draw conclusions about the importance of student/citizen participation in the lawmaking process and identify how one can get involved.
8. Identify how lawmakers, political parties, and interest groups influence legislation.
9. Gain appreciation for complexities of the lawmaking process and the power it has to turn ideas into laws that can make life better for Americans.

Integrated Skills

1. Information literacy skills

Students will . . .

- Gather, organize, and present information.
- Analyze primary sources.
- Use technology as a tool to support learning.

2. Media literacy skills

Students will . . .

- Gain explicit and implicit information through viewing and listening.
- Interpret both verbal and nonverbal behavior.

3. Communication & Collaboration skills

Students will . . .

- Write and speak clearly to contribute ideas, information, and express own point of view.
- Write in response to questions.
- Collaborate to produce a final project.
- Negotiate and compromise to form consensus.
- Respect diverse opinions.
- Assume shared responsibility for collaborative work.
- Resolve differences peacefully and productively.

4. Study skills

Students will . . .

- Use organizational strategies.
- Take notes.
- Manage time and materials.

5. Thinking skills

Students will . . .

- Describe and recall information.
- Explain ideas or concepts.
- Apply concepts and principles.
- Analyze and compare to discover relationships.
- Synthesize information to create.
- Evaluate and judge courses of action.
- Use systems thinking.

6. Problem-solving skills

Students will . . .

- Use sound reasoning in understanding.
- Ask meaningful questions.
- Explain the interconnections within the process that are needed to achieve a goal.

7. Participation skills

Students will . . .

- Contribute to small and large group discussion.
- Work responsibly both individually and with diverse people.
- Contribute to group decisionmaking.
- Express own beliefs, feelings, and convictions.
- Show initiative and self-direction.

ASSESSMENT

Evidence of achievement may be gathered from student performance related to the following:

1. Individual Work
 - Viewing and Listening
 - Study Guide and Challenge Questions
 - Diagram
 - Opinion Essay
2. Group Work (Follow-up Activities)
 - One from Many
 - Messages Beyond Words
3. Lesson Quiz

VOCABULARY (see glossary included with this lesson)

- 110th Congress
- American Dream
- appropriation bill
- authorization bill
- “big guns”
- bill
- checks and balances
- civic life
- cloture
- committee
- committee process
- compromise
- Congress
- Congressman
- consensus
- Constitution
- debate
- “deliberative body”
- Democrat
- enact
- expert witnesses
- federal law
- filibuster
- germane
- “go to the wall”
- hopper
- House of Representatives
- idea
- “ideas body”
- jurisdiction
- law
- “legislative work”
- lobbyist
- majority Leader
- majority rule
- majority Whip
- minority leader
- minority whip
- Parliamentarian
- party
- party whip
- politics
- process
- referred
- regular order
- Representative
- Republican
- Rules Committee
- “selling your bill”
- Senate
- Senator
- shared powers
- signature
- Speaker of the House
- Standing Committee
- testimony
- Transportation & Infrastructure Committee
- unanimous consent
- veto
- veto override
- vote

Resources for Definitions

Annenberg Classroom Glossary

<http://www.annenbergclassroom.org/terms>

FactCheckED—Dictionary

<http://factchecked.org/factchecked-dictionary/>

Senate Glossary

http://www.senate.gov/pagelayout/reference/b_three_sections_with_teasers/glossary.htm

LESSON OVERVIEW

Day 1: Follow the Paper Trail

Students are prepared for the lesson and video, “How a Bill Becomes a Federal Law,” through review of basic vocabulary and information about the legislative process. They participate in the construction of a giant paper trail on the board that shows one path a bill can take to become a law, then follow the paper trail as a review. The class relates the paper trail to the way processes work through the interconnection and interaction of many parts to reach a goal. Study groups are formed for the duration of the lesson.

Day 2: Video “How a Bill Becomes a Federal Law”

Students view the video, work through the Video Study Guide, and begin Follow-Up Activity #1: One from Many by drafting their individual process diagrams for the bridge bill in the video, which they complete for homework.

Day 3: Video Follow-Up Activity #1: One from Many

Each study group collaborates to develop a single process model from the multiple ideas contributed by each member that describes the pathway for the bridge bill in the video.

Day 4: Video Follow-Up Activity #2: Messages Beyond Words

The study groups view the video once again to notice the important verbal and non-verbal messages conveyed and complete the Follow-Up Activity #2: Messages Beyond Words. After a class discussion, students begin writing their opinion essays.

Day 5: A REAL Review; Lesson Quiz

Through a teacher-led discussion, students review and discuss the lawmaking process by examining the pathway of actual legislation (H.R. 3311) introduced in the House after the collapse of the interstate I-35 bridge located in Minneapolis, Minnesota on August 1, 2007. Comparisons will be made to the path for the fictitious bridge repair bill tracked in the video. After discussion, students take the Lesson Quiz.

Implementation Options (3 or 4 days)

Depending on the availability of time, and the knowledge level of the class, this lesson can be adjusted from 5 sessions to 3 in the following ways:

- Skip Day 1 for a class with a good understanding of the legislative process and have a brief review on the day of the video.
- Eliminate Day 3 by substituting the study group part in Follow-Up Activity #1 with an individual homework project to design a concept map for the bridge bill scenario. The same rubric could apply.

Materials and Equipment for this Lesson

Materials and Equipment Needed

- 20-minute video: “How a Bill Becomes a Federal Law” available from Annenbergclassroom.org
- Paper and pencil
- Variety of materials to make charts and diagrams
- Computer with Internet access
- Projector for class viewing

Lesson Materials Included

- Student’s Video Study Guide (includes follow-up activities with worksheets)
- Teacher’s Video Guide (with additional notes, answers, and directions)
- H.R. 3311 legislation
 - H.R. 3311 IH
 - H.R. 3311 EAS
 - H.R. 3311 as Public Law 110-56
- Lesson Rubric
- Lesson Quiz

Supporting Resources Included

- Congressional Committees
- The Legislative Process
- Standards-Level Alignment to National Standards for Civics and Government

TEACHING ACTIVITIES

DAY ONE: Follow the Paper Trail

Overview: The teacher introduces the lesson and helps build background knowledge about the legislative process by involving students in the construction of a giant paper trail on the board. An understanding of how processes work is also developed.

Materials Needed:

- 5x7 cards or half/sheets of paper (1 per student)
- Tape or magnets for the board

Advance Preparation:

1. Plot out a pathway that is simple, yet appropriate for the class. If you don't have a pathway in mind, refer to the "The Legislative Process" description in the Supporting Resources section or follow links for other resources listed in this lesson.
2. Write a step in the lawmaking process on one card and a related detail on another card. Use enough 5x7 cards or half sheets of paper so every student in class gets at least one card.
3. Steps should be written in one color, details in another. If there is an odd number of students, give one student 2 cards.
4. Select ONLY the appropriate steps from the following chart that are needed to make the pathway you want to portray on the board.
5. NOTE: If your class is fairly new to the legislative process and needs more help, sequence the cards in advance by writing a small number on the back of the cards. There should be 2 cards for each number (Step 1; Detail 1)

Examples of Steps	Examples of Details
Recognize a problem or a need	anyone
Propose an idea for a solution	anyone
Talk to Congressman	anyone
Talk to Senator	anyone
Write a bill	Representative (Congressman)
Introduce a spending bill	Only in the House of Representatives
Write a bill	Senator
Introduce a bill	Representative (Congressman)
Introduce a bill	Senator
Bill is referred to House committee	Reviewed, debated, amended, put to vote
Bill is referred to Senate committee	Reviewed, debated, amended, put to vote
Influence lawmakers	Anyone
Influence lawmakers	Anyone
Bill goes to Rules Committee	Step in House, not in Senate
Bill goes to full House	Debate and vote
Bill goes to full Senate	Debate and vote
Bill is changed (amended)	Rewritten and new version made
Bill is changed (amended)	Rewritten and new version made
Bill goes to other house of Congress	Debate and vote
Bill is not changed	Approval by both Houses
Bill is signed	President
Bill is vetoed	President

Procedure:

1. As students enter the class, hand each one a 5 x7 card on which you have written a step or detail in the path that you want to create and discuss with your class.
2. When everyone is seated, ask the students if they ever heard someone say. . .“There oughta be a law!!” Have a short discussion about why someone might say those words (e.g., pressing issues, needs, problems). Then point out that awareness of a need or problem is really the first step in making laws. But awareness alone won’t fix things unless people get motivated, involved, and know how to make it happen for themselves and others.
3. Explain to the students that they will be mapping out a journey of survival by using the cards you gave them when they entered class.
4. Get started by asking, “How do you think the journey begins?” Look at your cards and decide if yours is first. (Two or more people may have the correct cards. Every step card will also have a detail card.)
5. If students think they have the right cards, they stand up. When called on, students must justify their reasons. If they are correct, the cards get taped on the board in sequential order to plot out the journey of a bill up Capitol Hill. Detail cards sit side-by- side with the step cards.

(Option: The Teacher calls out the numbers and tells the story as the students tape the cards on the board.)
6. Prompt students with leading questions to move the process along.
7. When everyone has used their cards, a giant visual of the paper trail will be made on the board.
8. Review the process by following the paper trail created.
9. Help the class analyze the paper trail and develop understandings about the nature of the process. Ask leading questions to draw out understandings about process, then make a chart and post it in the room. Points to make include the following:
 - It is a problem-solving process.
 - It is a decision-making process.
 - The process begins with awareness of a need or problem.
 - There is a goal. (meet a need or fix a problem)
 - There is an idea for a solution.
 - The idea is improved through a cycle of negotiation, compromise, and decisionmaking.
 - The process contains related and interconnected steps.
 - Without action (negotiation, compromise, and decision-making) there is no movement toward the goal.
 - Without continuous action (negotiation, compromise, and decision-making) goals cannot be reached.
 - Resources and support are needed along the way. (e.g., people, money, time)
10. Define “bill” and “law” and help the students understand how they are different and how they are related.
11. Preview the coming days and divide the class into study groups.

Important: Because bills can take different pathways and still end up as laws, the path you choose to have the students work with on this day can, and probably should be, different from the bridge bill scenario in the video. If you choose to use the same path, described in the video, don’t tell the students as you want them to figure it out by listening carefully, analyzing information they gather, and coming to their own conclusions. There is a diagram of the video’s bridge bill path in the Teacher’s Video Guide for your reference.

DAY TWO: Video “How a Bill Becomes a Federal Law”

Day 2 is video day. All directions related to the video can be found in the Teacher’s Video Guide.

Each student will need a copy of the Student’s Video Study Guide. The Study Guide contains everything students need for the 3 days of video-related work. Students will view the 20 minute video, “How a Bill Becomes a Federal Law,” work through the Video Study Guide, and begin Follow-Up Activity #1: One from Many by drafting their individual diagrams about the bridge bill in the video, which will be completed for homework. (They should figure out what they think is the pathway without any help.)

DAY THREE: Video Follow-Up Activity #1- One from Many

Day 3 is a video-related day. Please refer to the directions for this activity in the Video Guides. Students work in study groups to complete the collaborative part of the activity by creating a single model of the pathway for the bridge bill in the video.

DAY FOUR: Video Follow-Up Activity #2- Messages Beyond Words

Day 4 is a video-related day. Please refer to the directions for this activity in the Video Guides. The study groups view the video once again without stops to notice the flow of the story and gain important verbal and non-verbal messages conveyed by the video. After watching, students complete Follow-Up Activity #2: Messages Beyond Words (in their Guides). After a class discussion, students begin writing individual opinion essays and complete the essays for homework.

DAY FIVE: A REAL Review; Lesson Quiz

Overview

Real-world connections will be made while also reviewing the process of how a bill becomes a law. The first part of class time will be devoted to a teacher-led discussion that examines actual legislation to learn about the pathway for H.R. 3311 that was introduced in Congress after the collapse of the interstate I-35 bridge located in Minneapolis, Minnesota on August 1, 2007. Comparisons will also be made to the bridge bill in the video.

After the discussion, students begin working on the Lesson Quiz.

Materials and Equipment Needed

- Computer with an internet connection and a projector for class viewing
- Lesson Materials section
 - o Documents to show on the screen
 - H.R. 3311 IH
 - H.R. 3311 EAS
 - H.R. 3311 as Public Law 110-56
 - o 1 copy of the Lesson Quiz for each student
- Additional information if needed
 - o Congressional Bills Glossary at <http://www.gpoaccess.gov/bills/glossary.html>

Procedure

1. Show a photo of the Minneapolis bridge collapse on the screen for the class to see as they enter the room. This real event prompted the introduction of a bill to Congress to assist with the repair, a scenario that is very similar to the one in the video.

