

The North Carolina General Assembly: A Simulation of How a Bill Becomes a Law

Overview

Students will learn about the North Carolina General Assembly and how a bill becomes a law in North Carolina. They will apply their knowledge by participating in a legislative simulation in which the NC House Judiciary Committee determines whether to report a proposed bill regarding flag desecration as favorable on the floor of the General Assembly.

Grade

10

North Carolina Essential Standards for American History: Founding Principles, Civics & Economics

- FP.C&G.2.1 - Analyze the structures of national, state and local governments in terms of ways they are organized to maintain order, security, welfare of the public and the protection of citizens (e.g., federalism, the three branches, court system, jurisdictions, judicial process, agencies, etc.)
- FP.C&G.2.2 - Summarize the functions of North Carolina state and local governments within the federal system of government (e.g., local charters, maintain a militia, pass ordinances and laws, collect taxes, supervise elections, maintain highways, types of local governments, etc.).
- FP.C&G.2.6 - Evaluate the authority federal, state and local governments have over individuals' rights and privileges (e.g., Bill of Rights, Delegated Powers, Reserved Powers, Concurrent Powers, Pardons, Writ of habeas corpus, Judicial Process, states' rights, Patriot Act, etc.)
- FP.C&G.2.7 - Analyze contemporary issues and governmental responses at the local, state, and national levels in terms of how they promote the public interest and/or general welfare (e.g., taxes, immigration, naturalization, civil rights, economic development, annexation, redistricting, zoning, national security, health care, etc.)
- FP.C&G.3.1 - Analyze how the rule of law establishes limits on both the governed and those who govern while holding true to the ideal of equal protection under the law (e.g., the Fourteenth Amendments, Americans with Disabilities Act, equal opportunity legislation.)
- FP.C&G.3.2 - Compare lawmaking processes of federal, state and local governments (e.g., committee system, legislative process, bills, laws, veto, filibuster, cloture, proposition, etc.)
- FP.C&G.3.3 - Analyze laws and policies in terms of their intended purposes, who has authority to create them and how they are enforced (e.g., laws, policies, public policy, regulatory, symbolic, procedural, etc.)
- FP.C&G.3.4 - Explain how individual rights are protected by varieties of law (e.g., Bill of Rights, Supreme Court Decisions, constitutional law, criminal law, civil law, Tort, Administrative law, Statutory law and International law, etc.)

Essential Questions

- What is the basic structure of the North Carolina General Assembly?
- What are the basic functions of committees, and how do they help make the General Assembly more efficient?
- What are the basic types of legislation that come out of the General Assembly, and when are they used?
- How does a bill become a law in the North Carolina General Assembly?
- What are the responsibilities and duties of state legislators?
- How can legislator's impact change at the state level?
- How difficult is consensus building when different parties have conflicting beliefs and diverse needs?
- What role do citizens and special interest groups play in state legislation?
- Why are the decisions made by state legislators relevant to each of us?

Materials

- Power Point: *The NC General Assembly, How Your Laws Are Made* (optional); available in the Database of K-12 Resources or by e-mailing a request to CarolinaK12@unc.edu
- NC General Assembly Images, attached
- How a Law is Made in the North Carolina General Assembly, handout attached
- Chart paper or poster board and markers
- Participating in a General Assembly Judiciary Committee Meeting, summary of participants and roles attached
- Proposed Bill on Flag Desecration, attached
- Art supplies (white art paper, chart paper, or poster board and markers)
- NC Flag Law Rarely Enforced, article available at <http://www.citizen-times.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=200770726111>

