

# **Before Your Capitol Visit**

## **There Ought to be a Law**

### **Duration**

Two 30-minute class periods. (More class time may be needed.)

### **Description/Objective**

Students will learn the process of writing and presenting a bill to be considered for a law.

### **Oregon Standards**

Social Science Standards: 4.1: Investigate the organization and functions of Oregon Government.

Literacy Standards: 4R1.7: Interpret information presented visually, orally, or quantitatively (i.e., in charts, graphs, diagrams, timelines, animations, or interactive elements on Web pages) and explain how the information contributes to an understanding of the text in which it appears.

### **Oregon English and Language Arts Standards**

Knowledge of Language

3. Use knowledge of language and its conventions when writing, speaking, reading, or listening.
  - a. Choose words and phrases to convey ideas precisely.

### **NCSS Standards**

### **Theme 10: Civic Ideals and Practices**

### **Capitol History Gateway Messaging**

**Message 3:** It is easy to get involved in Oregon's democracy.

### **Resources**

1. 'There Ought to be a Law' power point
2. How a Bill Becomes a Law document
3. Schoolhouse Rock: I'm Just a Bill (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FFroMQKiag>)
4. Bottle Bill Fact Sheet (Attachment C)
5. 'Reader Theater' Script for classroom participation - House committee hearing on Oregon's Bottle Bill (Attachment D)
6. Character Cards for Reader Theater Bottle Bill Hearing (Attachment E 1-15)
7. K-W-L Chart (Attachment F)

### **Vocabulary**

Bill, Law, Legislator, Representative, Senator, Governor, Hearing, Committee, Testify, Debate, Vote, Veto, Chairman, Majority Rules

### **Activities/Procedure**

1. Teacher led brainstorming using K-W-L Chart for responses: Why do we have laws? How are laws made? Who makes the laws? Name a law. What is a bill?
2. Record responses for future in-class discussion. (For expected responses see attachment.)

3. Resources include the Oregon Bottle Bill fact sheet, classroom “Readers Theater” and **THERE OUGHT TO BE A LAW** document. The teacher will instruct students on the origin and development of the bill. Resources provide an example of how the bill progresses through the process; from committee hearings to the debate and votes in the House and Senate Chamber, to Oregon’s governor signing the bill.
4. Referring to the K-W-L Chart, students will add information and/or change what has been learned.
5. A ‘Readers Theater’ has been developed using Oregon’s Bottle Bill as the real-life example allowing students to become actively involved in a committee hearing. The script, a short fact sheet for the Oregon Bottle Bill, and the ‘character cards’ are provided in the following attachments: (Attachment C, D and E1-15).

### **Extension Activities**

1. Given a list of Oregon student led bills the classroom can take an idea and write a bill.
2. Divide the room into groups of three to five (keeping it an odd number eliminates an issue in voting within each group). Each group would write their own bill. Each group should have a secretary, a researcher and a presenter. Groups of five could add the following roles; recorder and fact checker.
3. Once the ‘idea’ has been decided, the researcher from each group would find evidence of why their bill should be made law. (In the school setting this idea could be as simple as gum chewing or a school mascot.)
4. When the research has been completed and compiled the bills would be collected by the teacher for review.
5. The next step would be the presentation to the class of each bill. The groups that do not present become the committee. The committee chair should rotate with each new bill presentation.
6. Since legislator votes are taken publicly, the teacher could decide if this would be acceptable or decide to have a secret ballot.
7. Depending on the vote of each bill the teacher becomes the *governor* and will sign those bills that receive a majority vote.