

*Strong States, Strong Nation*

# STATE LEGISLATIVE ACTIVITY AND CIVICS EDUCATION



NATIONAL CONFERENCE *of* STATE LEGISLATURES

Alaska Legislative Task Force on Civics Education  
November 22, 2016

# ABOUT NCSL



- ❑ Provides non-partisan research & analysis
- ❑ Offers professional development for legislators and staff
- ❑ Links legislators with each other and experts
- ❑ Speaks on behalf of legislatures in D.C.



# TODAY'S AGENDA

- ❑ State Legislatures and Civics Education
- ❑ Examples of State Legislative Activity
- ❑ America's Legislator Back to School Program
- ❑ Questions

# Presented by Angela Andrews, NCSL





# State Legislatures and Civics Education

“For representative democracy to function, citizens must understand and endorse the roles performed by governmental institutions. The task force recommends that legislatures work to improve the public understanding of state legislatures and the role they play in our governmental system.”

-- Strengthening State Legislatures: A Report of NCSL's Legislative Institution Task Force (NCSL, 1994)



# State Legislatures and Civics Education

“Legislatures must take a proactive role in civic education. They must provide leadership to ensure a broad public understanding of the role and benefits of representative democracy.”

--Legislatures of the Future: Implications of Change (Task Force on Legislatures of the Future of the Legislative Staff Coordinating Committee, NCSL, 2000)



# State Legislatures and Civics Education

Civic education is a central value of our country, our state, and our Legislature. Civics is important for students of every age as they learn to understand and appreciate their role in our government. By supporting legislators visiting schools and by creating lesson plans, resources, and professional development opportunities for teachers, we're always working to bring the democratic process to life in the classroom.

--- Washington State Legislature Civics Education Program



# State Legislatures and Civics Education

The Senate Clerk's Office is proud to offer engaging and dynamic education programs such as the Senate Page Leadership Program,...and Virginia Capital Semester, ...Virginia's Model General Assembly, ...and serves as a resource for the American Legion Boys and Girls State programs. These programs promote good citizenship and further the awareness of the role we all share in representative democracy.

-- Virginia Senate Clerk's Office Overview





# Examples of State Legislative Activity

- ❑ Mock sessions
- ❑ Page & Internship Programs
- ❑ Youth Legislatures
- ❑ Student Government Days
- ❑ Printed and Digital Resources
- ❑ Citizen Seminars & Forums
- ❑ Partnering with other programs (We The People, YMCA Youth in Government, Boys & Girls' State, etc...)

# Examples of State Legislative Activity:

## Nebraska's Unicameral Youth Legislature



- Annual program for high school students
- Four-day simulation where students step into the role of lawmaker – conduct hearings, sponsor bills, debate legislation



# Examples of State Legislative Activity:

## Nevada Youth Legislature (NRS 385.515)



- ❑ **Membership:** 21 high school students in 2 yr terms
- ❑ **Duties:** evaluate issues of importance to youth, hold 2 public hearings, public awareness towards youth, each youth legislator hold one meeting, report activities to legislature
- ❑ **Powers:** meet as often as necessary, form committees, periodic seminars on gov't/leadership, draft 1 measure related to youth

# Examples of State Legislative Activity: Massachusetts Student Government Day



# Examples of State Legislative Activity:

## Massachusetts Student Government Day



- ❑ Established in 1947, first Friday in April (M.G.L. Chapter 6, Section 12M)
- ❑ Dept. of Secondary & Elementary Education with major assistance from the legislature, approx. 400 students participate
- ❑ Students are assigned the roles of senators, representatives, constitutional officers and Justices of the Supreme Court.

*“This is an informative program about state government, that includes students participating in the role of elected or appointed officials to observe the processes of government.”*

*-- Massachusetts Department of Secondary & Elementary Education*

# Examples of State Legislative Activity:

## Virginia's Capitol Classroom



Capitol Classroom: Main x Angela

capclass.virginiageneralassembly.gov

Search Information and Virginia Legislation

Enter Keyword Here **SEARCH**

Tips Virginia General Assembly

**Capitol Classroom**

**HOME** **ELEMENTARY** **MIDDLE** **HIGH SCHOOL** **TEACHERS**

**WELCOME TO CAPITOL CLASSROOM!**

The Capitol Classroom web site provides legislative information about Virginia in an educational and entertaining setting for K-12 students and adults. Learn about Virginia's symbols and emblems, history, Members of the General Assembly, the Virginia State Capitol, and How a Bill Becomes a Law!