Duration

2 class periods

Procedure

Day One

The General Assembly - Overview

1. As a warm-up, project the attached images of the NC General Assembly and ask the class if anyone has a guess as to what location the photos represent. If no one guesses correctly, tell students the pictures are of the NC General Assembly, located in downtown Raleigh. Next, ask students to brainstorm everything they already know regarding the **North Carolina General Assembly**. As they report their thoughts to class, ensure that you facilitate conversation of important points such as:
 - **General Assembly:** Main legislative body for North Carolina (*similar to Congress for United States*)
 - **Bicameral:** Divided into two houses; House of Representatives and Senate (*also true of US Congress*)
 - **House of Representatives:** 120 members, Presiding Officer and Chamber Leader is the Speaker of the House (*the US Congress has 435 members directly elected to represent congressional districts*)
 - **Senate: 50 NC senators;** Presiding Officer is the Lieutenant Governor; elected Chamber Leader is the President Pro Tempore (*in the US Senate, there are 100 senators directly elected by statewide election, 2 for every state regardless of size*)
- For a more in-depth overview of the General Assembly, see Carolina K-12's Power Point, *The North Carolina General Assembly: How Your Laws Are Made*, available in the Database of K-12 Resources or by e-mailing a request to CarolinaK12@unc.edu

General Assembly Committees

2. Next, ask students what they know about **legislative committees** and encourage them to list any committee examples they can think of. Then, provide students with information to fill in gaps in what they do not know:
 - Each house is divided into a number of committees to more easily handle legislative work and to allow for specialization. Committees have jurisdiction over specific topic areas; this allows for specialization on a few topic areas by members.
 - Committees are further divided into subcommittees that handle even smaller sub-issues in a committee's jurisdiction.
 - Committee assignments are made by the majority and minority floor leaders, or heads of parties.
 - The General Assembly's committees range from Judiciary I, II, and III to the Education Committee

How a Bill Becomes a Law in the North Carolina General Assembly

3. Give students an overview of how a bill becomes a law (optionally use the accompanying Power Point, *The North Carolina General Assembly: How Your Laws Are Made*) and/or hand out and go over the attached *How a Law is Made in the North Carolina General Assembly*. Explain to students that it is important they

pay attention to this process, since they will be participating in a General Assembly Judiciary Committee meeting soon!

4. Once you have gone over the process as a class, have students complete one of the following visual activities to review the process:
 - Hand out pre-made pieces of large paper, each with one of the following phrases written in large text, to 12 students. When handing them out, do not hand them out in order. Rather, tell the 12 students they must line themselves up in the proper order of how a bill becomes a law. Tell students still sitting that their job is to assist in this process by telling the 12 students if they need to rearrange themselves. Once the 12 students believe they are in the proper order, review the steps with the class.
 - Bill is drafted
 - Member of General Assembly sponsors bill and files it with Principal Clerk
 - Bill receives a number
 - Bill undergoes its first reading
 - Bill is reported to a committee
 - Bill considered by First House if reported favorably
 - Consideration by Second House
 - Concurrence in amendments if necessary
 - Bill is enrolled and ratified
 - Bill is presented to Governor for approval or veto
 - If Governor signs bill or takes no action, bill becomes law
 - Law is given a chapter number and published
 - Have students break into partners and create a graphic organizer showing the General Assembly's process for making laws. Provide students with chart paper or poster board and markers. As they work, highlight the fact that the General Assembly's process for making state and local law is similar to Congress' progress for making federal laws. Display their work around the room when finished.

General Assembly Judiciary Committee Meeting Preparation

5. Next, ask students to consider where the ideas for laws come from. Explain that often **lobbyists** contact lawmakers or other government officials in an attempt to influence policy making. Lobbyists supply useful information to lawmakers, suggest solutions to problems and issues, prepare drafts of bills from lawmakers to consider, and testify at legislative hearings. Lobbyists are at work on local, state, and national levels.

Professional lobbyists, individuals, and groups of citizens often travel to Raleigh to lobby their legislators for particular policy changes or laws. Discuss how if enough people place pressure on their legislators, legislators will then be compelled to introduce/sponsor a bill representing constituent views.

