

# THE LegiSchool PROJECT



Fall 2003

## The LegiSchool Project

Teen smoking, using cell phones while driving, the pros and cons of soda vending machines at school—these are some of the timely, engaging and educational topics that will be addressed at this year's LegiSchool Town Hall Meetings. Welcome to another year of exciting LegiSchool activities!

LegiSchool is all about engaging students in the same debates that California's policy makers are engaged in. Learning by doing is LegiSchool's philosophy on getting high school students interested in the politics that impact so much of what goes on in their everyday lives. LegiSchool Town Hall Meetings offer students the chance to meet directly with legislators and other state leaders to share their thoughts and concerns on actual legislation as it works its way through the legislative process. LegiSchool's Town Hall Meetings and curriculum materials are developed not only to engage students in public policy debates that are taking place everyday at the Capitol, but also to heighten students' awareness about state government, how it works, and the importance of civic involvement as a means to improve the society in which we live. Detailed Town Hall Meeting information can be found in the Calendar of Events section of this newsletter.

In addition to our Town Hall Meetings, LegiSchool, in conjunction with the California Channel, offers a wide range of free, government-oriented classroom materials. Videotapes such as *The Voting Process: YOU Have the Power!* and *A Day in the Life of a Candidate* offer students lively and engaging opportunities to learn about the basic functions of state government. Furthermore, whether it's a Town Hall Meeting videotape you're using in the classroom or curriculum materials on the initiative process, LegiSchool materials are designed to be easily incorporated into the states' social science and history content standards.

By making government relevant to young people, it is LegiSchool's goal to help lay the groundwork for their on-going commitment to civic life. Read on to learn how you can involve your students in one of our LegiSchool Town Hall Meetings or to order LegiSchool's free classroom materials. You can also learn more about LegiSchool at [www.csus.edu/legischool](http://www.csus.edu/legischool).

## Thank You...

The LegiSchool Project wishes to thank the following legislators for their participation in 2002/2003 LegiSchool meetings:

Senators Deborah Bowen and Wesley Chesbro; and Assembly Members John Benoit, Ray Haynes, Sharon Runner, and Darrell Steinberg.

Additional thanks to the following policy makers and community leaders for their participation in 2002/2003 LegiSchool meetings...

Cynthia Bryant, Simon for Governor Campaign; Dan Carrigg, League of California Cities; Art Crony, Committee on Moral Concerns; Cassie Gilson, Kahl/Pownall Advocates; John Gomez, Pechanga Tribe; Peter Hansel, Senate Health and Human Services Committee; Patrick Johnston, former Senator, lobbyist; Bill Lockyer, State Attorney General; Bob Mulholland, California Democratic Party; and Eusevio Padilla, Office of Senator Alarcon.



## Dear Friends,

On behalf of our partners—the California State Legislature, California State University, Sacramento, and the California Channel, I would like to welcome you to another exhilarating year of LegiSchool. We look forward to working with students and educators to make this year even more exciting and successful than ever before.

Last year's curriculum helped students to understand the debate between land developers and Native Americans. Students also participated in a debate and mock election for Governor, learned about our civil liberties and voiced their opinions on the pros and cons of cell phone use in school.

LegiSchool takes pride in giving students a new appreciation for the complexity of our democracy and a new excitement about the potential of government to change people's lives. With the help of educators all over the state, we can provide a fun-filled, educational opportunity for students to learn valuable information they will use throughout their lives.

Sincerely,  
Greg Schmidt  
Secretary of the Senate

## Mission

The LegiSchool Project is a civic education collaboration between California State University, Sacramento and the California State Legislature, administered by the Center for California Studies. The Project's mission is to engage California's high school students in matters of public policy and state government by creating opportunities for students and state leaders to meet and share ideas on issues affecting California. In doing so, we hope to motivate young people to take an interest in the public life around them and to encourage their active participation in our political process.

**Real Issues, Real Debate, Real Curriculum**

# Free Videos and Curriculum Materials

from the LegiSchool Project and the California Channel

New!

## **The Lobbyist: The Power of Persuasion at Work**

Commonly referred to as the third house, lobbying plays a significant role in the legislative process. This lively video provides students a thorough representation of what it takes to be a lobbyist in the state of California from tracking legislation to attending state legislative hearings to meeting with policy makers, all in an attempt to influence a particular outcome desired by their clients. The video provides students with the opportunity to learn about the legislative process while observing a lobbyist in

action. Video will be available in late October.

