Compliments of...

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HOW A BILL BECOMES A LAW

A Legislative Coloring Book
Dear Kids:

Ever wonder how a law is made? If you ever thought that there ought to be a law to change things for the better, then you are in for a treat. The following coloring book shows you how a bill can become a new law.

Every year hundreds of ideas to change existing laws or add new laws are presented in the State Legislature. These ideas are written on a paper that is then called a “bill.” Not all bills automatically become new laws. Bills need to be debated and voted on by your state representatives – Assemblymembers and Senators. If a bill passes through all its committees, the Senate, the Assembly and is signed by the Governor, then it becomes a new law.

To learn more, just follow your host “Bill.” He comes up with a fun idea, makes it into a bill and moves it through the Legislature.

Good luck and have fun learning about turning a good idea into a new law.

For more information, please contact me at (408) 262-2501.

Sincerely,

ALEX LEE
Assemblymember, 24th District
Two branches of government are involved in making a new law: the Legislative Branch (the Senate and Assembly) and the Executive Branch (the Governor). The Senate has 40 Senators, and the Assembly has 80 Assemblymembers. Each Senator and Assemblymember gets to vote on bills.
Each Senator and Assemblymember represents a different part of California (called a district). The part of California you live in (your district) is represented by one Senator and one Assemblymember. Besides voting on bills, your Senator and Assemblymember can help people in their districts with problems they may be having.

Word Search

Find the following words from the word bank in the puzzle. They may be up, down, horizontal, diagonal, upside down or backwards.

ASSEMBLY BILL CAPITOL GOVERNOR LAW PASS SENATE SPEAKER VETO VOTE
Every year, hundreds of proposals are made for new laws. Many of these proposals come from people who don’t work in government but who have a good idea.

Do you have an idea for a law?

If AB 101 becomes law, it will take effect on January 1st of the next year. There will be better nutrition in California schools, all because you thought up the idea! Wasn't that simple? Help us think of new ways of making California a better and healthier place to live, and write to your Assemblymember with your bill ideas.
Hey!

How about a law requiring better nutrition in all schools??

Now that we have an idea, we need to find a Senator or Assemblymember to be the author of a bill based on our idea. We can start by asking the Senator or Assemblymember from our district.

If AB 101 gets passed by both the Assembly and Senate, it will be sent to the Governor. There are three things the Governor can do with your bill.

SIGN IT – It becomes law.
VETO IT – It does not become law.
DO NOTHING – After 30 days, it becomes law automatically without a signature.
All 80 Assemblymembers meet to discuss AB 101. If the majority of them like the bill, it is passed on to the Senate, where it will go through the same process all over again, but if a majority vote against the bill, it fails. It stays in the Assembly and does not become a new law.

It looks like your Assemblymember agreed to be the author of the school nutrition bill!

The author of the bill will introduce it, and it will be given a number. Let's call the school nutrition bill Assembly Bill 101 (AB 101 for short). AB 101 will now be assigned to a committee for discussion.
is a small group of Assemblymembers. Committees hold public hearings where anyone can come and discuss a bill. There are many committees, each discussing bills on specific subjects — for example, one committee will discuss bills about cars and one committee will discuss bills about doctor visits. A bill could also be discussed by more than one committee.

After a bill is discussed at a hearing, the committee members vote on whether it would be a good law. If the majority of the committee’s members like the bill, they pass it and send it to the full Assembly for another vote.

Guess what? The committee liked the school nutrition bill. AB 101 has passed!