6. Explain to the class that currently NC legislators have been receiving many letters, e-mails, calls, and visits regarding a very controversial issue: flag desecration. Project the attached image of a burning flag. Ask students:
 - What do you see here?
 - How does this image make you feel?
 - Why might someone choose to do this?
7. Explain that desecration refers to any abusive treatment of the flag, such as burning, ripping, etc. Set up the simulation by telling students the following:
 - Based on all of the recent requests regarding flag desecration, House member Maria Gonzalez introduced a bill to the General Assembly calling for flag desecration to be illegal.
 - The bill received a number and passed its first reading.

- The Speaker of the House of Representatives has now assigned the bill to the House Judiciary Committee for careful study, after which the House Judiciary Committee must make a recommendation regarding the bill.
 - Today, the House Judiciary Committee is holding a hearing at which lobbyists can express their opinions regarding this bill in hopes to sway the committee's opinion.
 - Each of you will be assuming the roles of a committee member, or a lobbyist for one of the following special interest groups who will be testifying at the hearing, either for or against the proposed legislation:
 - North Carolina Veterans Association (in favor of the bill)
 - North Carolina Civil Liberties Union (against passing the bill)
 - Proud Mothers of Soldiers (in favor of the bill)
 - Student Voices for Peace (against passing the bill)
8. Review class expectations for group work and divide students into five groups, with one group being legislators and the other four groups representing the special interest groups. Hand out the proposed flag desecration bill and have a student volunteer to read it out loud. Clarify any questions students have pertaining to the proposed bill, then give the following instructions:
- **Committee members/legislators:** (Provide these students with *Instructions for Members of the House Judiciary Committee*. Also assign one student in this group to be the Committee Chair.) You will spend the following work time reviewing the bill that was introduced by House member Gonzalez. Under the leadership of your Chair, you should discuss your initial opinions of the bill. Remember as you discuss the bill that amendments to the bill can be made by you, as legislators, at any point by crossing through the text and rewriting it at will. You should also review the *groups* who are scheduled to testify in front of you. Many of them will have opposite beliefs and requests. Think about how you will deal with this, considering the “common good” of North Carolina. As a group, you should form at least two follow-up questions for each special interest group in preparation for their testimonies.
- **Teacher note:** The teacher should spend time with the committee members during the preparation phase of this activity. Ensure that the committee members understand the structure of the hearing and that the Chair knows what is expected of him/her:
- The Chair should call the meeting to order, thanking everyone for being present and acknowledging that this is a very controversial issue. The Chair should also explain that he/she will call each group up one by one to present, after which the Committee will be able to ask them questions. Presenting groups may not directly address each other.
 - Once all groups have presented and been questioned, the Chair should thank everyone for their time. Depending on how much time is left in class, the Chair can then lead the committee members as they openly discuss what to do regarding the bill (the presenting groups can only listen and not comment at this point). If time for discussion does not permit, the teacher can instruct students to complete a homework assignment in which they write how they would have reported on the bill and why.
9. Next, provide instructions for the remainder of students, who will be playing special interest groups:
- **Special Interest Groups:** (Provide these students the appropriate special interest group instruction sheets.) Each of you, as lobbyists for special interest groups, will work on creating a 3-5-minute presentation to present to the panel of legislative committee members. Your goal is to convince members of the House Judiciary Committee to either support or not support a bill for making flag desecration illegal. You should form arguments based on the facts given about the views of your special interest group, as well as make inferences that might help your position. Organize these thoughts into a presentation that will convince this committee to see things your way. In addition to considering your group's views, you should think of ways to argue against your opponent's views.
10. Tell the groups they will have the remainder of class to prepare for the committee meeting, which should take place at the beginning of the next class. Circulate around the room as groups work, ensuring they are

on the right track. Let students know they will have a brief amount of time in the beginning of the next class to organize themselves, but that any loose ends on their presentations should be tied up for homework. You may also wish to instruct students to come “dressed” in character tomorrow, as they would dress if they were actually participating in a General Assembly committee meeting.