## **The Voting Process: YOU Have the Power!**

This energetic eight-minute video gives students a step-by-step look at procedures for voting in California. The goal of the video is to

give young, first time voters the knowledge and confidence to become involved in our most cherished constitutional right, the democratic process. Registration, absentee ballots, resources (websites, phone numbers, etc.) and demonstrations of the three prevalent forms of voting systems in our state are given a thorough treatment. Written materials take your students through a mock election, with the 2002 California governor's race as the model. Materials include a mock voter registration form and instructions, a ballot, suggestions for in-class exercises and take home assignments.

## **The Initiative Process**

This eight-and-a-half minute video takes a fun, informative and step-by-step look at the initiative process as well as providing a strong

message of civic involvement and personal empowerment. Daylight savings time and the banning of nuclear power plants are just two of the examples provided which illustrate the power of this important political tool of the people. Thomas Jefferson stated that "there

is no safer depository of the ultimate power of society but the people themselves"—a frank recognition of the important role the initiative process plays in making law and placing the public in power to set this state's political agenda.

## **Checks & Balances: The Three Branches of State Government**

This ten-minute video is geared towards helping middle and high school students learn more about how our state legislative process works—and is presented in a way that is enjoyable for everyone. The main premise for the lesson is that, as in the federal government, the framers of our state's constitution wanted to be sure that no one branch of government would have too much power, so they divided the powers of the government into three equal branches.

## **How a Bill Becomes Law**

Produced by the California Channel, this ten-and-a-half-minute video uses AB 2268, the Bicycle Helmet Law, to describe how a bill becomes law in California. Ideal for high school students, the video introduces concepts such as how a bill is authored, the process of first, second, and third readings, and how legislation is assigned to various committees within the Legislature.

## **Dialogue on Freedom, A Nation Called Quest**

In February 2002, U.S. Supreme Court Justice Anthony M. Kennedy visited his old high school in Sacramento, McClatchy High School. There he engaged a political science class in his "Dialogue on Freedom" using the fictitious country of Quest as a model for applying the best concepts introduced by the students. The purpose of this "Dialogue on Freedom" is to explore American civic values and legal traditions in the context of a hypothetical situation. The video is 30 minutes long.

## **A Day in the Life of a Candidate**

During an election, citizens are bombarded with campaign literature and media coverage of candidates, but running for public office takes much more than slick mailers and TV commercials. This 35-minute video demonstrates some of the more routine, but critical work that goes into running for public office and features the Republican and Democratic

candidates for the November 2000 race for California's 5th Senate District. Two students serve as the video's hosts as they take viewers through the last four weeks leading up to the election. Highlights of the video include footage from precinct walking, phone banking, staff briefings, interviews with both candidates, and election night coverage.

## **A Day in the Life of the Secretary of State**

Have you ever wondered what California's Secretary of State does? Grace Pak, a student from Sacramento, recently spent a day with Secretary of State Bill Jones to get the answer for us. Approximately 25 minutes in length, the video highlights some of the key aspects of the job, including the Secretary's role as chief elections officer, member of the World Trade Commission, and overseer of the state archives.

## **A Day in the Life of the Legislature**

This 30-minute video features two key members of the Legislature, Senator Jim Brulte and Assembly Member Robert Hertzberg. Highlights of the video include footage from a Senate floor session, an Assembly committee hearing, a meeting between Senator Brulte and a group of lobbyists, and a staff briefing with Assembly Member Hertzberg.

Each video is accompanied by a Video Viewing Guide, which includes two pages of critical thinking exercises and pertinent vocabulary for teachers to use as an assignment for students. To order free videos, please complete and return the Video Order Form on page 4.

## **State Government for Beginners Handout Binder (\$10 to non-California teachers and administrators)**

Looking for good, basic handouts about state government and the legislative process? Then this binder is for you! Easy-to-duplicate handouts include:

- legislative terminology
- a diagram of the legislative process
- a step-by-step description of the process
- a sample bill with instructions on how to read legislation
- voter registration and elections information
- useful state government and political websites and much more!

