

# Everything is Political

Trustees: Dan Gattis and Patrick Rose

Subject: Government

Topic: Legislative process

Grade Level: 10-12

Time: 90 minutes

[View how this fits state standards](#)

[View Representative Gattis and Roses' 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](#).
- Pencils, markers and/or highlighters
- Students Worksheets ([MS Word](#), [PDF](#))
- Download Lesson Plan: ([MS Word](#), [PDF](#))

## Learning Objectives:

Students will

1. discuss how a bill becomes a law;
2. research legislation;
3. explore how law affects student; and
4. craft a bill.

## PREVIEWING (5 minutes)

1. At the beginning of class, ask students: What do legislators do? What issues are candidates talking about that matter to you? When do candidates talk about issues that matter to you (if ever)? If students have little prior knowledge about the legislative process, you may need to briefly discuss how a bill becomes a law.

Note: You may also use the "[State and National Government](#)" (found at: [www.americantrusteesproject.org](http://www.americantrusteesproject.org)) lesson plan as a primer.

2. Tell the class that they are going to watch a short documentary about two legislators from the Texas House of Representatives.

## VIEWING AND DISCUSSION (20 minutes)

1. As a class, watch the Dan Gattis/Patrick Rose video. The video can be accessed online at [www.americantrusteesproject.org](http://www.americantrusteesproject.org). If you have difficulties accessing the video, please visit our [Media Help page](#).

2. Ask students what they think about the statement: “There is nothing in life that isn’t political.” (Note: stated by Rep. Dan Gattis at the beginning of the film.) As a class, discuss whether or not they think that this statement is true or false and why or why not? In what ways does politics affect your life and in what ways is it different from your life? Are there any issues in particular that you think legislators handle that directly affect your life or the lives of young people/students in general?

## **APPLICATION (45 minutes)**

1. In the middle of the film, the legislators list a few issues that affect young people: (1) classes that you take in high school (2) types of schools (3) graduation requirements (4) tuition (5) and job opportunities. Ask the students to form groups of 3-4 around the issues listed above. If any issue has more than 4 students, break them into smaller teams.
2. Working in teams of 3-4, define the problem. Provide each group with an area (butcher paper or a place on the blackboard) to more clearly define the issue or problem. Ask students to brainstorm and record what specifically about that issue raises concern. For example, students may feel that graduation requirements are too stringent or that the graduation requirements are too lax. Ask students to come to consensus or vote for one **area for improvement** within that “issue.” Quickly, invite each group to share which issue, specifically, they will research.
3. Each group needs to research their topic area to find out if there are any policy recommendations that they would make to the state legislature. Complete **WORKSHEET 1** at the library or computer lab.
4. In a following class period, invite students to use their research to draft a sample bill using **WORKSHEET 2**.

## **ASSESSMENT**

Students may be assessed on:

- Completion of worksheets 1
- The bill