Day 2

NC General Assembly Judiciary Committee Meeting Simulation

11. As students enter, instruct them to return to their groups. Use your discretion regarding whether your students need more preparation time. Once it is time for the hearing to begin, review behavior expectations for being a respectful participant. Often, the most difficult part of this simulation is for students not to talk among themselves planning their own presentations while other groups present. Ensure groups understand they must remain silent during presentations. It is advised that the teacher instruct them to take notes on all presentations.
12. Have the legislator group take seats in the front of the classroom facing the lobbyists. Ask the Chair to call the meeting to order, giving an overview of the bill that is being discussed, as well as reminding students of the format for the testimonies (teachers may want to display this on the board or on chart paper as well).
13. Allow for 35-45 minutes for the simulated committee meeting, following the outlined process. Once the comment session has ended, the Committee members can deliberate the proposed bill in front of the class, determining how they will present it to the General Assembly.
14. Once the legislators have determined their response to the bill, have the class give a round of applause for all of their hard work, and debrief by discussing:
 - What factors influence legislators in the decisions they make?
 - How might a legislator decide what is best for the state as a whole (the "common good")?
 - What would happen if citizens did not make their opinions known to legislators? How might our society be affected?
 - Would you want to be a state legislator who makes these kinds of decisions? Why or why not?
 - Why is it important for North Carolina citizens to participate in the election process of their legislators?
 - How is the work of state legislators relevant to each of us?
 - Based on the decision the House Judiciary Committee just made, what would the next step in this process of the bill be?
15. Refer students back to their handout *How Law is Made in the NC General Assembly* and discuss the remainder of the process after the Judiciary Committee reports back to the floor.

Flag Burning in North Carolina

16. Let students know that in actuality, North Carolina does have a law regarding flag desecration, though it is seldom enforced. NC state law prohibits anyone from knowingly mutilating, defiling, defacing or trampling the U.S. or North Carolina flags. However, U.S. Supreme Court decisions in 1989 and 1990, which protected flag desecration as a form of expressive conduct under the First Amendment, raise questions as to the legality of the North Carolina law.
17. Give students a bit of background on ***Texas v. Johnson***:
 - In 1984, Gregory Lee Johnson was with a group protesting the Republican National Convention in Dallas, Texas.
 - The protestors gathered around Dallas City Hall, where Johnson pulled down the US flag from the flagpole and set it on fire.
 - He was arrested 45 minutes later and charged with breaking a Texas law that made flag desecration illegal.

- Though a Texas jury found Johnson guilty, the case was eventually appealed to the US Supreme Court, who ruled that the Texas law was in violation of the First Amendment right to freedom of speech. Thus, the law could not be upheld.
- The US Congress has grappled with passing Constitutional amendments making flag desecration illegal, but nothing has ever passed.

18. Today, numerous states, including North Carolina, have laws and ordinances regarding flag desecration, yet most are seldom enforced. Chances are, any conviction would be appealed to the Supreme Court, who would rule in favor of freedom of speech.

Culminating Activities/Assessments

- For lessons, activities, and additional readings on *Texas v. Johnson*, go to <http://www.landmarkcases.org/texas/home.html>
- Instruct students to write a newspaper article reporting on their legislative simulation, as if it actually happened.
- Students can write a letter to their state representative, expressing their individual opinion of North Carolina's flag law.
- View an excerpt of "Mr. Smith goes to Washington" so that students can further explore how a bill is created and presented in Congress. You may want to start the movie at around 21 minutes in, when Mr. Smith is sightseeing in DC and stop after around 40 min. after Mr. Smith introduces his bill to Senate). Afterwards, debrief the steps of how a bill becomes a law that they saw in action. Also, have students brainstorm issues of current concern in the community and nation and ask them what laws they feel are needed to improve the situation.

