

AMERICAN GOVERNMENT

LEGISLATIVE UNIT: BILL WRITING PROJECT

Name: _____ Period: _____

Build-a-Bill Outline

The Idea

Your first step is to decide what to try and write a bill about. Every bill begins with an idea. Is there a problem that you would like to see addressed by the government? Or perhaps there is an issue you feel the government should **not** be involved in that they currently are, and you want to make that official. You may also, if you choose, propose an amendment to the Constitution.

What would you like to see done (or not done, or added/removed from the Constitution)?

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The Reasons

Why are you proposing this bill? In other words, what led to you coming up with your idea for the law? Was there a problem or set of problems that needed fixing? For example, a bill calling for the construction of a national high-speed rail system might be offered because of concerns over the number of deaths on the interstate highway system, or simply to speed up travel between cities.

List at least two reasons why you are proposing this bill:

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The Constitutional Basis

What power(s) of Congress, found in Article I, Section 8 of the Constitution, would allow the federal government to enact this bill? Remember – it has to at least relate to one of the *enumerated* powers (see the back of this sheet).

List the power(s) granted to Congress in Article I, Section 8 of the Constitution, that allows for Congress to pass this bill:

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The Details

If you are proposing something that will cost money, how do you propose to pay for it? A new tax? Taking money away from something else? Also, if you are writing a bill that criminalizes something, what will be the prescribed punishment/sentence? How will you enforce it? If you don't write it down, the executive department gets to fill in the gaps! Perish the thought...

What details do you need to fill in? What bases do you need to cover? This is where you address the "what ifs"...

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Article I: Section 8. The Congress shall have Power...

- To **lay and collect Taxes**, Duties, Imposts and Excises, To **pay the Debts** and **provide for the common Defense and general Welfare of the United States**; but all Duties, Imposts and Excises shall be uniform throughout the United States;
- To **borrow Money** on the credit of the United States;
- To **regulate Commerce** with foreign Nations, and among the several States, and with the Indian Tribes;
- To establish an uniform Rule of **Naturalization**, and uniform Laws on the subject of **Bankruptcies** throughout the United States; (*immigration and bankruptcy laws*)
- To **coin Money**, regulate the Value thereof, and of foreign Coin, and **fix the Standard of Weights and Measures**;
- To provide for the **Punishment of counterfeiting** the Securities and current Coin of the United States;
- To **establish Post Offices and post Roads**;
- To **promote the Progress of Science and useful Arts**, by securing for limited Times to Authors and Inventors the exclusive Right to their respective Writings and Discoveries; (*copyrights and patents*)
- To **constitute Tribunals** inferior to the supreme Court; (*set up the Federal court system*)
- To define and **punish Piracies** and Felonies committed on the high Seas, and Offenses against the Law of Nations;
- To **declare War**, grant Letters of Marque and Reprisal, and make Rules concerning Captures on Land and Water;
- To **raise and support Armies**, but no Appropriation of Money to that Use shall be for a longer Term than two Years;
- To **provide and maintain a Navy**;
- To **make Rules** for the Government and Regulation of the **land and naval Forces**; (*write military laws*)
- To **provide for calling forth the Militia** to execute the Laws of the Union, suppress Insurrections and repel Invasions;
- To **provide for organizing, arming, and disciplining, the Militia**, and for governing such Part of them as may be employed in the Service of the United States, reserving to the States respectively, the Appointment of the Officers, and the Authority of training the Militia according to the discipline prescribed by Congress;
- To **exercise exclusive Legislation** in all Cases whatsoever, over such District (not exceeding ten Miles square) as may, by Cession of particular States, and the Acceptance of Congress, become the Seat of the Government of the United States, (*govern Washington D.C. directly*)
- and to exercise like Authority over all Places purchased by the Consent of the Legislature of the State in which the Same shall be, for the Erection of Forts, Magazines, Arsenals, dock-Yards, and other needful Buildings;

And To make all Laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into Execution the foregoing Powers, and all other Powers vested by this Constitution in the Government of the United States, or in any Department or Officer thereof.