- Photo from Salem News

http://www.salem-news.com/stimg/august032007/bridge_photo_3.jpg

2. Show bill H.R. 3311 as introduced in the House. (H.R.3311.IH) Either use the copy provided in the Lesson Materials section or go directly to the THOMAS database at <http://thomas.loc.gov/> and search by H.R.3311.IH. Be sure to select “Bill Number.”

Tell the students a little about THOMAS:

“Named after Thomas Jefferson, THOMAS was launched in 1995 by the Library of Congress at the direction of the 104th Congress in order to make federal legislative information freely available to the public”

http://thomas.loc.gov/home/abt_thom.html

Help students crack the code:

- Bills introduced in the House are numbered then given an H.R. prefix. Bills introduced in the Senate are numbered and given an S. prefix. They keep this “name” for the entire process and it also is written on the final law.
- There are abbreviations (initials) to the right of the number that indicate the version of the bill. Any time a bill is changed, a new version must be made. Often bills may go through many re-writes as they make their way along the process.
- The IH abbreviation stands for (Introduced in House).

Questions:

- What does an IH abbreviation tell us about where the bill is in the process? Has it been changed by Congress yet? How do you know?

It tells us that the bill is at the beginning of the process. It was just introduced in the House of Representatives and has not been changed.

- If H.R. 3311 passes the House, where does it go next?

To the Senate

3. Show bill H.R. 3311.EAS to find out what happened when H.R. 3311 went to the Senate. A copy is included in the Lesson Materials section or you can search THOMAS in the same way.

Help students crack the code:

The EAS abbreviation stands for “Engrossed Amendment Senate” and indicates that H.R. 3311 was changed (amended) by the Senate so it had to be rewritten and this is the new version passed by the Senate. Point out the section that was added as the amendment.

Questions:

- If the Senate amends a bill it received from the House, what must happen next?

It must go back to the House for review and a vote.

- How is the H.R. 3311 path different from the path for the bridge repair bill tracked in the video?

In the Minneapolis bridge example, the Senate amended the House version so it had to go back to the House for approval. In the video, the Senate did not change the bill so it went on to the President because the House has already approved it.

4. Show H.R. 3311 as **Public Law 110-56**.

A copy is included in the Lesson Materials section or you can search THOMAS. This time select “Public Laws” on the home page under the “Find More Legislation” category. Select the appropriate range for 110-56 then scroll down to “56.” The “110” stands for the 110th Congress.

- Point out where H.R. 3311 appears on the law (on the left).
- Explain how the bill got its new designation as Public Law 110-56: “If the President approves a bill, or allows it to become law without signing it, the original enrolled bill is sent from the White House to the Archivist of the United States for publication. If a bill is passed by both Houses over the objections of the President, the body that last overrides the veto transmits it. It is then assigned a public law number, and paginated for the Statutes at Large volume covering that session of Congress. The public and private law numbers run in sequence starting anew at the beginning of each Congress and are prefixed for ready identification by the number of the Congress. For example, the first public law of the 108th Congress is designated Public Law 108–1 and the first private law of the 108th Congress is designated Private Law 108–1. Subsequent laws of this Congress also will contain the same prefix designator.” (How Our Laws are Made, U.S. House of Representatives, pg. 53-54)

<http://www.senate.gov/reference/resources/pdf/howourlawsaremade.pdf>

Questions:

- What can we conclude happened to H.R. 3311 when it went back to the House after the Senate amended it? It was passed by the House of Representatives, because a changed bill must always be approved by both Houses of Congress.
- What does having an H.R. 3311 designation on the final law tell you about the process the bill went through? It indicates that the bill originated in the House of Representatives.
- When we look at the law, what can we be sure about the process that H.R. 3311 went through to get there? Answers should reflect the steps and decisions made in the process of a bill becoming law.

Lesson Quiz (It may also be used as a take-home quiz.)

EXTENSION ACTIVITIES

1. Survivor: Washington, D.C.

In many ways, the process of a bill becoming a law is a story of growth and survival. Born out of an idea, it must be nurtured and supported through different stages of development before it reaches maturity as a law. A bill is always vulnerable and can die at many points along its journey. It depends on others to protect it, grow it, and make it better. Even after it becomes a law, it's still at risk because in a constitutional democracy the power to make to make and change the laws is up to the people through their representatives in Congress.

- Write a survival story about the journey of a bill on its way to becoming law. Use your imagination, but the journey must parallel a real legislative pathway. Plot out the legislative path you want to use for your story then use it to guide the story development. You may get ideas from the Survivor TV series, favorite survival stories or movies. Include a map for the story and a parallel drawing of the legislative process your story describes. Enrich your story with illustrations, pictures, maps, etc.

2. Learn More about Bill H.R.3311

- Research the process that H.R. 3311 followed on its journey to becoming a law.
- Use a computer to create a concept map and a timeline for the pathway of H.R. 3311.
- Write a response: Congress has often been criticized for moving too slowly. Calculate the length of time it took for H.R. 3311 to become law and make observations and draw conclusions about the speed at which Congress acted.

3. Compare Descriptions of the Lawmaking Process

- View the 3-minute video “I’m Just a Bill” from Schoolhouse Rock (Lyrics and link to video from You Tube)
<http://www.schoolhouserock.tv/Bill.html>
- Make a chart to compare and contrast what is learned about the legislative process through the 3-minute Schoolhouse Rock video “I’m Just a Bill” and the 20-minute Annenberg Classroom video, “How a Bill Becomes a Federal Law.”

Fun Fact: When the video debuted in 1975, “a number of government agencies and lobbyists asked for copies to educate their own staffs.” <http://www.school-house-rock.com/history.htm>

4. Making Laws is Messy Business

For a look at the messy business of lawmaking, view the following video from The Center on Congress from Indiana University and write a personal response.

“The Dynamic Legislative Process” (An interactive learning module)

<http://congress.indiana.edu/e-learning-module-the-dynamic-legislative-process>

5. Some Legislation May Surprise You

- Research to learn about different types of legislation via THOMAS at <http://thomas.loc.gov/>
- Search by keywords that are interesting to you (e.g., horse, dog, employment, vehicles, cars, tires, guns, food, etc.)
- Make a chart that contains the following:
 - o 10 examples of interesting, and what you would consider unusual, pieces of legislation. Include at least 5 examples that became laws and indicate the date they became law.
 - o The keywords used to find the legislation.
 - o The Congress in which you found the legislation.
 - o For legislation that didn’t make it, indicate where they died in the process.

6. Word Games—Why Definitions Matter

Politicians are skillful with words and often try to skew definitions to their advantage.

- Read the following article from FactCheck.org to learn how politicians running for President tried to use definitions for “a bill” to their advantage. Article: “Just How Many Bills Has Kerry Passed?”

http://www.factcheck.org/print_just_how_many_bills_has_Kerry_passed.html

- Quote a definition for “a bill” from an authoritative source then determine who was right—President Bush, or John Kerry. Support your answer.

Resources from AnnenbergClassroom.org, its Affiliates, and others

Speak Out Discussions

<http://www.annenbergclassroom.org/speakouts>

FactCheck.org

http://www.factcheck.org/a_fictional_view_of_the_filibuster.html

The Annenberg Guide to the United States Constitution: What it Says, What it Means

<http://www.annenbergclassroom.org/page/a-guide-to-the-united-states-constitution>

National Constitution Center

Legislative Process

<http://capwiz.com/constitutioncenter/issues/basics/?style=legis>

Additional Resources

Ben's Guide to U.S. Government (for Kids)

“How Laws are Made”

<http://bensguide.gpo.gov/6-8/lawmaking/index.html>

The Center on Congress at Indiana University

“The Dynamic Legislative Process” (An interactive learning module)

<http://congress.indiana.edu/e-learning-module-the-dynamic-legislative-process>

“Enactment of a Law”

By Robert B. Dove Parliamentarian, United States Senate, Updated February 1997

<http://thomas.loc.gov/home/enactment/enactlawtoc.html>

GPO Access (A Service of the U.S. Government Printing Office)

“Legislative Branch Resources on GPO Access”

<http://www.gpoaccess.gov/legislative.html>

“How Our Laws are Made”

Revised and Updated by Charles W. Johnson, Parliamentarian, U.S. House of Representatives, U.S. Government Printing House, 2003

<http://thomas.loc.gov/home/lawsmade.toc.html>

“I'm Just a Bill” video and lyrics from Schoolhouse Rock

<http://www.schoolhouserock.tv/Bill.html>

Office of the Clerk, U.S. House of Representatives

“The Legislative Process”

<http://clerk.house.gov/legislative/legprocess.aspx>

THOMAS

<http://thomas.loc.gov/>

Named after Thomas Jefferson, THOMAS was launched in 1995 by the Library of Congress at the direction of the 104th Congress in order to make federal legislative information freely available to the public. There is a variety of useful information on the site, including a searchable database of bills and resolutions.

U.S. Senate

“Legislative Process: How a Senate Bill Becomes a Law”

<http://www.senate.gov/reference/resources/pdf/legprocessflowchart.pdf>

LEARN ABOUT CONGRESS

- U.S. Senate
<http://www.senate.gov/>
- U.S. House of Representatives
<http://www.house.gov/>
- C-Span
Congress Resources
<http://www.c-spanvideo.org/videoLibrary/congress.php>
- The Center on Congress at Indiana University
Understanding Congress: A Citizens Guide
<http://congress.indiana.edu/Understanding-Congress-home>

All legislative Powers herein granted shall be vested in a Congress of the United States, which shall consist of a Senate and House of Representatives.

The Constitution of the United States, Article I, Section 1

Lesson Materials

- Student's Video Study Guide with follow-up activities
- Teacher's Video Study Guide with follow-up activities and directions for 3 sessions
- H.R. 3311 Legislation
 - H.R. 3311 IH
 - H.R. 3311 EAS
 - H.R. 3311 as Public Law 110-56
- Lesson Rubric
- Lesson Quiz

Student's Video Study Guide for "How a Bill Becomes a Federal Law"

Video Overview

In the video, "How a Bill Becomes a Federal Law," Representative Pete Sessions (R) of Texas meets with a class of high school students to talk about the process a bill must go through to become a law. Senator Dianne (D) of California is interviewed and provides additional insights and information about how decisions are made. Throughout the video, both members of the 110th Congress respond to questions from the students.

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The narrator presents a bridge-repair scenario for the viewer/listener to use and relate to what Congressman Sessions and Senator Feinstein have to say about the process of a bill becoming a law.

Note: The video describes information about committees and leadership in the House of Representatives and the Senate for the 110th Congress during the Bush Administration.

Study Tips

There is a lot of information packed into this video and speeding through it is not a good strategy for learning. Because it's much easier to process lots of information by breaking it into smaller chunks, the guide divides the video into 10 parts.

1. Work through the video carefully the first time it is shown by following this guide.
2. Watch and listen carefully.
3. Use your listening and observation skills to discover verbal and non-verbal messages about what's needed to make the process work.
 - personal attitudes, behaviors, knowledge, and skills
 - civic dispositions
 - democratic values and principles
4. Take good notes so you can use them later.
5. Participate in discussion.
6. Pause at the time indicators to reflect and answer the questions.
7. Revisit sections as needed to review by rewinding to the start times.
8. Ask questions.
9. Watch the video another time without any stops to gain appreciation for the flow of the story and notice things you may not have noticed before.

Challenge Questions

1. Where along the process of the bridge bill becoming a law, could it be changed?
2. Where along the process of the bridge bill becoming a law did it absolutely not get changed? Cite details to support your answer.
3. What was required for the bridge bill to keep moving along and end up as a law?
4. Of the two kinds of bills defined in the video, which kind of bill was the bridge bill? In which House did it originate? Provide details to support your answer.

Student's Video Study Guide for "How a Bill Becomes a Federal Law"

5. Reflect on Rep. Sessions final statement: "The American Dream will be alive and well as long as you continue to not only understand what we stand for, but how to make these ideas become present in our lives to make our country better." What is the "American Dream" and your role in helping it stay alive and well?