Differentiation

Students with special needs

- Ensure that students are placed in mixed ability groups
- Students who do not work well in small groups may be assigned duties that are less intense, such as:
 - "Reporter:" While groups are working, the reporter(s) should float between groups and take notes on the various discussions. The student(s) could then deliver a "news cast" to the class at the end of the lesson based on his/her notes.
 - "Researcher:" Use the internet to research various state laws and ordinances on flag desecration, as well as Congressional discussions on the issues and Supreme Court rulings

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- Rather than provide background sheets on the groups presenting to the House Judiciary Committee, simply provide the name of the group and a brief overview of their beliefs. Have students then determine all of the details of the group's stance and position on their own. Thus, students will develop presentations from scratch.
- Act out the next step in the process of a bill becoming law, by simulating the debate that would take place on the floor of the General Assembly regarding the bill on ignition interlocks and hold a "mark up session" by passing the proposed bill around the classroom and allowing students to make comments. You may wish to organize the rules of the class debate close to actual procedure:
 - As students discuss and debate, one of the students may request a **vote** on the bill. He/she should raise his/her hand and when called upon, say "Question!" Then a vote proceeds. Votes shall be recorded by the raising of hands, first for; then against.
 - If someone wishes to make an **amendment** to the legislation, he/she should raise his/her hand and when called upon, say "I would like to make an amendment." He/she should then state the amendment. Once this happens, debate begins again, but it is limited to the amendment specifically. When debate on the amendment is finished, voting solely on the amendment proceeds by the same manner described above.

- If debate is lively enough and if enough time exists, debate can be extended. If this occurs, you can either extend time by fiat, or one of the debaters can make a motion to **suspend the rules** and extend debate by a specified amount of time.

NC General Assembly Images



How a Law is Made in the North Carolina General Assembly

1. Drafting of Bills

A **bill** is a proposed law. It may be drafted by any competent person. The Legislative Services Commission's Bill Drafting Division drafts bills at the request of the members of the General Assembly. The Office of the Attorney General has the statutory duty to draft bills for the State departments and agencies generally, including the General Assembly. Thus, legislators have two separate offices to which they may turn for drafts of bills.

2. Introduction of Bills

Only a member of the General Assembly may introduce a bill - that is, present it to the General Assembly for its consideration - and that member is called the **bill's introducer** or **sponsor**. At the proper time during each daily session, the presiding officer announces, "Introduction of Bills and Resolutions." A member wishing to introduce a bill has already filed the bill with the **Principal Clerk** on the previous legislative day when it received a **bill number**. The **Reading Clerk** reads aloud the name of the introducer, the bill number, and the bill title. At this point the bill has passed its **first reading**.

3. Reference to Committee

Normally, when a bill is introduced, the **Chair of the Rules and Operations of the Senate Committee** for Senate bills and the **Speaker of the House of Representatives** for House bills name a **committee** to which the bill will be assigned for careful study and recommendation. If the committee approves the bill, it reports this fact and the bill is placed on the calendar - the daily schedule of business - for consideration by the full membership of the body. Changes to the bill called "**amendments**" may be recommended by the committee or may be proposed by any member from the floor.

4. Consideration by First House

When the time comes for a consideration of the bill by the full membership of the house (Senate or House of Representatives), the Chair will recognize the sponsor of the bill or the chair of the committee which recommended the bill for passage. That person will explain the bill, and then any member who wishes to speak for or against the bill will be heard. Sometimes there is lengthy and heated debate; sometimes there is virtually no debate at all. After all who wish to be heard have spoken, a vote is taken. If the vote is favorable, the bill is said to have **passed its second reading** and moves to its third and final reading, at which time there may be more debate.

5. Consideration by Second House

After a bill has **passed its third reading** in the house in which it was introduced, it is sent to the other house, where it goes through the same process as in the first house - that is, it is referred to committee, and if approved, is debated and voted on at the second and third readings on the floor.

6. Concurrence in Amendments

It often happens that the second house will make changes in a bill which was passed by the house in which the bill originated. In such cases the bill must be returned to the house of origin with a request that that body concur in the changes. If the original house does concur, the bill is ready to be enrolled and signed into law.

