

PLANNING GUIDE

6

Students Take Action

Working to Create New Laws

Some Project Citizen student groups described in your book identified problems in their community that could only be solved by passing new state laws. To write a new law and get it passed, students carefully researched and worked with members of the state government.

Which issues of concern in your community may require new state laws? Follow the steps below to identify a problem, research it, and draft a new law.



1. Brainstorm with your classmates and teacher possible problems in your community that require new state laws to be resolved. Investigate ideas by researching online and surveying community and family members on their opinions on each issue. Ask yourself the following questions:
 - What issue do the most people seem concerned about?
 - Why are current laws not adequate to address this problem? In the past, has other legislation targeted this problem?
 - What new laws could we most likely get passed?
 - What support could we get (for example, help from a state legislator in writing and sponsoring the law)?
2. In small groups, compare your preliminary research findings and weigh the issues. Then, as a class, come to a consensus on the issue you think your class will be best able to resolve by drafting a new law.
3. As a class, decide on a plan of action. Identify the goals you hope to achieve, most importantly getting a new law passed that will improve the quality of life in your community.
4. Under your teacher's guidance, work with group members to lobby members of the state legislature. Meet with members of the local media and provide them with solid facts about why you are supporting this new law and what you hope it will accomplish.
5. Participate in a class discussion on what information needs to be put into the hands of state government leaders, and how. Then work in small groups to organize all of the information you have gathered in a complete report. Also, create a display that visually explains why the issue is a concern to the community and your class's plan of action. Finally, draft a preliminary version of your suggested law, with your teacher's help.
6. Ask to present at an upcoming meeting of state legislators. Along with your report and display, present statements from citizens, as well as statistics. Read the draft of your bill and explain to the group how the targeted problem affects your community.