Words and Phrases

- | | | |
|------------------------------|----------------------------|---|
| • 110 th Congress | • filibuster | • referred |
| • American Dream | • germane | • regular order |
| • appropriation bill | • "go to the wall" | • Representative |
| • authorization bill | • hopper | • Republican |
| • "big guns" | • House of Representatives | • Rules Committee |
| • bill | • idea | • "selling your bill" |
| • checks and balances | • "ideas body" | • Senate |
| • civic life | • jurisdiction | • Senator |
| • cloture | • law | • shared powers |
| • committee | • "legislative work" | • signature |
| • committee process | • lobbyist | • Speaker of the House |
| • compromise | • majority Leader | • Standing Committee |
| • Congress | • majority rule | • testimony |
| • Congressman | • majority Whip | • Transportation & Infrastructure Committee |
| • consensus | • minority leader | • unanimous consent |
| • Constitution | • minority whip | • veto |
| • debate | • Parliamentarian | • veto override |
| • "deliberative body" | • party | • vote |
| • Democrat | • party whip | |
| • enact | • politics | |
| • expert witnesses | • process | |
| • federal law | | |

Study Questions

Directions: This guide divides the video into the following 10 parts and provides questions for each part to help you gather important information. Even if you know the answers to the questions, write something down because the process of writing will help you remember.

Part 1: Learn background information about Congress.

Part 2: Learn about the beginning steps for a bill to become a law.

Part 3: Learn more about what happens in committees.

Part 4: Learn about the role of negotiation and compromise.

Part 5: Learn about the leadership in the House of Representatives.

Part 6: Learn about other options for helping a bill become a law.

Part 7: Learn about consensus, decision-making, and the influence of others.

Part 8: Learn about the committee process in the Senate, information about the Senate, and how the Senate process differs from that in the House.

Part 9: Learn about President's power in the lawmaking process.

Part 10: Reflect on the value of the process and its importance for everyone.

Student's Video Study Guide for "How a Bill Becomes a Federal Law"

Part 1: Learn background information about Congress.

Start at the Beginning

1. What is the primary responsibility of Congress?
2. What document gives Congress its powers?
3. What are the two houses of Congress?
4. Who can write a bill?
5. Who can have an idea for a bill?
6. Where do bills begin?
7. What is the process like?
8. Who is Pete Sessions?
9. What does Pete Sessions mean when he says, "We are an ideas body and we like to make ideas better."?

Pause at 01:04 Answer/discuss the above questions. Continue when done.

Part 2: Learn about the beginning steps for a bill to become a law.

Start at 01:04

1. How does the process begin?
2. Describe the scenario used for the idea in this video.
3. How does an idea get considered by Congress?
4. Who can write a bill?
5. What is a hopper?
6. What happens to a bill before it is dropped in the hopper?
7. What happens to all the bills collected in the hopper?
8. What happens in Committee that makes it hard for a bill to survive?

Pause at 02:13 Answer/discuss the above questions. Continue when done.

Part 3: Learn more about what happens in committees.

Start at 02:13

Student question for Rep. Sessions: "Could you explain what happens in the committee process?"

1. How many Standing Committees are there in the House of Representatives?
2. Name the Standing Committee to which the bridge repair bill was referred and tell why it ended up there?
3. Define jurisdiction.
4. What does it mean to begin "selling your bill" and how does it help?

Student's Video Study Guide for "How a Bill Becomes a Federal Law"

5. Authorization bills deal with _____.
6. Appropriation bills deal with _____.
7. While most bills can originate in the House or the Senate, which bills can only originate in the House?

Pause at 03:28 Answer/discuss the above questions. Continue when done.

Part 4: Learn about the role of negotiation and compromise.

Start at 03:28

Student question for Rep. Sessions: "How much do lawmakers have to negotiate and compromise to pass a bill?"

1. How does negotiation and compromise make a bill better?
2. How does a bill get out of Committee and move to the next step?
3. Where does a bill go after it passes the Committee?
4. What does the Rules Committee do?
5. How many Representatives sit on the House Rules Committee? _____
How many are from the majority party? _____
How many are from the minority party? _____

Pause at 05:59 Answer/discuss the above questions. Continue when done.

Part 5: Learn about the leadership in the House of Representatives.

Start at 05:59

Student question for Rep. Sessions: "What are the responsibilities of the leaders of the House? More specifically, what power does the Speaker exert over legislation? And what is the role of the party whip?"

1. How often is a new Congress convened?
2. The current Congress is the 110th Congress. Name the majority party in the House of Representatives. _____ Democrat
3. How many members (House seats) are in the House of Representatives?
4. Who is the Speaker of the House in the 110th Congress?
How is the Speaker selected?
How does the Speaker influence legislation?
5. What is the majority whip's responsibility?
6. What is the minority whip's responsibility?
7. Why is it important for the House to debate a bill before a vote?
8. What happens in the full House of Representatives that makes it hard for a bill to survive?

Student's Video Study Guide for "How a Bill Becomes a Federal Law"

9. How does a bill make it out of the House?
10. Where does a bill go after leaving the House?

Pause at 08:18 Answer/discuss the above questions. Continue when done.

Part 6: Learn about other options for helping a bill become a law.

Start at 08:18

Student question for Rep. Sessions: "When a bill is voted down by a committee, what happens to it? Can it be brought back up again? When a bill is voted down by the full House of Representatives, what happens to it and can it be brought back up again?"

1. If a bill is having a hard time making it through the process what other ways can be tried to help it become a law?
2. Define germane.
3. After making it through the House, the bill heads for the Senate. Where does it end up in the Senate?

Pause at 09:37 Answer/discuss the above questions. Continue when done.

Part 7: Learn about consensus, decision-making, and the influence of others.

Start at 09:37

1. What is the meaning of consensus?
2. Why is consensus difficult?
3. When Senator Feinstein was asked how she handles important issues with other members of Congress, she responded by saying, "The key, I've always said, is knowing when to go to the wall and when to make a compromise. You can't go to the wall all of the time . . ." Explain what her statement means.
4. How does one decide when to "go to the wall?"

Student question for Senator Feinstein: "Have you ever had any personal conflicts while you're passing a law?"

5. What did you learn about decision-making from Senator Feinstein?
6. What did Senator Feinstein mean when she said she's a "little bit independent."

Student question for Senator Feinstein: "What is the impact of lobbyists when deciding controversial issues such as gun control?"

7. What did you learn about lobbyists from Senator Feinstein?
8. What did Senator Feinstein mean when she talked about "big guns."
9. Who are the "big guns" related to gun control in this country?

Pause at 12:10 Answer/discuss the above questions. Continue when done.

Student's Video Study Guide for "How a Bill Becomes a Federal Law"

Part 8: Learn about the committee process in the Senate, information about the Senate, and how the Senate process differs from that in the House.

Start at 12:10

1. How is the committee process in the Senate like that in the House?
2. How many Senators are there in the Senate?

Student question for Rep. Sessions: "How does the Senate's dealing with legislation contrast with that of the House?"

3. How is the Senate process different from than in the House?
4. Define "regular order."
5. Define "unanimous consent."
6. Tell about filibuster and cloture and why they are used in the Senate?
7. How does a bill get out of the Senate and where does it go next?

Pause at 14:45 Answer/discuss the above questions. Continue when done.

Part 9: Learn about President's power in the lawmaking process.

Start at 14:45

1. What does the President do to turn a bill into a law?
2. What happens to a bill that is approved by the House and Senate but the President doesn't like it?

Student question for Rep. Sessions: "If the President vetoes legislation that was initiated by the House, what are the steps a bill would be put through if the House wanted to try to override the bill veto?"

3. What is a veto override and how does it work?

Student question for Sen. Feinstein: "If the President was part of a different party is it harder to pass laws?"

4. Which party is in control of the House?
5. Which party is in control of the Senate?
6. To which party does President Bush belong?
7. Explain why it's harder to pass laws if the President is from the minority party.
8. What are the 3 options that Congress has for a bill that the President vetoed?
9. How many votes does it take to override a veto?

Pause at 17:07 Answer/discuss the above questions. Continue when done.

Part 10: Reflect on the value of the process and its importance for everyone.

Student's Video Study Guide for "How a Bill Becomes a Federal Law"

Start at 17:07

Student question for Rep. Sessions: "Congress has been criticized for moving slowly in developing legislation. Do you think the process needs to get sped up?"

1. What do you think? Discuss with others and support your reasons.
Before you respond
 - Reflect on Rep. Sessions comment at the beginning of the video when he said, "We are an ideas body and we like to make ideas better."
 - Consider Sen. Feinstein's comment at the end of the video. "It's called a deliberative body. In a sense that means a slow moving body. It's based, I believe, on the fact that no legislation is better than bad legislation."
 - Consider the three reasons given for why this process is important for everyone:
 - Determines the policies that govern our lives
 - Where government spends our money
 - How government meets our needs
2. Why is it important for YOU to know about the process of how a bill becomes a law?

Stop at the End Answer/discuss the above questions.

Revisit Challenge Questions

You teacher will pass back the responses that you gave to the Challenge Questions before watching the video.

Student Directions

1. Self-assess. Review what you wrote, cross out errors (don't erase), then write in the corrections.
2. Make additional corrections if needed after answers are discussed in class.
3. Reflect and identify specific reasons you did better the second time around.
4. Write your reasons on the back of the paper.

Student's Video Study Guide for "How a Bill Becomes a Federal Law"

Follow-up Activities

Follow-Up Activity #1: One from Many

Overview

Students work individually to draft a diagram for the path of the bridge bill in the video then collaborate in a small group to produce a single model.

Purpose

To experience the struggles of decision-making that lawmakers go through to produce one agreement from many ideas, students work to reach consensus from diverse ideas to produce a single diagram, model, or graphic organizer that identifies, describes, and sequences the steps involved in the bridge bill scenario presented in the video. The final product should match the process described in the video.

Materials Needed

- Lesson Rubric
- Student's Video Study Guide
- Video: "How a Bill Becomes a Federal Law"
- Paper, pencil, Post-It notes, markers, poster paper, etc.
- Computer and appropriate software (optional)

Student Directions

1. Homework: Develop a sketch for a graphic organizer that represents the path of the bridge bill in the video. Use the Study Guide and video as needed. The draft you bring to class should be a sequential representation of how the bridge bill became a law and include a brief description and explanation for each step.
2. Work in your study group to reach consensus by pooling the ideas in your drafts to produce a single diagram, model, or graphic organizer that identifies, describes, and sequences the steps involved in the bridge bill scenario presented in the video. Be creative and use a variety of materials.
3. As a group present and explain the model of agreement to the rest of the class.
4. Be prepared to reflect on the group interaction just experienced and share a little about what was easy, what was hard, and how problems were resolved.
5. Be prepared to discuss, imagine, and "think out loud" about what it takes to get 1 agreement from 585 people.(435 Representatives, 100 Senators, 1 President). Consider the importance of process, rules and procedures, time involved, fairness, etc.

Student's Video Study Guide for "How a Bill Becomes a Federal Law"

Follow-Up Activity #2: Messages Beyond Words

Overview

Students view the video without any stops then use critical and analytical viewing and listening skills to draw conclusions about the not-explicitly-stated knowledge, skills, values, principles, attitudes, and behaviors needed for the lawmaking process work. After small group work and class discussion, students will write an opinion essay.

Purpose

Focus on the roles and responsibilities of American citizens necessary for effective lawmaking by gathering information that was not explicitly discussed in the video but could be gained through inference, analysis, and interpretation of verbal and non-verbal behavior.

Materials Needed

- Follow-Up Activity #2: Messages Beyond Words
- Video: "How a Bill Becomes a Federal Law"
- Student's Video Study Guide
- Pencil/paper and/or word processing program
- Lesson Rubric

Student Directions

1. Using Follow-Activity #2: Messages Beyond Words, work in your study group to identify the many factors necessary for making the lawmaking process work by gathering information that was not explicitly discussed in the video but could be gained through inference, analysis, and interpretation of verbal and non-verbal behavior.

2. **Homework:** Write an Opinion Essay

Reflect on the activity Messages Beyond Words, then write a 5-paragraph opinion essay that supports one "behind the scenes" factor that you feel is critical for making the lawmaking process work and explain why.