**"Thank you very much for providing these resources about California state government to teachers at no charge. As I'm sure you are aware, textbooks don't address state government specifically. These are invaluable resources for us, especially given our tight budgets!"**

### **California Teacher**

**"My students were thrilled with the experience of attending a Town Hall Meeting. The opportunity to interact with and ask questions of state officials proved memorable."**

### **Teacher and Town Hall Meeting Participant**

# Incorporating LegiSchool into the State's History-Social Science Content Standards

## History-Social Science Content Standards for California Public Schools Grade Twelve: Principles of American Democracy and Economics

California's Grade 12 History-Social Science standards pay particular attention to the principles of American democracy, which are intended to provide students with the knowledge and skills that are required to assume the responsibilities of citizenship.

Topics addressed at LegiSchool meetings and in LegiSchool curriculum materials have been aligned with many of the social studies standards now required by the state. Below are just a few of the standards that can be met through the use of LegiSchool and its curriculum materials. By using LegiSchool materials, students are given the opportunity to:

- 12.1.6 Understand that the Bill of Rights limits the powers of the federal and state governments;
- 12.2.1 Discuss the meaning and importance of each of the rights guaranteed under the

Bill of Rights and how each is secured;

- 12.2.3 Discuss the individual's legal obligations to obey the law;
- 12.2.4 Understand the obligations of civic-mindedness, including voting, being informed on civic issues, volunteering and performing public service;
- 12.3.1 Explain how civil society provides opportunities for individuals to associate for social, cultural, religious, economic, and political purposes;
- 12.3.3 Discuss the historical role of religion and religious diversity;
- 12.4 Analyze the unique roles and responsibilities of the three branches of government as established by the U.S. Constitution;
- 12.4.3 Identify their current representatives in the legislative branch of the national government;
- 12.5.1 Understand the changing interpretations of the Bill of Rights over time, including interpretations of the basic

freedoms articulated in the First Amendment and the due process and equal protection of the law clauses of the Fourteenth Amendment;

- 12.6 Students evaluate issues regarding campaigns for national, state, and local elective offices;
- 12.6.3 Evaluate the roles of polls, campaign advertising, and the controversies over campaign funding;
- 12.6.4 Describe the means that citizens use to participate in the political process;
- 12.7.5 Explain how public policy is formed, including the setting of the public agenda and implementation of it through regulations and executive orders;
- 12.7.6 Compare the processes of law-making at each of the three levels of government, including the role of lobbying and the media.

**“From my visit to the Capitol I gained a surprising amount of knowledge about how a bill becomes law and had a great time doing it! I always say that learning by doing is the best way to learn.” Student Journalism Summit Participant**

For a complete list of the standards, visit the Department of Education's website at: [www.cde.ca.gov/board/pdf/history.pdf](http://www.cde.ca.gov/board/pdf/history.pdf)

### GETTING STUDENTS INVOLVED

## Simple Ideas for Engaging Students

- Have students follow the recall election for the office of governor. Ask students to share who they would vote for and why. What issues or ideals do the candidates represent that are appealing to students? Have the class vote in a mock election and compare results with those of the electorate.
- Offer extra credit to students who go to the polls with a parent on election day. Have students write a short essay on their impressions of the experience. Which form of ballot was used? Were they surprised by anything they saw? What impressed them most about the voting process?
- Have students draw a cartoon depicting a political issue that is important to them.
- If the legislature is in session, have students identify a bill that their Senator or Assembly Member has authored and is of concern to them. Have students research the bill by contacting the legislator's office and asking for the person

who “staffed” the bill. Students should also be able to collect the bill's legislative history via the internet ([www.sen.ca.gov](http://www.sen.ca.gov) or [www.assembly.ca.gov](http://www.assembly.ca.gov)). Have students write a brief history on the bill, including what motivated the legislator to author it, what does the bill propose to do, who supports/opposes it and why, has the media responded to the bill and where does it stand in the legislative process?

- Have students write a letter to their legislators or local government representatives expressing an opinion on a public policy issue that is important to them. How many students received responses back? Were students satisfied with the responses?
- Ask students to interview an elected representative and share the experience with class members. Students can “go local” and interview someone from their city council, school board or county board of supervisors or state representative (Senators and Assembly Members have district offices

**“Life's most persistent and urgent question is: What are you doing for others?”  
Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.**

which might be more accessible to students than State Capitol offices).

