

Citizen Advocacy



Trustee: Amy Wong Mok

Subject: Government, Civics, Language Arts

Topic: Policy Making

Grade Level: 11-12

Time: 90 minutes

[View how this lesson plan fits state standards](#)

[View Amy Wong Mok's video](#) or [read the transcript](#)

Materials:

- Computer with internet access, external speakers, and a LCD projector OR access to a computer lab with Internet access and headphones for each student
- Updated Media Player recommended. [Download QuickTime](#). Problems playing? [Check our Media Help page](#).
- Journal or notebook
- Writing implements
- Student Worksheets ([Word](#), [PDF](#))
- Letter Home to Parents ([Word](#), [PDF](#))
- Download Lesson Plan ([Word](#), [PDF](#))

NOTE: As part of a lesson, the students will be viewing a five minute video about a woman who successfully lobbied the Texas Legislature to end the marital exemption for rape. With the understanding that the content of the above mentioned video may be objectionable to some parents, a letter home to parents might be necessary.

Learning Objectives:

Students will

1. recognize the importance of testimony of experts and advocates in the legislative process; and
2. understand why is it important for citizens to engage themselves in their democracy.

PREVIEWING (15 minutes)

PREREQUISITE: Students must be familiar with how a bill becomes a law.

1. Begin class with a discussion. Ask students: Can citizens influence legislation?

NOTE: If students are skeptical about how much influence citizens have in the legislative process, it might be helpful to remind them of protest movements, voting, etc.

2. As a class, brainstorm a list of ways that citizens can influence legislation. Have a students record these ideas on the blackboard.

3. Tell students that they are going to watch a video about a woman who played a role in passing legislation to end the marital exemption for rape in Texas.

4. Advise students that the assessment activity for this lesson will be making a recommendation for an amendment to a bill.

VIEWING AND DISCUSSION (30 minutes)

1. As a class, watch the brief Amy Wong Mok video about her efforts to lobby the Texas Congress. The video can be accessed online at www.americantrusteesproject.org. If you have difficulties accessing the videos, please visit our [Media Help page](#).

2. Ask students if they have any more ideas about how citizens can influence legislation and write them on the blackboard. Hopefully, Amy Wong Mok has reminded them of more ways that citizens are influential, including addressing legislators directly.

3. Each student should then write in their journals discussing the following questions:

- What political issues do you feel passionate about?
- What would you say to your legislator if you could talk to him/her about one issue?

NOTE: It is recommended that you allot approximately eight minutes per question for students to write a response. Remind students to keep this activity fresh in their minds because they will be working with these concepts again in the following class period.

APPLICATION (45 minutes)

1. Preface this activity by reminding students about Amy Wong Mok's accomplishments. As the former President of the Texas Association Against Sexual Violence, Amy Wong Mok was an advocate against sexual violence. To end the marital exemption for rape, she talked with legislators and testified before multiple committees.

2. As a class, go to the computer lab to complete the **WORKSHEET**.

3. Tell students that they are going to be legislators for the day by going through the following process:

- first, they are going to learn about the hearing process (which involves listening to testimony from witnesses);
- then they are going to learn about the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB);
- next they will read the testimony from the 108th Congress on the NCLB Act; and

- finally, they will make a recommendation to amend the bill based on the testimony they read in the computer lab.

4. To learn about the hearing process. First, direct students to http://www.ait.org.tw/infousa/enus/government/branches/docs/committee_system.pdf which is a CRS Report for Congress called “The Committee System in the U.S. Congress.” Go to page 4 and ask a volunteer or volunteers to read out loud to the class about committee hearings.

5. To learn about the No Child Left Behind Act. Direct students to link to <http://www.ed.gov/nclb/overview/intro/factsheet.html> which is the No Child Left Behind Fact Sheet. Have students scan the Fact Sheet to identify the key ideas. Ask students what they learned from the website about the No Child Left Behind Act and document the main ideas on the board.

6. To read the testimony. Instruct students to go to <http://edlabor.house.gov/hearings/education/esea/>. This site features testimony on the No Child Left Behind Act. Students will then elect to read one person’s testimony.

7. After the student has made his/her selection, he/she will read the testimony and take notes. Ultimately, students will be required to recommend a change to the No Child Left Behind Act. They need to include the following in their notes:

- The major points of the witness testimony
- Improvements that are being recommended by the witness

8. Describe to the class that in the actual legislative process, at the national level, the committee will decide whether it wants to alter the legislation based on the testimony it hears. For homework, students will be required to recommend an amendment to the No Child Left Behind Act.

HOMEWORK

Based on the testimony they read, the students should recommend an amendment to the No Child Left Behind Act. Additionally, they should include a short analysis describing why they would recommend this amendment based on the testimony.

EXTENSION ACTIVITIES

Using the journal writing activity from the “Viewing and Discussion” section, write a letter to your legislator about the political issue that you feel most passionate. As a part of this exercise, you may also want to direct students to identify their legislator at www.dnet.org.

ASSESSMENT POINTS

Students may be assessed on:

1. journal entry with one particular political issue of interest identified;
2. completion of the WORKSHEET; and
3. the writing exercise (homework).