- Paragraph 1: Introductory paragraph
- Paragraph 2: First supporting detail
- Paragraph 3: Second supporting detail
- Paragraph 4: Third supporting detail
- Paragraph 5: Summary paragraph

Student's Video Study Guide for "How a Bill Becomes a Federal Law"

Follow-Up Activity #2: Messages Beyond Words

How well the lawmaking process works depends on a lot of "behind the scenes" factors that were not explicitly discussed in the video, but could be inferred from the way the words were delivered, the attitudes and actions of the speakers, and the images used.

1. In your study group, discuss the verbal and nonverbal messages that came through in the video related to each of the items in the chart. Check the ones you can substantiate and be prepared to share during the class discussion that follows.

(✓)	Knowledge
	Understands how the lawmaking process works.
	Informed about public issues.
	Knows responsibilities of leadership.
	Knows what government can and cannot do.
(✓)	Skills
	Gathers information and facts
	Communicates knowledge to others.
	Joins political parties, interest groups, and other organizations to influence decisions.
	Attends meetings of governing bodies.
	Votes responsibly.
	Works cooperatively with others.
	Participates in public service.
	Speaks and write persuasively.
(✓)	Traits of character, attitudes, and behavior. (Dispositions)
	<i>civility</i> —willingness to listen to and respect different points of view; avoiding hostile, abusive, emotional, and illogical argument
	<i>courage</i> —strength to stand up for one's convictions when conscience demands
	<i>respect for the rights of individuals</i> —respect for others' right to an equal voice in government, to hold and advocate diverse ideas
	<i>respect for law</i> —willingness to abide by laws; willingness to work through peaceful, legal means to change laws.
	<i>honesty</i> —willingness to seek and express the truth
	<i>open mindedness</i> —considering others' points of view
	<i>critical mindedness</i> —question the validity of various positions, including one's own
	<i>negotiation and compromise</i> —reaching agreement with those of differing views
	<i>persistence</i> —willingness to try again and again to accomplish worthwhile goals
	<i>civic mindedness</i> —paying attention to and having concern for public affairs
	<i>compassion</i> —concern for the well-being of others, especially for the less fortunate
	<i>patriotism</i> —loyal to the values and principles of American constitutional democracy
(✓)	Values and principles of American constitutional democracy
	Respect for the Constitution.
	The importance of "the loyal opposition" in a constitutional democracy.
	Government responsibility to carry out the mandates of the people.
	Government responsibility to work for our benefit.
	Both men and women can serve in public office.

2. List other important knowledge, traits, attitudes, and actions that you noticed and feel are important that are not on the chart—the rights, roles, and responsibilities of citizens in an American democracy.

Teacher's Video Guide for "How a Bill Becomes a Federal Law"

Instructions to Teacher

There is a lot of information and detail about the lawmaking process packed into the 20-minute video, "How a Bill Becomes a Federal Law." Therefore, it is recommended that you adjust the pace at which students view the video according to their knowledge level so they have time to process what they hear and see.

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Using the Teacher's Video Guide

The Video Guides contain all the video-related questions and activities and worksheets for the lesson. The Teacher's Video Guide parallels the student's guide, but also includes notes, answers, information, and instructions to assist teachers as they guide students and develop the lesson.

Before the Video

On the day of the video, give each student a copy of the Student's Video Study Guide and review it together. Read the video overview, review the words and phrases, and discuss your expectations for watching, listening, and using the guide. Be sure to review the study tips.

- Identify topics to guide watching and listening. (Post these in the room.)
 - The nature and order of the steps involved in the lawmaking process
 - The roles and responsibilities of the people involved in the lawmaking process
 - The knowledge, skills, attitudes, and behaviors necessary for the process to work
 - The criticisms people have about the process
 - The way the process works to improve ideas
- Review the Challenge Questions and gather "before video" answers.

During the Video

- Pause at specific time indicators for reflection, discussion, clarification, and interpretation as needed. (Students viewing the video on their own should also "Pause" at the time indicators in their Study Guide to process what they just saw and heard.)
- Students watch and listen carefully to acquire information and understanding.
- Students respond to questions in the Study Guide.

After the Video

- Have a brief discussion to answer any questions or help clarify any points. Make the video available to students if they missed any questions or feel a need to revisit any specific parts.
- Revisit the Challenge Questions.
- Point out that they will be viewing the video again for some of the follow-up activities, too.
- Remind students that the Video Study Guide is for their personal study and they should be able to answer all the questions.
- Review and assign the Follow-Up Activities.

Teacher's Video Guide for "How a Bill Becomes a Federal Law"

Video Overview

In the video, "How a Bill Becomes a Federal Law," Representative Pete Sessions (R) of Texas meets with a class of high school students to talk about the process a bill must go through to become a law. Senator Dianne Feinstein (D) of California is interviewed and provides additional insights and information about how decisions are made. Throughout the video, both members of the 110th Congress respond to questions from students.

The narrator describes a bridge-repair scenario for the viewer/listener to use and relate to what Congressman Sessions and Senator Feinstein have to say about the process of a bill becoming a law.

Note: The video provides information about committees and leadership in the House of Representatives and the Senate for the 110th Congress during the Bush Administration.

Study Tips

There is a lot of information and detail packed into this video and speeding through it is not a good strategy for learning. Because it's much easier to process lots of information by breaking it into smaller chunks, the guide divides the video into 10 parts and provides questions about each part.

1. Work through the video carefully the first time it is shown by following this guide.
2. Watch and listen carefully.
3. Use your listening and observation skills to discover the hidden messages about what's needed to make the process work.
 - personal attitudes, behaviors, knowledge, and skills
 - civic dispositions
 - democratic values and principles
4. Take good notes so you can use them later.
5. Participate in discussion.
6. Pause at the time indicators to reflect and answer the questions.
7. Revisit sections as needed to review by rewinding to the start times.
8. Ask questions.
9. Watch the video another time without any stops to again appreciate the flow of the story and notice things you may not have seen before.

Challenge Questions

1. Where along the process of the bridge bill becoming a law, could it be changed?
It could be changed when it is written as a bill. It could be changed in the House Committee. It could be changed in the Senate Committee.
2. Where along the process of the bridge bill becoming a law did it absolutely not get changed? Cite details to support your answer.
This answer is not explicitly stated in the video and must be inferred. We know the bill was not changed in the Senate because it did not go back to the House for its approval and instead went on to the President. Any time a bill is changed and passed in one House it must go back to the other House for approval. Both Houses must approve the exact language in a bill. We know it didn't get changed by the President because the President doesn't have the power to change bills, only sign bills into laws.

Teacher's Video Guide for "How a Bill Becomes a Federal Law"

3. What was required for the bridge bill to keep moving along and end up as a law?
Answers may vary: It must get introduced into the House of Representatives, voted on and passed in Committee, voted on and passed by the full House, voted on and passed by the Senate Committee, voted on and passed by the full Senate, then signed by the President or make it through a veto-override.
4. Of the two kinds of bills defined in the video, which kind of bill was the bridge bill? In which House did it originate? Provide details to support your answer.
The answer is not explicitly stated in the video and must be inferred. It was a House bill because Rep. Pete Sessions is telling the story as a member of the House of Representatives. It was a spending bill because a repair would cost money. It originated in the House because spending bills can only originate in the House, not the Senate.
5. Reflect on Rep. Sessions final statement: "The American Dream will be alive and well as long as you continue to not only understand what we stand for, but how to make these ideas become present in our lives to make our country better." What is the "American Dream" and your role in helping it stay alive and well?
Answers will vary.

Teacher Directions

1. Review the questions with students.
2. Ask students to write answers on a signed piece of paper, fold it in half then give it to you. Be sure students realize they are not expected to know all the answers at this point, but by the end of the video and activities they will be able to provide good answers.
3. Revisit these questions after viewing the video.

Note: The purpose is to have students self-assess their growth in knowledge and understanding and identify strategies that helped with learning by analyzing their "before video" answers and "after video" answers.

Teacher's Video Guide for "How a Bill Becomes a Federal Law"

Words and Phrases

- 110th Congress
- American Dream
- appropriation bill
- authorization bill
- "big guns"
- bill
- checks and balances
- civic life
- cloture
- committee
- committee process
- compromise
- Congress
- Congressman
- consensus
- Constitution
- debate
- "deliberative body"
- Democrat
- enact
- expert witnesses
- federal law
- filibuster
- germane
- "go to the wall"
- hopper
- House of Representatives
- idea
- "ideas body"
- jurisdiction
- law
- "legislative work"
- lobbyist
- majority Leader
- majority rule
- majority Whip
- minority leader
- minority whip
- Parliamentarian
- party
- party whip
- politics
- process
- referred
- regular order
- Representative
- Republican
- Rules Committee
- "selling your bill"
- Senate
- Senator
- shared powers
- signature
- Speaker of the House
- Standing Committee
- testimony
- Transportation & Infrastructure Committee
- unanimous consent
- veto
- veto override
- vote

Resources for Definitions

- FactCheckED Dictionary
<http://www.factchecked.org/Dictionary.aspx>
- Justice Learning Democracy Glossary
<http://services.justicetalking.org/dg/>
- Senate Glossary
http://www.senate.gov/pagelayout/reference/b_three_sections_with_teasers/glossary.htm
- C-Span Congressional Glossary
<http://www.c-span.org/guide/congress/glossary/glossary.htm>

Teacher's Video Guide for "How a Bill Becomes a Federal Law"

Study Questions

Directions in Student's Guide

This guide divides the video into the following 10 parts and provides questions for each part to help you gather important information. Even if you know the answers to the questions, write something down because the process of writing will help you remember.

- Part 1: Learn background information about Congress.
- Part 2: Learn about the beginning steps for a bill to become a law.
- Part 3: Learn more about what happens in committees.
- Part 4: Learn about the role of negotiation and compromise.
- Part 5: Learn about the leadership in the House of Representatives.
- Part 6: Learn about other options for helping a bill become a law.
- Part 7: Learn about consensus, decision-making, and the influence of others.
- Part 8: Learn about the committee process in the Senate, information about the Senate, and how the Senate process differs from that in the House.
- Part 9: Learn about President's power in the lawmaking process.
- Part 10: Reflect on the value of the process and its importance for everyone.

Part 1: Learn background information about Congress.

Start at the Beginning

1. What is the primary responsibility of Congress?
Make laws
2. What document gives Congress its powers?
Constitution
3. What are the two houses of Congress?
House of Representatives, Senate
4. Who can write a bill?
Member of Congress
5. Who can have an idea for a bill?
Anybody
6. Where do bills begin?
Bills begin as ideas.
7. What is the process like?
Long and difficult
8. Who is Pete Sessions?
Republican Congressman (Member of the House of Representatives) from Texas
9. What does Pete Sessions mean when he said, "We are an ideas body and we like to make ideas better?"
Rarely does a bill end up exactly like the way it was written at the beginning of the process. Congress works with ideas in the form of bills which go through an improvement process in Congress on their way to becoming a law.

Pause at 01:04 Answer/discuss the above questions. Continue when done.

Teacher's Video Guide for "How a Bill Becomes a Federal Law"

Part 2: Learn about the beginning steps for a bill to become a law.

Begin at 01:04

1. How does the process begin?
When someone has an idea to fix a problem or address a need.
2. Describe the scenario used for the idea in this video.
There's a need to fix a dilapidated bridge on a federal highway that runs through a community.
3. How does an idea get considered by Congress?
It must first become a bill. The idea must be shared with a member of Congress who agrees there is a problem and supports legislation to fix it.
4. Who can write a bill?
A member of Congress
5. What is a hopper?
A little box on the floor of the House into which proposed bills are placed
6. What happens to a bill before it is dropped in the hopper?
It must be signed by the author. (Information to add: The person who signs the bill is called the Sponsor of the bill.)
7. What happens to all the bills collected in the hopper?
The Parliamentarian refers the bills to committees.
8. What happens in Committee that makes it hard for a bill to survive?
It meets up with people who may be opposed to the idea or want to make changes.

Pause at 02:13 Answer/discuss the above questions. Continue when done.

Part 3: Learn more about what happens in committees.

Begin at 02:13

Student question for Rep. Sessions: "Could you explain what happens in the committee process?"

