**Follow That Legislation!**

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**Purpose**

This lesson helps students understand the legislative process while also giving them the opportunity to find ways to remain informed about legislative issues that are important to them. Using various websites that offer timely, even sometimes up-to-the-minute information about current legislation, students can enjoy a more meaningful learning experience regarding the legislative process and hopefully become more informed and politically active citizens. If students find out about relevant legislation, it may encourage them to take action to promote policies that they believe will benefit them and their community, thus becoming truly productive citizens.

**Objective**

Using Congress.gov, students will research a chosen piece of legislation and follow it through the legislative process. They will then evaluate the value and benefit of the legislation and determine if they think that it will be a positive step for their own community or even their state. They will also track how their particular lawmakers in Congress vote on the legislation, thus being able to evlatuate how well their elected officials represent their constituencies. Students will create a presentation to share with the class and inform their peers about legislation that may be affecting them.

**SC State Standards and Indicators:**

USG-3.2 Evaluate the formal and informal structure, role, responsibilities, and authority of the legislative, executive, and judicial branches of the national government as the embodiments of constitutional principles.

**20th Century Skills for Social Studies:**

D2.Civ.11.9-12. Evaluate multiple procedures for making governmental decisions at the local, state, national, and international levels in terms of the civic purposes achieved.

D2.Civ.12.9-12. Analyze how people use and challenge local, state, national, and international laws to address a variety of public issues.

D2.Civ.13.9-12. Evaluate public policies in terms of intended and unintended outcomes, and related consequences.

**Grade Level:** Grades 9-12, Civics or Government classes

**Time:** Several class periods. The timeframe may be determined by the teacher in choosing whether to track a bill that is still going through the steps toward being signed into law, or to choose legislation that has already moved through Congress and gained final approval. The teacher may also decide whether to allow time in class to learn how to navegate the necessary webpages in order to gather the proper information.

**Configuration:** This may be done in small groups or individually.

**Procedure:**

1 Day: With the whole class, show students how to navegate the United State Congress’ website to find information needed to complete their research. See the attached document “*Finding What You Need From Congress.gov*” as a quick guide to navegating that website.

2 to 4 Days: Allow students to use Congress.gov to locate their particular elected officials in the Senate and the House of Representatives and fill out a general fact sheet on each elected official (Use the attached form).

Allow students to brainstorm topics and issues that they think are important to consider when deciding upon a piece of legislation to follow, then have them identify what piece of legislation they are going to choose, either individually or in small groups. They can begin gathering information on their chosen bill and working on organizing their findings. You may need to allow more time for students to gather their information.

You may require students to do some background research on the issue regarding the bill that they have chosen, in which case they will need some time to gather background information.

1 to 2 Days: Students will work on their presentations and prepare to share their findings with the class. You may choose to offer students some menu choices on how to present their findings.

**Assessment:** Student presentations and evaluations of the ligislation that they have chosen.

**Extensions and Adaptations:**

* Have students create brief opinion polls and sample the student population at their school or even the general community about their chosen legislation. Then have them analyze their findings and deptermine how a particular population feels about the legislation.
* Have students write letters to their elected officials asking for information regarding the elected officials’ thoughts on the legislation from the point of view of a member of Congress.
* Have students collect news releases that relate to their legislation and comment on whether the legislation accomplishes its goal.

**Attached Documents:**

* *“Finding What You Need From Congress.gov”*
* *“Who Are Our Elected Officials in Washington?”*
* *“Legislation Research Form”*