If the original house objects to the amendments adopted in the other house, the two presiding officers may appoint members to a **conference committee** which seeks to reconcile the differences between the two houses. If the committee can agree upon the disputed subject, the committee reports to each house, and the two houses vote on the recommended text. If either house rejects the conference committee's recommendation, new members to the conference committee may be appointed to try again, otherwise the bill is defeated.

7. Enrollment, Ratification, and Publication

After a bill passes both houses, it is **enrolled**. A clean copy, including all amendments, is prepared, with space for the signatures of the two presiding officers, and the governor, if necessary. The enrolled copy is taken to each presiding officer during the daily session. Each officer signs the enrolled copy. When the second signature is affixed, the bill is said to have been **ratified**. If the bill is a local law, it becomes law at that point.

In November 1996, the citizens of North Carolina voted to amend the State Constitution to allow for a gubernatorial veto (Section 22 of Article II of the North Carolina Constitution). All Public Bills other than bills making appointments, proposing constitutional amendments, or revising districts are presented to the Governor on the day following ratification for the Governor's approval or veto. If the Governor signs the bill or takes no action on the bill within ten days after presentation, the bill becomes law. After adjournment of the General Assembly, the Governor has 30 days to act on a bill. The Governor is required to reconvene the General Assembly if a bill is vetoed after adjournment, unless a written request is received and signed by a majority of the Members of both houses that it is not necessary to reconvene.

If the Governor vetoes a bill, the bill is returned to the original house where 3/5 of present and voting members can vote to override the veto. If the original house votes to override the veto, the bill is sent to the second house where 3/5 of present and voting members must also vote to override the veto before the bill can become law.

After it becomes law, the term "bill" is no longer used. The enrolled act or law is given a chapter number and is published under that number in a volume called "Session Laws of North Carolina."

Source: <http://www.ncqa.state.nc.us/NCGAInfo/Bill-Law/bill-law.html>

Image of a Burning Flag



GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA

SESSION 1989

Short Title: Flag Desecration (Public)

Sponsors: Representative Gonzalez.

Referred to: House Judiciary I.

July 13, 1989

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT to make it unlawful to intentionally destroy or mutilate a flag of the United States or of the State of North Carolina.

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

SECTION 1. Any person who intentionally destroys or intentionally and substantially mutilates a flag of the United States of America or of the State of North Carolina is guilty of a misdemeanor.

SECTION 2. Any person violating this section shall be deemed guilty of a misdemeanor and shall be punished by a fine not exceeding five hundred dollars (\$500.00) or imprisonment for not more than six months or both, in the discretion of the court.

SECTION 3. This act is effective when it becomes law.

Instructions for Members of the House Judiciary Committee

As the NC House Judiciary Committee, you and your fellow legislators are holding a hearing to help you decide whether or not to favor a bill making flag desecration illegal. You have the choice of reporting the bill as:

- Favorable** - you agree with the bill as written
- Favorable as amended** - you make changes to the bill then are in agreement with it
- Unfavorable** - you do not agree with the bill
- Offer a **committee substitute** - rewrite the entire bill as you see fit

The following groups will testify before you today in hopes to influence your opinion regarding this bill:

1. **North Carolina Veterans Association** (in favor of the bill)
2. **North Carolina Civil Liberties Union** (against passing the bill)
3. **Proud Mothers of Soldiers** (in favor of the bill)
4. **Student Voices for Peace** (against passing the bill)

Your job:

1. Your teacher will assign one of you to be Chair. The Chair will be responsible for facilitating the testimonies of visiting groups when your meeting begins.
2. After the Chair is assigned, review the bill that was introduced by House member Gonzalez as a group (see the proposed bill provided to you). Each of you should express your initial opinions of the bill, noting any changes you might want to make.
3. Prepare for the groups who will be testifying in front of you today by discussing the position that each group has taken on the proposed flag desecration bill. Infer what types of things they might say in their testimony to you. Create 2-3 questions for each group, which will help you gain further details on their position or perhaps even challenge their views.
4. Once it is time for the committee members to hear the testimonies, each group will have up to 5 minutes to testify. Listen carefully to their position, opinion, and request.
5. After each group's presentation, you may ask your 2-3 follow-up questions. The Committee may refer to the questions that members previously created or ask questions based on information from the groups' testimonies. Remember, you need to gather all of the information you can in order to make an informed decision.
6. Once the testimonies are complete, the Chair will lead the Committee in an open deliberation; at this time, you will express where you now stand on the issue of making flag desecration illegal. Remember that the groups that presented to you today will be have a role in either supporting you or not supporting you in your reelection as North Carolina legislators!
7. Finally, you will decide to report the bill back to the full floor of the General Assembly as **favorable** or **unfavorable**. You can also choose to make changes to the bill and report it back to the full floor as **favorable with amendments**. Finally, you may also completely change the bill and create a **Committee Substitute** that you take back to the General Assembly.

North Carolina Veterans Association

Today you and other war veterans are testifying at a hearing of the North Carolina General Assembly's House Judiciary Committee. You hope to convince them that they **FAVOR** a proposed bill that would make flag desecration illegal.

As former veterans of numerous wars, and representing thousands of other North Carolina veterans, you feel that North Carolinians owe it to those who have fought and died for this country to not desecrate the flag. Veterans, and current citizens serving in the military, are making huge sacrifices to honor and fight for everything these flags stand for. Thus, to burn, cut, write on, or desecrate the flag in any way is a slap in the face to any and all soldiers, past and present.

Some argue that burning the flag is "freedom of speech." Well, it is again because of sacrifices made by members of the US military that citizens have such a freedom to begin with. Not to mention, taking a match to a flag has nothing to do with speaking...it is an action. A disrespectful, Anti-American action. North Carolina has numerous laws and ordinances to influence and control people's actions, so what is different about this? It is simply the right thing to do...the American thing to do.

Prepare Your Presentation

1. Develop a 5-minute presentation with the purpose of convincing NC state legislators to **FAVOR** the proposed bill making flag desecration illegal. Select 1-2 group members to take notes as you brainstorm ideas for your presentation.
2. Make sure your presentation includes convincing reasons why legislators should see things your way. You can use the information above as a starting point and add any other reasons your group can come up with to argue your side. You should also spend time inferring how other special interest groups may feel about this issue. If they are arguing an opposite view, think about ways to oppose their viewpoints in your presentation.
3. Choose 2-3 group members who will present to the panel of legislators. When presenting, be considerate, clear, and convincing. After your presentation, the committee members will be able to ask questions of your group, so be ready to "think on your feet." (*Questions can be answered by all group members, including those who did not present the testimony.)
4. Once the hearing is complete, the panel of legislators will hold an open deliberation to determine if they will report the bill back to the floor of the General Assembly as **favorable** or **unfavorable**. They may also choose to make changes to the bill and report it back to the full floor **as favorable with amendments**. Finally, they also have the option of completely changing the bill and creating a **Committee Substitute** to take back to the General Assembly.

Instructions for the North Carolina Civil Liberties Union

Today you and other lobbyists for the North Carolina branch of the Civil Liberties Union are testifying at a hearing of the North Carolina General Assembly's House Judiciary Committee. You hope to convince them that they should **NOT FAVOR** a bill making flag desecration illegal.

The North Carolina Civil Liberties Union works to defend and preserve individual rights and liberties guaranteed by the Constitution and laws of the United States. Making flag desecration illegal would be a violation of a citizen's First Amendment right to freedom of speech/expression. Since many people who choose to burn or desecrate flags are making a statement or expressing a negative opinion of the American government, making this illegal would be denying them the right to express the opinion and beliefs. The NC Civil Liberties Union believes that free speech should be protected, even when what is being expressed is unpopular, as with this case. If North Carolina makes flag burning/desecration illegal, what will be next? Passing laws that say we can't disagree with the President? Passing laws demanding we join a particular religion? If we allow the North Carolina legislators to start passing laws restricting our freedoms, there is no telling where they will stop.