1. How many Standing Committees are there in the House of Representatives?
20
2. Name the Standing Committee to which the bridge repair bill was referred and tell why it ended up there?
The Committee of Transportation and Infrastructure would receive the bill because it has jurisdiction over that issue.
3. Define jurisdiction.
Authority, control
4. What does it mean to begin "selling your bill" and how does it help?
A Congressman identifies friends or organizations that would help support the bill as an indication to the Committee and others in Congress of the broad support that is has.
5. Authorization bills deal with _____.
Policy
6. Appropriation bills deal with _____.
Spending

Teacher's Video Guide for "How a Bill Becomes a Federal Law"

7. While most bills can originate in the House or the Senate, which bills can only originate in the House?
Spending bills
8. What kind of bill do you think the bridge-bill is?
The bridge bill is a spending bill because it is requesting that the federal government spend some of its money to make bridge repairs.

Pause at 03:28 Answer/discuss the above questions. Continue when done.

Part 4: Learn about the role of negotiation and compromise.

Begin at 03:28

Student question for Rep. Sessions: "How much do lawmakers have to negotiate and compromise to pass a bill?"

1. How does negotiation and compromise make a bill better?
Through consensus and agreement that incorporates the ideas of others.
2. How does a bill get out of Committee and move to the next step?
It must be voted on and get enough votes to pass to the next step.
3. Where does a bill go after it passes the Committee?
It goes to the Rules Committee then to the full House of Representatives for consideration.
4. What does the Rules Committee do?
It takes legislation that would come to the House floor and makes decisions about how it will be presented to the full House.
5. How many Representatives sit on the House Rules Committee? _____
13
How many are from the majority party? _____
9
How many are from the minority party? _____
4

Pause at 05:59 Answer/discuss the above questions. Continue when done.

Part 5: Learn about the leadership in the House of Representatives.

Begin at 05:59

Student question for Rep. Sessions: "What are the responsibilities of the leaders of the House? More specifically, what power does the Speaker exert over legislation? And what is the role of the party whip?"

1. How often is a new Congress convened?
Every 2 years
2. The current Congress is the 110th Congress. Name the majority party in the House of Representatives. _____
Democrat
3. How many members (House seats) are in the House of Representatives?
435 (Information to add: Congressmen, another name for Representatives,

Teacher's Video Guide for "How a Bill Becomes a Federal Law"

represent congressional districts in the states that are determined based on the distribution of population.)

4. Who is the Speaker of the House in the 110th Congress?
Nancy Pelosi (D) California
How is the Speaker selected?
Elected by other members of the House
How does the Speaker influence legislation?
The Speaker gets to decide which legislation comes before the House for consideration. (Remind students that the Speaker presides over the House and the Vice President presides over the Senate.)
5. What is the majority whip's responsibility?
Get votes to pass the majority party's legislation
6. What is the minority whip's responsibility?
Get votes to defeat legislation from the majority party.
7. Why is it important for the House to debate a bill before a vote?
This is when information is provided by both sides in order to try and persuade and sway people to vote "for" or "against."
8. What happens in the full House of Representatives that makes it hard for a bill to survive?
Those in favor try to get the votes to support it and those against it try to defeat it.
9. How does a bill make it out of the House?
It must pass a vote.
10. Where does a bill go after leaving the House?
The Senate

Pause at 08:18 Answer/discuss the above questions. Continue when done.

Part 6: Learn about other options for helping a bill become a law.

Begin at 08:18

Student question for Rep. Sessions: "When a bill is voted down by a committee, what happens to it? Can it be brought back up again? When a bill is voted down by the full House of Representatives, what happens to it and can it be brought back up again?"

1. If a bill is having a hard time making it through the process what other ways can be tried to help it become a law?
1) wait and re-introduce it the next year and 2) Get it tacked on or added as an amendment to another bill that is "germane" and has something to do with your bill.
2. Define germane.
relevant, connected
3. After making it through the House, the bill heads for the Senate. Where does it end up in the Senate?
In one of 16 standing committees that has jurisdiction over the issue.
(Note: The video does not tell the name of the Standing Committee that might be appropriate to handle the issue of bridge-repair in the example. After the video is over, provide the list of Senate Standing Committees included in the Teacher resources and revisit this point.)

Pause at 09:37 Answer/discuss the above questions. Continue when done.

Teacher's Video Guide for "How a Bill Becomes a Federal Law"

Part 7: Learn about consensus, decision-making, and the influence of others.

Begin at 09:37

1. What is the meaning of consensus?
A general agreement
2. Why is consensus difficult?
When there are many different points of view it's hard to reach agreement.
3. When Senator Feinstein was asked how she handles important issues with other members of Congress, she responded by saying, "The key, I've always said, is knowing when to go to the wall and when to make a compromise. You can't go to the wall all of the time . . . "
Explain what her statement means.
Answers will vary but this is a figure of speech that comes from war times and refers to people willing to literally go the wall of the fort or a barricade and fight to the death for what they believed in and wanted to protect. So it means figuring out when to stand up and fight for an issue that one believe in. When she says "you can't go to the wall all of the time" she means that one needs to pick the issues that are most important and concentrate all efforts on those. It's better to work hard on fewer issues then work a little on many.
4. How does one decide when to "go to the wall?"
Answers will vary, but may include personal and civic values and ideals, matters of life and death, protection of individual rights, national security, safety, etc.

Student question for Senator Feinstein: "Have you ever had any personal conflicts while you're passing a law?"

5. What did you learn about decision-making from Senator Feinstein?
Answers will vary.
6. What did Senator Feinstein mean when she said she's a "little bit independent."
If she doesn't believe something is right, she won't vote for it just because the Democrat party says to. It shows she thinks through the issue rather than automatically go along with what other Democrats say.

Student question for Senator Feinstein: "What is the impact of lobbyists when deciding controversial issues such as gun control?"

7. What did you learn about lobbyists from Senator Feinstein?
They can be very productive or very destructive.
8. What did Senator Feinstein mean when she talked about "big guns."
Big special interest groups and organizations who try to influence legislation.
9. Who are the "big guns" related to gun control in this country?
National Rifle Association

(Note: If students don't already know about lobbyists and what they do, see if they can figure it out by the context in which they are discussed in the video.)

Pause at 12:10 Answer/discuss the above questions. Continue when done.

Teacher's Video Guide for "How a Bill Becomes a Federal Law"

Part 8: Learn about the committee process in the Senate, information about the Senate in the 110th Congress, and how the Senate process differs from that in the House.

Begin at 12:10

1. How is the committee process in the Senate like that in the House?
In both House and Senate committees the bill is discussed and debated, revised and amended and put to a vote.
2. How many Senators are there in the Senate?
100, two from each state

Student question for Rep. Sessions: "How does the Senate's dealing with legislation contrast with that of the House?"

3. How is the Senate process different from than in the House?
Voting rules are different. In the House it is majority vote, in the Senate it is unanimous consent.
4. Define "regular order."
majority rule
5. Define "unanimous consent."
Everyone must be in agreement
6. Tell about filibuster and cloture and why they are used in the Senate.
Filibuster—delay tactic that can be used by one person who gets the microphone and can talk as long as he/she wants to
Cloture—ends debate and puts a hold on a bill to show dislike for the bill
7. How does a bill get out of the Senate and where does it go next?
It must pass a vote by unanimous consent before it goes to the President.
(Important information to add—A bill can only go to the President if the exact wording is approved by both Houses. IF ANY changes are made to a bill by either House, it must get rewritten and sent back to the other House for its approval. If the bridge bill had been changed in the Senate, it would have been sent back to the House for approval. In the bridge-bill scenario in the video, apparently no changes were made because the bill went to the President immediately after the Senate.

Pause at 14:45 Answer/discuss the above questions. Continue when done.

Part 9: Learn about President's power in the lawmaking process.

Begin at 14:45

1. What does the President do to turn a bill into a law?
Signs it
2. What happens to a bill that is approved by the House and Senate but the President doesn't like it?
He can veto it.

Student question for Rep. Sessions: "If the President vetoes legislation that was initiated by the House, what are the steps a bill would be put through if the House wanted to try to override the bill veto?"

Teacher's Video Guide for "How a Bill Becomes a Federal Law"

3. What is a veto override and how does it work?
It's a way to pass a bill without the President's signature. (Students may need some additional information about a veto override. A veto override is "the process by which each chamber of Congress votes on a bill vetoed by the President. To pass a bill over the President's objections requires a two-thirds vote in each Chamber. Historically, Congress has overridden fewer than ten percent of all presidential vetoes." (Source: Senate Glossary <http://www.senate.gov/>)

Student question for Sen. Feinstein: "If the President was part of a different party is it harder to pass laws?"

4. Which party is in control of the House?
Democrats are the majority party and the Republicans are the minority party so the Democrats are in control.
5. Which party is in control of the Senate?
Democrats are the majority party and the Republicans are the minority party so the Democrats are in control.
6. To which party does President Bush belong?
Republican
7. Explain why it's harder to pass laws if the President is from the minority party.
Because the President, who represents the minority party, must sign a bill that's presented by the majority party. Because the two parties have differences of opinion, it can be very tough to convince him to sign it.
8. What are the 3 options that Congress has for a bill that the President vetoed?
Let the bill die; revise the bill and try again; vote to override the veto
9. How many votes does it take to override a veto?
2/3 of both houses must agree to override the veto which is 290 votes in the House and 67 votes in the Senate

Pause at 17:07 Answer/discuss the above questions. Continue when done.

Part 10: Understand the value of the process and its importance for everyone.

Begin at 17:07

Student question for Rep. Sessions: "Congress has been criticized for moving slowly in developing legislation. Do you think the process needs to get sped up?"

1. What do you think? Support your reasons.

Before you respond

- Reflect on Rep. Sessions comment at the beginning of the video when he said, "We are an ideas body and we like to make ideas better."
- Consider Sen. Feinstein's comment at the end of the video. "It's called a deliberative body. In a sense that means a slow moving body. It's based, I believe, on the fact that no legislation is better than bad legislation."
- Consider the three reasons given for why this process is important for everyone:
 - Determines the policies that govern our lives
 - Where government spends our money
 - How government meets our needs

Teacher's Video Guide for "How a Bill Becomes a Federal Law"

2. Why is it important for YOU to know about the process of how a bill becomes a law?

The End Answer/discuss the above questions.

Revisit Challenge Questions

(Individual activity)

Overview

Students revisit their answers to the questions asked before watching the video and working through the follow-up activities in order to make observations and draw conclusions about their own learning.

Purpose

Self-assess growth in knowledge and understanding and identify strategies that helped with learning.

Materials Students Needed

- Answers to questions collected before viewing the video.

Teacher Directions

1. Review directions with the students.

Directions in Student's Guide

1. Self-assess. Review what you wrote, cross out errors (don't erase), then write in the corrections.
2. Make additional corrections if needed after answers are discussed in class.
3. Reflect and identify specific reasons you did better the second time around.
4. Write your reasons on the back of the paper.

2. Help students realize the value of review, analysis, systematic study, group work, careful listening and viewing, note taking, etc.
3. When they are finished collect the papers.

Teacher's Video Guide for "How a Bill Becomes a Federal Law"

Follow-Up Activities

Follow-Up Activity #1: One from Many

(Individual and small group activity)

Overview

Students work individually to draft a diagram for the path of the bridge bill in the video then collaborate in a small group to produce a single model.

Purpose

To experience the struggles of decision-making that lawmakers go through to produce one agreement from many ideas, students work to reach consensus from diverse ideas to produce a single diagram, model, or graphic organizer that identifies, describes, and sequences the steps involved in the bridge bill scenario presented in the video. The final product should match the process described in the video.

Materials Students Need

- Lesson Rubric
- Student's Video Study Guide
- Video: "How a Bill Becomes a Federal Law"
- Variety of materials to make charts or posters, etc.

Teacher Directions

1. Assign the homework as indicated in #1 of the student directions below. It is important for students to develop their individual diagrams without any help before bringing them to the group.
2. Have students work in their study groups to collaborate on a single model that represents and describes the pathway followed by the bridge bill in the video.
3. When groups present their models to the class, the flow of steps should be consistent with the pathway described on the next page.
4. Use the Lesson Rubric to evaluate the group projects.
5. Engage students in reflection and discussion of #4 and #5 in the student directions.

