**The Citizen Lobbyist: Influencing Change in Our Society**

**Anticipatory Set:** *With your partners brainstorm 2 laws in our society that you wish were different.*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **What is the Current Law** | **How would you change this Current Law?** |
| 1. |  |
| 2. |  |

**How are Laws made in New York State?**

*Directions: Read the information in the gray box to help you fill in the blanks in guided notes below.*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| New York State’s government has three branches of government, the Executive Branch (headed by the Governor), and the Judicial Branch (the Courts), and the Legislative Branch (comprised of the Senate and Assembly). The Assembly has 150 members and the Senate has 63 members.  The main job of the Legislative branch main job is to pass bills (ideas) into laws. A Bill is an idea that can only become a law if it makes it through three main steps: 1. It is passed by Assembly (the majority of the 150 members vote for it). 2 It is passed by the Senate (the majority of the 63 members vote for it). 3. It is signed into law by the Governor (the governor may also veto the bill preventing it from becoming law).  Every year the Assembly and Senate meet for 6 months (from January to June) in our state capital, Albany, proposing thousands of Bills (ideas) and passing only the most supported Bills into law. | A. For 6 months each year, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Branch and the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Branch meet in \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ to propose ideas/solutions (\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_) to problems and pass the ones most supported into New York State \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.  B. The head of the Executive Branch is the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.  C. The New York Legislative Branch has two chambers. The New York State \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and the New York State \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.  D. There are 150 members in the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and 63 in the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.  E. In order for a bill (idea or solution) to become law it must be passed in both the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and then be signed into law by the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. |

Special Interest Groups

Just as you cared about the laws at the top of this sheet, New York citizens, groups, business, and organization have a lot to gain or lose when a bill becomes law. The groups that could benefit or be hurt by new policy are called Special Interest Groups.

Define: Special Interest Groups -

So if a new bill was introduced to make the school year longer, the Special Interest Groups affected would be…

**(List 3) 1. 2. 3.**

What if a new bill was introduced to allow New Yorkers to start driving at 14-years old, who would the Special Interest Groups be?  **(List 3) 1. 2. 3.**

Graphs

*Directions: Look at Graph A, B, and C on the handout and then answer the questions below:*

A. What do these graphs show us Special Interest Groups are doing?

B. Why do you think they are doing this?

C. How do you feel about Special Interest Groups doing this?

Many Special Interest Groups use these funds to hire professional Lobbyists who have connections in Government and are experts in the Legislative Process to enhance their changes of influencing what becomes law. (Example: A Teacher’s Union use funds to hire a professional Lobbyist so the Lobbyist’s connections and knowledge can help a bill lengthening the school day to get support in the Assembly and Senate and become law.)

Define: Lobbyist -

*Directions: Look at the “Reasons to Hire a Lobbyist” reading handout and summarize in a sentence below the reasons Special Interest Groups like the Teacher’s Union might use their funds to hire a professional Lobbyist.*

**1. Experience -**

**2. Strategy -**

**3. Personal Contacts -**

**4. Speed -**

Thought/Discussion Question: Does the ability (money) of Special Interest Groups to hire a professional Lobbyists make the Legislative Process unfair? (Yes or No - Explain Your Answer)

Many opponents of Lobbying would like to see Professional Lobbying banned, but professional Lobbying protected by the First Amendment. The good news is lobbying by citizens is also protected by the First Amendment.

*Directions: Look at the text of the First Amendment below and fill in the blanks of 5 Rights given.*

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.

1. Freedom of Religion

**2. Freedom of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

3. Freedom of the Press

**4. Right to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_** (gather in groups, protest, boycott, etc.)

**5. Right to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_** (contact the Government - call, write, visit, Email, petition - to tell

them what you support and do not support).

**\*\* BOLDED RIGHTS ABOVE PROTECT YOUR ABILITY AS A CITIZEN TO LOBBY THE GOVERNMENT FOR CHANGE!**

What actions do you see above next to the bolded rights that you could use to Lobby as a citizen?