- Have students analyze an editorial from a newspaper covering an issue that is being discussed in class. Have students summarize the editorial's position on that issue to the class and ask them to provide their own position and/or opinion on the issue.
- Have students identify common myths about government and politicians. Then, conduct a class brainstorming session citing positive examples of how government impacts and influences our lives.
- Ask students to identify and research an elected official who they admire and the changes that person has, or desires to bring about, in his/her community.
- Have students read up on California's three branches of government (www.leginfo.ca.gov/califleg.html) and then ask students to imagine being either a member of the legislature, governor of the state or a Supreme Court justice. Have students write down their reasons for selecting one particular branch and why they did not select one of the other two branches. Ask students to identify three public policy issues that they would want to address as a member of one of the three branches of government and explain why those issues are important to them.
- Discuss separation of powers and checks and balances with the class and explain how these principles impact how government functions. Examine the history of these principles and have students explain and provide examples of what can happen in a government that does not adhere to such principles.

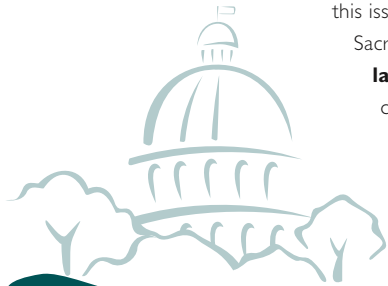
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## LegiSchool's Eighth Annual Essay Contest

### **Selling soda: What are the costs and benefits to students and schools?**

This year's essay contest will ask students to weigh the costs and benefits of having soda vending machines on high school campuses. At a time when childhood obesity affects roughly 27% of young people and inactivity is on the rise, should schools be required to remove soda vending machines from their campuses? On the other hand, schools rely heavily on the revenues generated from soda sales. As state funding for education decreases, can schools afford to eliminate soda vending machines without adversely impacting special programs such as the school newspaper, equipment for athletes and the drama club? Students will be asked to share their opinions on this issue. Ten winning essayists will be invited to spend a day in Sacramento at LegiSchool's **Eighth Annual Student Legislative Summit** on March 25, 2004. Look for essay contest details in late October!



LegiSchool...making government  
relevant to young people.

### **Your feedback is important to us! Tell us what you think...**

If you have an idea for a future Town Hall Meeting, suggestions on how to improve LegiSchool, or want to share a story about a successful civic education program in your community, please contact Kolleen Ostgaard at the Center for California Studies.

### **For more information about LegiSchool, contact:**

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Center for California Studies/LegiSchool  
6000 J Street  
Sacramento, CA 95819-6081  
(916) 278-6906  
legischool@csus.edu

Visit the LegiSchool website:  
[www.csus.edu/legischool](http://www.csus.edu/legischool)



## 2003–2004 LegiSchool Calendar of Events

**M**ark your calendars now for this year's LegiSchool Town Hall Meetings! All meetings, with the exception of the December meeting, will take place at the State Capitol. December's meeting will take place at the Skirball Cultural Center in Los Angeles. To find out how to participate in a meeting, please read on.

### Teens and smoking: Whose business is it anyway?

**October 16, 2003**

In the past 15 years, California has passed some of the toughest anti-smoking laws in the nation. A large focus of the state's anti-smoking campaign has been on preventing teen smoking. The latest attempt to discourage smoking among young people is AB 221 (Koretz), a bill that would increase the legal smoking age from 18 to 21.

Should it be the government's responsibility to try to prevent teens from taking up smoking? What are the costs associated with teen smoking? Is the cigarette industry doing enough to prevent teens from smoking? If someone is old enough to go to war should they also be allowed to decide for themselves whether or not to smoke? Should smoking be a personal decision and not one that is determined by government imposed age restrictions?

### Native American mascots at schools: What's the harm?

**December 4, 2003**

AB 858 (Goldberg) would prohibit public schools from using references to Native American Indians as school mascots or athletic team names including Redskins, Indians, Braves, Chiefs, Apaches, Comanches, Papooses, or any other Native American tribal name.

Some contend that the decision to change a school name, nickname, or mascot should be made at the local level. While many schools across the country have voluntarily changed their names, nicknames or mascots, some individuals maintain that a school mascot is a source of pride and symbolizes a strong tradition not only for the school, but the community and families as well, and thus have chosen not to change their mascot. This meeting will give students the opportunity to weigh in on this sensitive topic.

### Calling all cell phone users: Should cell phone use be illegal while driving?

**February 12, 2004**

AB 45 (Simitain) would create an infraction for driving a motor vehicle while using a wireless phone, unless it can be used hands-free, and is used in that manner while driving. The offense would be punishable by a fine of not more than \$20 for a first offense and not more than \$50 for each subsequent offense, including all assessments and court costs, unless a cell phone is being used to contact a law enforcement agency for emergency purposes.