Directions in Student's Guide

1. Homework Assignment: Develop a sketch for a graphic organizer that represents the path of the bridge bill in the video. Use the Video Study Guide and video as needed. The draft you bring to class should be a sequential representation of how the bridge bill became a law and include a brief description and explanation for each step.
2. Work in your study group to reach consensus by pooling the ideas in your drafts to produce a single diagram, model, or graphic organizer that identifies, describes, and sequences the steps involved in the bridge bill scenario presented in the video. Be creative and use a variety of materials.
3. As a group, present and explain the model of agreement to the rest of the class.
4. Be prepared to reflect on the group interaction just experienced and share a little about what was easy, what was hard, and how problems were resolved.
5. Be prepared to discuss, imagine, and "think out loud" about what it takes to get 1 agreement from 537 people. (1 President, 1 Vice President, 435 Representatives, 100 Senators). Consider the importance of process, rules and procedures, time involved, fairness, etc.

Teacher’s Video Guide for “How a Bill Becomes a Federal Law”

Pathway for Bridge Bill H.R. 6789 (For teacher only)

Bills can take different pathways and still end up as laws. The bridge bill in the video follows a particular path and the student’s task is to chart the path for that bill. Use this as a guide when evaluating the completeness of the group model.

Recognition of Need or Problem
There is dilapidated bridge on a federal highway that runs through a community that needs to be repaired.

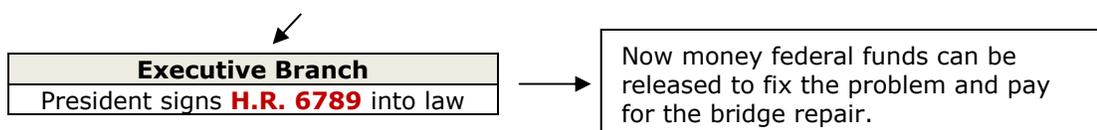
↓

Idea from Anyone
A solution is proposed to get the needed money to fix the problem.
A state Representative is contacted.

110th Congress (Legislative Branch)	
House of Representatives	Senate
The Congressman agrees with the proposed idea then writes and signs a bill. ↓	
The Congressman drops his/her bill in the hopper. The bill gets identified as H.R. 6789 ↓	
The Parliamentarian refers H.R. 6789 to the Committee that has jurisdiction over the issue. ↓	
The House Committee discusses, debates, revises, and amends H.R. 6789 then puts to a vote. ↓	
The House Rules Committee makes decisions about how H.R. 6789 will be handled on the floor when it goes before the full House. ↓	
H.R. 6789 goes before the full House for discussion, debate, and vote. It must pass by majority rule. →	The Senate Committee with jurisdiction discusses, debates, revises, and amends H.R. 6789 if necessary then puts the bill to a vote. ↓
	The Full senate discusses, debates, and puts H.R. 6789 to a vote. May run into interference through... <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Filibuster • Cloture Must pass by unanimous consent in the Senate.

Additional Notes

1. The bridge bill is requesting money from the federal government to fix the dilapidated bridge because it’s part of the federal highway system.
2. When a bill is introduced in Congress it gets assigned a number and a prefix based on where it originated—H.R. for House of Representatives; S. for Senate.
3. Because the bridge bill is a spending bill it can only originate in the House of Representatives.
4. In the bridge bill scenario, there is no reference to a companion bill introduced into the Senate.
5. Any time a bill is changed, it must be rewritten and a new version made. The new version must then pass both the House and the Senate.
6. In the bridge bill scenario, one can conclude that the Senate didn’t make any changes to the bill. If it had, the House would have had to agree to the changes. Changes are never made unilaterally.
7. When a bill becomes law, the law will reference the prefix and number of the bill it was given at the beginning of its journey.



Teacher’s Video Guide for “How a Bill Becomes a Federal Law”

Follow-Up Activity #2: Messages Beyond Words

(Small group, class, and individual activity)

Overview

Students view the video without any stops then use critical and analytical viewing and listening skills to draw conclusions about the not-so-obvious knowledge, skills, values, principles, attitudes, and behaviors needed for the lawmaking process work. After small group work and class discussion, students will write an opinion essay.

Purpose

Focus on the roles and responsibilities of American citizens necessary for effective lawmaking by gathering information that was not explicitly discussed in the video but could be gained through inference, analysis, and interpretation of verbal and non-verbal behavior.

Materials Students Need

- Follow-Up Activity #2: Messages Beyond Words (in student’s and teacher’s guides)
- Video: “How a Bill Becomes a Federal Law”
- Student’s Video Study Guide
- Pencil and paper and/or word processing program
- Lesson Rubric

Note: To assist with this lesson, teachers may refer to relevant excerpts collected from the national civics and government standards included in the Readings and Resources section: “Rights and Responsibilities of Citizens in American Democracy”

Teacher Directions

1. Divide the class into their study groups.
2. Review Follow-Up Activity #2: Messages Beyond Words with the students and read the directions for the 2 tasks.
3. View the video again without any pauses or stops.
4. Allow time for each group to complete the activity.
5. Hold a class discussion.

Note: Sharing and discussing is important because everyone will not see the same thing in the same way and there will be differences of interpretation and opinion. Differences are o.k. if they are supported by sound reasoning and the facts.

6. Assign homework: Write an Opinion Essay
Reflect on the activity Messages Beyond Words, then write a 5-paragraph opinion essay that supports one “behind the scenes” factor that you feel is critical for making the lawmaking process work and explain why.

Paragraph 1: Introductory paragraph

Paragraph 2: First supporting detail

Paragraph 3: Second supporting detail

Paragraph 4: Third supporting detail

Paragraph 5: Summary paragraph

Teacher's Video Guide for "How a Bill Becomes a Federal Law"

Follow-Up Activity #2: Messages Beyond Words

How well the lawmaking process works depends on a lot of "behind the scenes" factors that were not explicitly discussed in the video, but could be inferred from the way the words were delivered, the attitudes and actions of the speakers, and the images used.

1. In your study group, discuss the verbal and nonverbal messages that came through in the video related to each of the items in the chart. Check the ones you can substantiate and be prepared to share during the class discussion that follows.

(✓)	Knowledge
	Understands how the lawmaking process works.
	Informed about public issues.
	Knows responsibilities of leadership.
	Knows what government can and cannot do.
(✓)	Skills
	Gathers information and facts
	Communicates knowledge to others.
	Joins political parties, interest groups, and other organizations to influence decisions.
	Attends meetings of governing bodies.
	Votes responsibly.
	Works cooperatively with others.
	Participates in public service.
	Speaks and write persuasively.
(✓)	Traits of character, attitudes, and behavior. (Dispositions)
	<i>civility</i> —willingness to listen to and respect different points of view; avoiding hostile, abusive, emotional, and illogical argument
	<i>courage</i> —strength to stand up for one's convictions when conscience demands
	<i>respect for the rights of individuals</i> —respect for others' right to an equal voice in government, to hold and advocate diverse ideas
	<i>respect for law</i> —willingness to abide by laws; willingness to work through peaceful, legal means to change laws.
	<i>honesty</i> —willingness to seek and express the truth
	<i>open mindedness</i> —considering others' points of view
	<i>critical mindedness</i> —question the validity of various positions, including one's own
	<i>negotiation and compromise</i> —reaching agreement with those of differing views
	<i>persistence</i> —willingness to try again and again to accomplish worthwhile goals
	<i>civic mindedness</i> —paying attention to and having concern for public affairs
	<i>compassion</i> —concern for the well-being of others, especially for the less fortunate
	<i>patriotism</i> —loyal to the values and principles of American constitutional democracy
(✓)	Values and principles of American constitutional democracy
	Respect for the Constitution.
	The importance of "the loyal opposition" in a constitutional democracy.
	Government responsibility to carry out the mandates of the people.
	Government responsibility to work for our benefit.
	Both men and women can serve in public office.

2. List other important knowledge, traits, attitudes, and actions that you noticed and feel are important that are not on the chart—the rights, roles, and responsibilities of citizens in an American democracy.

HR 3311 IH (Introduced in the House)

110th CONGRESS
1st Session
H.R. 3311

To authorize additional funds for emergency repairs and reconstruction of the Interstate I-35 bridge located in Minneapolis, Minnesota, that collapsed on August 1, 2007, to waive the \$100,000,000 limitation on emergency relief funds for those emergency repairs and reconstruction, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

August 2, 2007

Mr. OBERSTAR (for himself, Mr. ELLISON, Mr. PETERSON of Minnesota, Mr. RAMSTAD, Ms. MCCOLLUM of Minnesota, Mr. KLINE of Minnesota, Mr. WALZ of Minnesota, and Mrs. BACHMANN) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure

A BILL

To authorize additional funds for emergency repairs and reconstruction of the Interstate I-35 bridge located in Minneapolis, Minnesota, that collapsed on August 1, 2007, to waive the \$100,000,000 limitation on emergency relief funds for those emergency repairs and reconstruction, and for other purposes.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. ADDITIONAL EMERGENCY RELIEF FUNDING.

- (a) In General- The Secretary of Transportation is authorized to carry out a project for the repair and reconstruction of the Interstate I-35 bridge located in Minneapolis, Minnesota, that collapsed on August 1, 2007.
- (b) Federal Share- The Federal share of the cost of the project carried out under this section shall be 100 percent.
- (c) Authorization of Appropriations- There is authorized to be appropriated \$250,000,000 to carry out this section. Such sums shall remain available until expended.

SEC. 2. WAIVER OF EMERGENCY RELIEF LIMITATION.

The limitation contained in section 125(d)(1) of title 23, United States Code, of \$100,000,000 shall not apply to expenditures under section 125 of such title for the repair or reconstruction of the Interstate I-35 bridge located in Minneapolis, Minnesota, that collapsed on August 1, 2007.

SEC. 3. EXPANDED ELIGIBILITY FOR TRANSIT AND TRAVEL INFORMATION SERVICES.

HR 3311 IH

Page 1 of 2

Section 1112 of the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (119 Stat. 1171) is amended--

(1) by inserting `(a) In General- ' before `There'; and

(2) by adding at the end the following:

`(b) Minnesota- Notwithstanding any provision of chapter 1 of title 23, United States Code, the Secretary may use funds authorized to carry out the emergency relief program under section 125 of such title to reimburse the Minnesota State department of transportation for actual and necessary costs of maintenance and operation, less the amount of fares earned, for additional public transportation services and traveler information services which are provided by such department of transportation as a temporary substitute for highway traffic service following the collapse of the Interstate I-35 bridge in Minneapolis, Minnesota, on August 1, 2007, until highway traffic service is restored on such bridge. The Federal share of the cost of activities reimbursed under this subsection shall be 100 percent.'.

Source:

The Library of Congress: THOMAS

<http://thomas.loc.gov>

HR 3311 EAS (Engrossed Amendment as Agreed to by Senate)

***In the Senate of the United States,
August 3, 2007.***

Resolved, That the bill from the House of Representatives (H.R. 3311) entitled `An Act to authorize additional funds for emergency repairs and reconstruction of the Interstate I-35 bridge located in Minneapolis, Minnesota, that collapsed on August 1, 2007, to waive the \$100,000,000 limitation on emergency relief funds for those emergency repairs and reconstruction, and for other purposes.', do pass with the following

AMENDMENT:

In section 1112(b)(1) of the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (as added by section 3), strike subparagraph (B) and insert the following:

`(B) use not to exceed \$5,000,000 of the funds made available for fiscal year 2007 for Federal Transit Administration Discretionary Programs, Bus and Bus Facilities (without any local matching funds requirement) for operating expenses of the Minnesota State department of transportation for actual and necessary costs of maintenance and operation, less the amount of fares earned, which are provided by the Metropolitan Council (of Minnesota) as a temporary substitute for highway traffic service following the collapse of the Interstate I-35W bridge in Minneapolis, Minnesota, on August 1, 2007, until highway traffic service is restored on such bridge.

Attest:

Secretary.

110th CONGRESS
1st Session
H. R. 3311
AMENDMENT

Source:
The Library of Congress: THOMAS
<http://thomas.loc.gov>

Public Law 110–56
110th Congress

An Act

Aug. 6, 2007

[H.R. 3311]

To authorize additional funds for emergency repairs and reconstruction of the Interstate I–35 bridge located in Minneapolis, Minnesota, that collapsed on August 1, 2007, to waive the \$100,000,000 limitation on emergency relief funds for those emergency repairs and reconstruction, and for other purposes.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. ADDITIONAL EMERGENCY RELIEF FUNDING.

(a) **IN GENERAL.**—The Secretary of Transportation is authorized to carry out a project for the repair and reconstruction of the Interstate I–35W bridge located in Minneapolis, Minnesota, that collapsed on August 1, 2007.