Prepare Your Presentation

1. Develop a 5-minute presentation with the purpose of convincing NC state legislators to **NOT FAVOR** the proposed bill making flag desecration illegal. Select 1-2 group members to take notes as you brainstorm ideas for your presentation.
2. Make sure your presentation includes convincing reasons why legislators should see things your way. You can use the information above as a starting point and add any other reasons your group can come up with to argue your side. You should also spend time inferring how other special interest groups may feel about this issue. If they are arguing an opposite view, think about ways to oppose their viewpoints in your presentation.
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Student Voices for Peace

Today you and other lobbyists for the statewide organization, Student Voices for Peace, will testify in front of the North Carolina General Assembly's House Judiciary Committee. You hope to convince them that they should **NOT FAVOR** a bill making flag desecration illegal.

Your organization is comprised of high school and college students across the state, and your mission is to promote peace both within North Carolina, throughout the United States, and throughout the world. Many of your members thus strongly disagree with the war in Iraq, and with any war for that matter. One way to show ultimate disapproval for war and for the decisions the US government makes is through flag burning. Your organization feels it is your right to make such a statement, especially when it gets people talking about all the violence happening in the world. How can it be legal for our military to kill innocent civilians in other countries, yet it isn't legal to burn a flag?

You also feel that making flag desecration illegal would be a way to try and force patriotism on citizens. You cannot force young people to be patriotic. Young people should be allowed to express their opinions, showing their disappointment in the government when and however they so choose. If this involves burning a flag at a rally, then so be it. It should be your right to make a bold statement, otherwise, how will there ever be change in the government?

Prepare Your Presentation

1. Develop a 5-minute presentation with the purpose of convincing NC state legislators to **NOT FAVOR** the proposed bill making flag desecration illegal. Select 1-2 group members to take notes as you brainstorm ideas for your presentation.
2. Make sure your presentation includes convincing reasons why legislators should see things your way. You can use the information above as a starting point and add any other reasons your group can come up with to argue your side. You should also spend time inferring how other special interest groups may feel about this issue. If they are arguing an opposite view, think about ways to oppose their viewpoints in your presentation.
3. Choose 2-3 group members who will present to the panel of legislators. When presenting, be considerate, clear, and convincing. After your presentation, the committee members will be able to ask questions of your group, so be ready to "think on your feet." (*Questions can be answered by all group members, including those who did not present the testimony.)
4. Once the hearing is complete, the panel of legislators will hold an open deliberation to determine if they will report the bill back to the floor of the General Assembly as **favorable** or **unfavorable**. They may also choose to make changes to the bill and report it back to the full floor as **favorable with amendments**. Finally, they also have the option of completely changing the bill and creating a **Committee Substitute** to take back to the General Assembly.

Proud Mothers of Soldiers

Proud Mothers of Soldiers is a statewide organization based in Fayetteville, NC. Your mission is to advocate for and recruit support for the troops working at home and abroad to keep our nation safe. Today you and other lobbyists for Proud Mothers of Soldiers will testify in front of the North Carolina General Assembly's House Judiciary Committee. You hope to convince them that they should **FAVOR** a bill making flag desecration illegal.

Your group feels that defacing or destroying a flag in anyway is the ultimate action in disrespecting our troops. All of you have children in the military, and many of you have lost your sons and daughters as they died to protect Americans. What kind of thank you is it to then burn the very symbol of America, an America they found so hard for?

Making flag desecration illegal is a way the General Assembly can show support for the troops and show that they as legislators are thankful for the sacrifice your children are making. As mother's who live each day in fear of your child's safety, you could care less about someone's right to "speech". What you care about is your own child's right to life, and when a member of our military tragically loses that life, they deserve to be respected and honored.

Since most of the states in America have some form of law protecting the flag, it is obviously something Americans care about protecting. North Carolina should follow the example of other states and respect the greatest symbol of our state and of America.

Prepare Your Presentation

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