Is the cell phone user any more dangerous than a driver changing a radio station, a person transporting four noisy friends with the radio blaring, or someone reading the newspaper while driving? Would fines up to \$50 deter people from using their phones while driving? Should the government legislate when individuals can and cannot talk on the phone?

### Selling soda: What are the costs and benefits to students and schools?

**March 25, 2004**

When SB 677 (Ortiz) was introduced it aimed to ban soda and other high-sugar drinks at elementary, intermediate and high schools. While the bill was amended to exclude high schools from the ban, the question still remains, do the financial benefits of vending machines on high school campuses outweigh the costs associated with too much soda consumption?

According to the California Center for Public Health Advocacy (CCPHA), childhood obesity and inactivity has reached an all-time high in California. It is estimated that 26.5% of California kids are overweight and 39.6% are unfit. CCPHA suggests that part of the solution is to limit the amount of soft drinks available to students. On the other hand, the average high school collects \$30,000 a year in drink vending sales that can be used to fund school newspapers, drama clubs and other special programs. As state funding for education decreases, can schools afford to eliminate the sale of sodas or have schools become so reliant on the revenues from soda sales, that they are forced to maintain their presence on school campuses despite the health risks? Where do students stand on this issue?

**See reverse side for information on how to watch and/or order free curriculum materials for these meetings.**

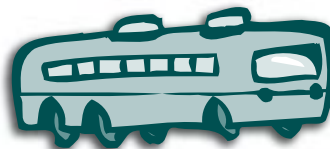
## How you and your students can attend a LegiSchool meeting...



LegiSchool frequently invites small groups of students from around California to participate in Town Hall Meetings. Limited travel money is available from LegiSchool for this purpose. If you are interested in bringing a group to attend a LegiSchool meeting and spend a day learning about the legislative process, please contact LegiSchool at (916) 278-6906 or send an email to [legischool@csus.edu](mailto:legischool@csus.edu). If you are particularly interested in a specific meeting, indicate so in

your email. If an opportunity arises for you and your students, you will be contacted by LegiSchool staff.

Thank you for your interest in the LegiSchool Project.



# LegiSchool Events Response and Curriculum Materials Order Form

## Town Hall Meeting Materials - Packet includes free video tape and curriculum guide

Click boxes to request materials and place the cursor on lines to type mailing information. Print page and mail or fax to us.

**October 16, 2003, 1:00 - 2:00 p.m.**

**Teens and smoking: Whose business is it anyway?**

- We will view the meeting live on the California Channel.
- We will view the meeting on video after the broadcast.

**December 4, 2003, 1:00 - 2:00 p.m.**

**Native American mascots at schools: What's the harm?**

- We will view the meeting on video after the broadcast.

**February 5, 2004, 1:00 - 2:00 p.m.**

**Calling all cell phone users: Should cell phone use be illegal while driving?**

- We will view the meeting live on the California Channel.
- We will view the meeting on video after the broadcast.

**March 25, 2004, 11:00 a.m. - noon**

**Selling soda: What are the costs and benefits to students and schools?**

- We will view the meeting live on the California Channel.
- We will view the meeting on video after the broadcast.

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## State Government Curriculum Videos

Packet includes free video tape and Video Viewing Guide including key terms and critical thinking questions

Indicate below which materials you would like:

- The Lobbyist: The Power of Persuasion at Work (available in late October)
- The Voting Process: YOU Have the Power!
- The Initiative Process
- Checks & Balances: The Three Branches of State Government
- How a Bill Becomes Law
- A Day in the Life of a Candidate
- A Day in the Life of the Secretary of State
- A Day in the Life of the Legislature
- Dialogue on Freedom, A Nation Called Quest

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## State Government for Beginners handout binder

- FREE to California teachers and administrators
- \$10 per binder for non California teachers and administrators. Please send a check in the amount of \$10 payable to CSUS Foundation to the address below.

## How to Order

### Mail order to:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

School: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

**Fax order to (916) 278-5199 (no cover sheet necessary) or send (with check if applicable) to:**

LegiSchool  
California State University, Sacramento  
6000 J Street  
Sacramento, CA 95819-6081

**You can also submit your order electronically from LegiSchool's website at: [www.csus.edu/legischool](http://www.csus.edu/legischool)**