(b) **FEDERAL SHARE.**—The Federal share of the cost of the project carried out under this section shall be 100 percent.

(c) **AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.**—There is authorized to be appropriated \$250,000,000 to carry out this section. Such sums shall remain available until expended.

SEC. 2. WAIVER OF EMERGENCY RELIEF LIMITATION.

The limitation contained in section 125(d)(1) of title 23, United States Code, of \$100,000,000 shall not apply to expenditures under section 125 of such title for the repair or reconstruction of the Interstate I–35W bridge located in Minneapolis, Minnesota, that collapsed on August 1, 2007.

SEC. 3. EXPANDED ELIGIBILITY FOR TRANSIT AND TRAVEL INFORMATION SERVICES.

Section 1112 of the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (119 Stat. 1171) is amended—

- (1) by inserting “(a) **IN GENERAL.**—” before “There”; and
- (2) by adding at the end the following:

“(b) **MINNESOTA.**—

“(1) **IN GENERAL.**—Notwithstanding any provision of chapter 1 of title 23, United States Code, the Secretary may—

“(A) use funds authorized to carry out the emergency relief program under section 125 of such title for the repair and reconstruction of the Interstate I–35W bridge in Minneapolis, Minnesota, that collapsed on August 1, 2007; and

“(B) use not to exceed \$5,000,000 of the funds made available for fiscal year 2007 for Federal Transit Administration Discretionary Programs, Bus and Bus Facilities

(without any local matching funds requirement) for operating expenses of the Minnesota State department of transportation for actual and necessary costs of maintenance and operation, less the amount of fares earned, which are provided by the Metropolitan Council (of Minnesota) as a temporary substitute for highway traffic service following the collapse of the Interstate I–35W bridge in Minneapolis, Minnesota, on August 1, 2007, until highway traffic service is restored on such bridge.

“(2) FEDERAL SHARE.—The Federal share of the cost of activities reimbursed under this subsection shall be 100 percent.”.

Approved August 6, 2007.

LEGISLATIVE HISTORY—H.R. 3311:

CONGRESSIONAL RECORD, Vol. 153 (2007):

Aug. 3, considered and passed House. Considered and passed Senate, amended.

Aug. 4, House concurred in Senate amendment.



Rubric for Lesson How a Bill Becomes a Federal Law

Elements Evaluated	Level of Quality				
	4	3	2	1	0
Video					
Viewing & Listening	Fully attentive, and engaged. Asks reflective questions during "Pause" to clarify or enhance understanding. Notices details and contributes meaningful insights. Makes broader applications beyond the immediate story line.	Fully attentive and engaged. Asks appropriate questions during "Pause" to help with own understanding.	Attention drifts away from the video from time to time causing student to miss important information. Asks a few questions during "Pause" but some are off the subject.	Attention drifts away from the video most of the time causing student to miss important information. Rarely asks a question.	Shows no interest or engagement.
Use of Study Guide	All study questions are complete with thoughtful and well developed answers. Extra notes are added to help own understanding. Answers to all Challenge Questions are correctly edited. Responses to Challenge Questions are well developed, supported, and insightful. Wrote several clear and specific self-assessment responses.	All study questions are answered with short responses. Additional notes may or may not be present. Answers to all Challenge Questions are correctly edited. Wrote a specific and clearly stated self-assessment response.	Some study questions are answered. No additional notes. Answers to Challenge Questions are not correctly edited and still have errors. Self-assessment response was not specific.	Few study questions are answered. Answers to Challenge Questions are incomplete with little correction. Self-assessment response not clear.	Little if anything appropriate is written in the guide. No self-assessment response was provided.
Activity: One from Many					
Draft of own diagram for path of bridge bill	Diagram is neat and well organized with the process easy to follow. Clear explanations accompany each step. Shows considerable effort and thought beyond expectations.	Diagram shows a process and includes explanations for each step. Shows good effort and thought.	Diagram has several steps but not all. Missing some explanations. There is some evidence of process. Shows some effort.	Diagram is messy with only a few steps and explanations. There is little, if any, evidence of process. Shows little effort.	No diagram is produced or if there is one, it has little written on it.
Group model for path of bridge bill	Diagram has a title. It is neat and well organized with the process correct and easy to follow. All steps are represented with accurate and succinct descriptions. Includes additional explanations between steps. A creative element is added to promote understanding of the process.	Diagram has a title. It is neat and well organized with the process correct and easy to follow. All steps are represented with accurate and succinct descriptions.	Diagram has a title. It is neat and well organized with the process easy to follow. One or two major steps are missing.	Diagram has no title. It lacks neatness and organization. The process is not clearly evident. Steps are missing and out of order.	Diagram shows no understanding of the process and the steps involved.

Rubric for Lesson
How a Bill Becomes a Federal Law

Elements Evaluated	Level of Quality				
	4	3	2	1	0
Messages Beyond Words: Group Work					
	The group provides verbal or non-verbal examples in support of all items on the chart. The list of knowledge, traits, attitudes, and behaviors is substantial for each area and shows breadth of understanding and insight.	The group provides verbal or non-verbal examples in support of all items on the chart. The list of knowledge, traits, attitudes, and behaviors shows good thought with at least 2 examples of each type.	The group provides verbal or non-verbal examples in support of some of the items on the chart but not all. The group list contains examples but not for each type.	The group provides verbal or non-verbal examples in support of only a few items on the chart. The group list contains 1 or 2 examples.	The group is unable to come up with verbal or non-verbal examples for the items on the chart. No examples are provided for the group list.
Messages Beyond Words: Opinion Essay					
Essay title	The title is cleverly stated, sparks interest and is directly related to the topic.	Title is related to the topic but needs to be more interesting.	There is a title but the connection to the topic is not obvious.	It's difficult to tell from the title what the essay is about.	The title is missing
Introductory paragraph	Introduces the topic and provides essential context and background information that includes a clear and strongly stated opinion. (Thesis statement)	Introduces the topic with some context. A thesis statement is present.	Introduces the topic but doesn't provide context Lacks clear thesis statement.	Introduces the topic but has no thesis statement.	No introductory paragraph.
Supporting details	Give 3 or more details to support opinion which are well developed and supported with sound reasoning and the facts.	Gives and supports 3 logical details.	Gives 3 logical details but only 2 are supported.	Gives and supports 1 logical detail. Other details may be present but are not supported.	Does not provide any specific details.
Concluding paragraph	Summarizes and concludes the essay in a strong compelling, and convincing way. Leaves no question in the reader's mind about the opinion of the writer.	Provides a summary and concluding statement that brings closure to the essay.	The concluding paragraph does not bring closure to the essay.	The essay concludes with a sentence not a paragraph.	The essay ends abruptly with no conclusion.
Organization	Includes clearly stated topic sentences. Follows a logical progression of thought and development that builds towards a conclusion.	Includes clearly stated topic sentences Follows a logical progression of thought and development.	Includes some topic sentences. Has some progression of thought and development.	Lacks topic sentences but has some sequence of ideas.	Ideas have little relationship to each other. No progression of thought is evident.
Correct spelling and grammar	There are no spelling or grammar errors.	There are one or two spelling errors. There are no grammar errors.	There are a few grammar and spelling errors.	There are frequent spelling and grammar errors.	There so many spelling and grammar errors it's difficult to read.

Lesson Quiz

How a Bill Becomes a Federal Law

1. What is a bill?

What is a law?

Are the two related? _____
Explain:

2. Identify the process a bill can take on its way to becoming law by writing the steps on the left in correct order on the right.

Steps	Correct Order of Steps
• Vote on bill	1.
• Sign bill	2.
• Put bill before full House	3.
• Bill becomes law	4.
• Send bill to committee	5.
• Send bill to Senate	6.
• Vote on bill	7.
• Introduce bill in House	8.
• Vote on bill	9.
• Send bill to committee	10.
• Put bill before full Senate	11.
• Vote on bill	12.
• Write a bill	13.
• Idea for bill	14.

2. Where in the process is most of the legislative work done?

What happens to the bill during this step?

3. What must happen to a bill to keep it moving along the process?

4. Give 3 examples of how individuals and groups outside of Congress can influence the lawmaking process.

5. Where in the process can decisions be influenced?

Lesson Quiz
How a Bill Becomes a Federal Law

6. Describe how the leadership in Congress can influence the legislation.

Speaker of the House

Majority Leader

Minority Leader (Party Whip)

7. What 2 steps must occur before a bill gets to the President?

8. What two branches of government share lawmaking responsibility? What is the primary lawmaking function of each?

9. Identify knowledge, skills, and character traits that leaders and citizens need to make the lawmaking process work and explain why each is important. (Give 2 examples for each one)

Knowledge:

Skills:

Character traits:

10. Write a short paragraph that explains why is it important for students to learn about how a bill becomes a law? Support your reasons.

Supporting Resources

How a Bill Becomes a Federal Law

- **Congressional Committees**
Source: Senate and House of Representatives
- **The Legislative Process**
Source: The National Constitution Center
- **Standards-level Alignment to National Standards for Civics and Government**
Source for Standards: Center for Civics and Government

Committees in the 110th Congress

Senate	House of Representatives
<p>Standing Committees</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry 2. Appropriations 3. Armed Services 4. Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs 5. Budget 6. Commerce, Science, and Transportation 7. Energy and Natural Resources 8. Environment and Public Works 9. Finance 10. Foreign Relations 11. Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions 12. Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs 13. Judiciary 14. Rules and Administration 15. Small Business and Entrepreneurship 16. Veterans' Affairs <p>Special, Select, and Other</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Indian Affairs 2. Select Committee on Ethics 3. Select Committee on Intelligence 4. Special Committee on Aging <p>Joint</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Joint Committee on Printing 2. Joint Committee on Taxation 3. Joint Committee on the Library 4. Joint Economic Committee <p><u>References:</u> Committees, U.S. Senate http://www.senate.gov/pagelayout/committees/d_three_sections_with_teasers/committees_home.htm</p>	<p>Standing Committees</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Agriculture 2. Appropriations 3. Armed Services 4. Budget 5. Education and Labor 6. Energy and Commerce 7. Financial Services 8. Foreign Affairs 9. Homeland Security 10. House Administration 11. Judiciary 12. Natural Resources 13. Oversight and Government Reform 14. Rules 15. Science and Technology 16. Small Business 17. Standards of Official Conduct 18. Transportation and Infrastructure 19. Veterans' Affairs 20. Ways and Means <p>Joint Committees</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Joint Economic Committee 2. Joint Committee on Printing 3. Joint Committee on Taxation 4. House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence 5. House Select Committee on Energy Independence and Global Warming <p><u>References:</u> Committee Offices, U.S. House of Representatives http://www.house.gov/house/CommitteeWWW.shtml Learn About Congress: House Committees http://clerkkids.house.gov/congress/committees/index.html</p>

The Legislative Process

Source: National Constitution Center
Citizen Action Center
<http://capwiz.com/constitutioncenter/issues/basics/?style=legis>

Introduction:

Anyone may draft a bill; however, only members of Congress can introduce legislation, and by doing so become the sponsor(s). There are four basic types of legislation: bills, joint resolutions, concurrent resolutions, and simple resolutions. The official legislative process begins when a bill or resolution is numbered - H.R. signifies a House bill and S. a Senate bill - referred to a committee and printed by the Government Printing Office.

Step 1. Referral to Committee:

With few exceptions, bills are referred to standing committees in the House or Senate according to carefully delineated rules of procedure.

Step 2. Committee Action:

When a bill reaches a committee it is placed on the committee's calendar. A bill can be referred to a subcommittee or considered by the committee as a whole. It is at this point that a bill is examined carefully and its chances for passage are determined. If the committee does not act on a bill, it is the equivalent of killing it.

Step 3. Subcommittee Review:

Often, bills are referred to a subcommittee for study and hearings. Hearings provide the opportunity to put on the record the views of the executive branch, experts, other public officials, supporters and opponents of the legislation. Testimony can be given in person or submitted as a written statement.

Step 4. Mark Up:

When the hearings are completed, the subcommittee may meet to "mark up" the bill, that is, make changes and amendments prior to recommending the bill to the full committee. If a subcommittee votes not to report legislation to the full committee, the bill dies.

Step 5. Committee Action to Report A Bill:

After receiving a subcommittee's report on a bill, the full committee can conduct further study and hearings, or it can vote on the subcommittee's recommendations and any proposed amendments. The full committee then votes on its recommendation to the House or Senate. This procedure is called "ordering a bill reported."

Step 6. Publication of a Written Report:

After a committee votes to have a bill reported, the committee chairman instructs staff to prepare a written report on the bill. This report describes the intent and scope of the legislation, impact on existing laws and programs, position of the executive branch, and views of dissenting members of the committee.

The Legislative Process

Step 7. Scheduling Floor Action:

After a bill is reported back to the chamber where it originated, it is placed in chronological order on the calendar. In the House there are several different legislative calendars, and the Speaker and majority leader largely determine if, when, and in what order bills come up. In the Senate there is only one legislative calendar.

Step 8. Debate:

When a bill reaches the floor of the House or Senate, there are rules or procedures governing the debate on legislation. These rules determine the conditions and amount of time allocated for general debate.

Step 9. Voting:

After the debate and the approval of any amendments, the bill is passed or defeated by the members voting.

Step 10. Referral to Other Chamber:

When a bill is passed by the House or the Senate it is referred to the other chamber where it usually follows the same route through committee and floor action. This chamber may approve the bill as received, reject it, ignore it, or change it.

Step 11. Conference Committee Action:

If only minor changes are made to a bill by the other chamber, it is common for the legislation to go back to the first chamber for concurrence. However, when the actions of the other chamber significantly alter the bill, a conference committee is formed to reconcile the differences between the House and Senate versions. If the conferees are unable to reach agreement, the legislation dies. If agreement is reached, a conference report is prepared describing the committee members recommendations for changes. Both the House and the Senate must approve of the conference report.

Step 12. Final Actions:

After a bill has been approved by both the House and Senate in identical form, it is sent to the President. If the President approves of the legislation he/she signs it and it becomes law. Or, the President can take no action for ten days, while Congress is in session, and it automatically becomes law. If the President opposes the bill he/she can veto it; or, if he/she takes no action after the Congress has adjourned its second session, it is a "pocket veto" and the legislation dies.

Step 13. Overriding a Veto:

If the President vetoes a bill, Congress may attempt to "override the veto." This requires a two thirds roll call vote of the members who are present in sufficient numbers for a quorum.

National Standards Alignment for “How a Bill Becomes a Federal Law”

Lesson and Video

Source: *National Standards for Civics and Government* (1994) Center for Civic Education
<http://www.civiced.org/index.php?page=stds>

Grades 5-8 Content Standards Alignment

The following chart shows a more granular alignment at the standards level.

National Standards for Civics and Government	“How a Bill Becomes a Federal Law”
Specific Content Standards	Understanding from Lesson & Video
<p>I.A.1. Defining civic life, politics, and government. Students should be able to explain the meaning of the terms civic life, politics, and government.</p>	<p>Congressmen and Senators are active in civic life which means they are interested in helping find solutions to problems, helping make rules and laws, and serving as elected leaders.</p> <p>People involved in politics have a way of reaching an agreement even when they have differing ideas. These agreements are reached after presenting information and evidence, stating arguments, negotiating, compromising, and voting.</p> <p>Making laws in one of the responsibilities of government.</p>
<p>I.A.2. Necessity and purposes of government. Students should be able to evaluate, take, and defend positions on why government is necessary and the purposes government should serve.</p>	<p>It is Congress as the legislative branch of the government that determines the policies that govern our lives, where government spends our money, and how government meets out needs.</p>
<p>I.C.2. Purposes and uses of constitutions. Students should be able to explain the various purposes constitutions serve.</p>	<p>It is the U.S. Constitution that defines how the government is organized in the United States.</p> <p>It is the Constitution that defines Congress as the legislative branch of government, and gives it the power to make laws.</p> <p>It is the Constitution that sets Congress up as two Houses-- House of Representatives and Senate--and defines the powers and rules of membership for each.</p>
<p>I.D.1. Shared powers and parliamentary systems. Students should be able to describe the major characteristics of systems of shared powers and of parliamentary systems.</p>	<p>The U.S. has a shared powers system in which powers are separated among 3 branches of government with each branch having primary responsibility for certain functions.</p> <p>Actions by both the Legislative Branch (Congress) and the Executive Branch (President) are required for passing laws.</p>
<p>II.A.1. The American idea of constitutional government. Students should be able to explain the essential ideas of American constitutional government.</p>	<p>The power to make laws is derived from the people and carried out by the officials they elect to represent them in Congress and the person they vote for as President. Members of the House of Representatives are called Representatives or called Congressmen. Members in the Senate are called Senators.</p>
<p>II.B.3. Diversity in American society. Students should be able to evaluate, take, and defend positions on the value and challenges of diversity in American life.</p>	<p>While diversity can make arriving at consensus difficult, it is desirable and beneficial for effective decision-making because it increases choice, fosters a variety of viewpoints, and encourages creativity.</p>

National Standards Alignment for “How a Bill Becomes a Federal Law”

Lesson and Video

National Standards for Civics and Government	“How a Bill Becomes a Federal Law”
Specific Content Standards	Understanding from Lesson & Video
<p>II.C.2. The character of American political conflict. Students should be able to describe the character of American political conflict and explain factors that usually prevent violence or that lower its intensity.</p>	<p>Even though there are differences of opinion regarding making and changing laws, those involved in the lawmaking process act out of a shared respect for the Constitution and its principles.</p> <p>Negotiation and compromise makes it possible to avoid conflict and arrive at an agreement that conveys unity even when different points of view still exist.</p> <p>Ways that individuals can influence the lawmaking process and participate include coming up with an idea for a bill, writing to elected officials to voice an opinion and try to influence their vote, join a political party, and join an interest group that lobbies for a particular side.</p> <p>The majority party has respect for minority rights and gives the minority party opportunities to speak up and make opinions known during the lawmaking process.</p>
<p>II.D.1. Fundamental values and principles. Students should be able to explain the meaning and importance of the fundamental values and principles of American constitutional democracy.</p>	<p>The following values are important for the lawmaking process to work well:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • individual rights (majority and minority rights) • the common or public good • self government • justice • equal opportunity (no gender discrimination) • diversity • openness and free inquiry • truth • patriotism <p>A constitutional government includes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • representative institutions • shared powers • checks and balances • individual rights
<p>II.D.2. Conflicts among values and principles in American political and social life. Students should be able to evaluate, take, and defend positions on issues in which fundamental values and principles are in conflict.</p>	<p>Conflicts may arise between individual rights and the common good. People may agree on values or principles in general, but disagree when applying them to specific issues. For example, there is agreement that the immigration problem needs to be solved, but disagreement about how to do it.</p>
<p>II.D.3. Disparities between ideals and reality in American political and social life. Students should be able to evaluate, take, and defend positions on issues concerning ways and means to reduce disparities between American ideals and realities.</p>	<p>Important American ideals include an informed citizenry, civic virtue, concern for the common good, and respect for the rights of others.</p> <p>Ideals are important as goals, even if they are not fully achieved because they help the process get better and better. And if the process is gets better, the results will get better, too. The “American Dream” is an ideal that people strive to achieve.</p>
<p>III.A.1. Distributing, sharing, and limiting powers of the national government. Students should be able to explain how the powers of the national government are distributed, shared, and limited.</p>	<p>Both the legislative branch and the executive branch are involved in the lawmaking process.</p>

National Standards Alignment for “How a Bill Becomes a Federal Law”

Lesson and Video

National Standards for Civics and Government	“How a Bill Becomes a Federal Law”
Specific Content Standards	Understanding from Lesson & Video
<p>III.D.1. Who represents you in legislative and executive branches of your local, state, and national governments? Students should be able to identify their representatives in the legislative branches as well as the heads of the executive branches of their local, state, and national governments.</p>	<p>Legislative Branch: 110th Congress as of December 2007 <u>House of Representatives:</u> 435 Members (represent congressional districts in states) Speaker of the House—Rep. Nancy Pelosi (D) California <u>Democrat Leadership</u> Majority House Leader: Rep. Steny Hoyer (D) Maryland Majority Whip: Rep. John Lewis (D) Georgia <u>Republican Leadership</u> Minority Leader: Rep. John Boehner (R) Ohio Minority Whip: Rep. Roy Blunt (R) Missouri</p> <p>Senate: 100 members, 2 from each state President of the Senate: Dick Cheney (R) Wyoming <u>Democrat Leadership</u> Majority Leader: Sen. Harry Reid (D) Nevada Assistant Majority Leader: Sen. Richard Durbin (D) Illinois (Democratic Whip) <u>Republican Leadership</u> Majority Leader: Sen. Mitch McConnell (R) Kentucky Assistant Minority Leader: Sen. Trent Lott (R) Mississippi (Republican Whip)</p> <p>Executive Branch: President, George W. Bush (R) Texas</p>
<p>III.F.5. Forming and carrying out public policy. Students should be able to explain how public policy is formed and carried out at local, state, and national levels and what roles individuals can play in the process.</p>	<p>The process for how policies (laws) are made is described and explained. The roles and responsibilities of key individuals (lawmakers, lobbyists, citizens) involved in the process are also discussed in the video.</p> <p>Ordinary citizens can influence the formation of laws by coming up with the idea or influencing the vote of elected officials.</p> <p>Conflicts about values, principles, and interests may make agreement difficult or impossible on certain issues of public policy, such as immigration and gun control.</p>
<p>V.B.1. 1. Personal rights. Students should be able to evaluate, take, and defend positions on issues involving personal rights.</p>	<p>Freedom of expression and association are personal rights</p>
<p>V.B.2. Political rights. Students should be able to evaluate, take, and defend positions on issues involving political rights.</p>	<p>Political rights include the right of free speech for political discussion, right of assembly, and the right to seek public office.</p>
<p>V.C.1. Personal responsibilities. Students should be able to evaluate, take, and defend positions on the importance of personal responsibilities to the individual and to society.</p>	<p>Everyone involved in the law making process has personal responsibilities as a citizen to respect the rights and interests of others.</p> <p>Everyone involved in the lawmaking process has the personal responsibility to behave in a civil manner.</p>
<p>V.C.2. Civic responsibilities. Students should be able to evaluate, take, and defend positions on the importance of civic responsibilities to the individual and society.</p>	<p>There are civic responsibilities associated with being an American citizen that include</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • being informed and attentive to public issue • respecting the rights of others • monitoring political leaders and governmental agencies and taking appropriate action if their adherence to constitutional principles is lacking • deciding whether and how to vote

National Standards Alignment for “How a Bill Becomes a Federal Law”

Lesson and Video

National Standards for Civics and Government	“How a Bill Becomes a Federal Law”
Specific Content Standards	Understanding from Lesson & Video
<p>V.D.1. Dispositions that enhance citizen effectiveness and promote the healthy functioning of American constitutional democracy. Students should be able to evaluate, take, and defend positions on the importance of certain dispositions or traits of character to themselves and American constitutional democracy.</p>	<p>Civic dispositions that help make the lawmaking process work well include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • civility • courage • respect for the rights of other individuals • honesty • open mindedness • critical mindedness • negotiation and compromise • persistence • civic mindedness • compassion • patriotism
<p>V.E.1. Participation in civic and political life and the attainment of individual and public goals. Students should be able to explain the relationship between participating in civic and political life and the attainment of individual and public goals.</p>	<p>If people don’t speak out and make their ideas and opinions known to lawmakers, then they can’t expect their needs and problems to be solved in a way that is acceptable to them.</p>
<p>V.E.3. Forms of political participation. Students should be able to describe the means by which Americans can monitor and influence politics and government.</p>	<p>Citizens can monitor and influence lawmakers by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • becoming informed about public issues • discussing public issues • communicating with public officials • joining political parties, interest groups, and other organizations that want to influence public policy • having knowledge about the lawmaking process to ensure that the process remains fair to all and consistent with the Constitution.
<p>V.E.4. Political leadership and public service. Students should be able to explain the importance of political leadership and public service in a constitutional democracy.</p>	<p>Personal qualities necessary for political leadership include relevant knowledge about the lawmaking process and current issues, communication and people skills, and traits of character.</p>
<p>V.E.5. Knowledge and participation. Students should be able to explain the importance of knowledge to competent and responsible participation in American democracy.</p>	<p>One cannot participate effectively as a citizen or lawmaker in the legislative process without knowledge about how it works.</p> <p>If people want laws that work for them, help them, and protect them, then they need to be involved to help make sure those laws get passed. If they don’t get involved, then important decisions get left up to others.</p>