**Civics Programs**  
Do you want to participate in government? Check out selected grade-level Civics Programs.

**State Emblems**  
Did you know there is a state fossil, dog, and dance? Learn about the state emblems and symbols!

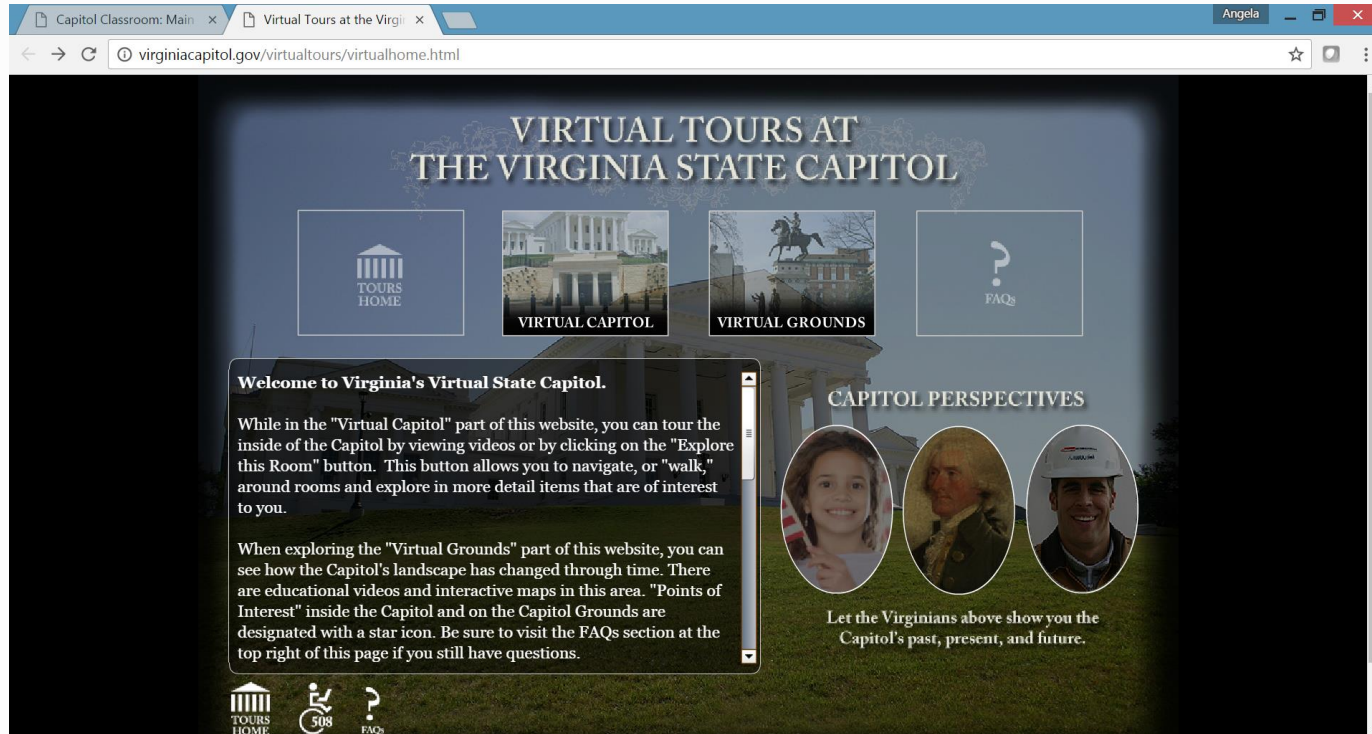
**How A Bill Becomes A Law**  
Learn the process from idea to law!

**Resources** **SPLAT** **Who's My**



# Examples of State Legislative Activity:

## Virginia's Capitol Classroom



# Examples of State Legislative Activity:

## Virginia's Capitol Classroom



Capitol Classroom Public x Virtual Tours at the Virg... Angela

capclass.virginiageneralassembly.gov/Publications/Publications.html


Search Information and Virginia Legislation  
Enter Keyword Here SEARCH  
Tips Virginia General Assembly

HOME ELEMENTARY MIDDLE HIGH SCHOOL TEACHERS


### PUBLICATIONS

*Publications for you to print and take with you on the go! Click on any of the Publication item titles to open the PDF. You will need [Adobe Reader](#) to open the PDFs. To order publications click [here](#).*


#### Activity Books



[A Capitol Script](#)  
A student guide to Virginia's legislative process for grades 6 and 7.



[A First Step](#)  
An information and activities booklet for pre-school and kindergarten students which contains puzzles and pictures to color.



[Activity Book](#)  
The Virginia House of Delegates Activity Book has been developed for 4th and 5th graders who are being introduced to Virginia studies. The Activity Book includes Virginia history and government, problems and puzzles, a word search and



# Examples of State Legislative Activity:

## Washington State's Legislative Scholar Program



- 5-day interactive workshop at State Capitol for social studies, history, government and civics teachers
- A professional development opportunity to learn first-hand about the state's legislative process
- Equips teachers with valuable resources and ideas to integrate civics and citizenship into the classroom

# Examples of State Legislative Activity:

## Washington State's Legislative Scholar Program



2016 Legislative Scholar x Angela

https://storify.com/WACivicEd/2016-legislative-scholar-program

We kick off the week with welcomes from House and Senate Administration and our Civic Ed program staff and volunteers:

Washington State Legislature  
LEGISLATIVE  
SCHOLAR PROGRAM

WA Civic Education  
@WACivicEd

Welcome to our #LegScholars of 2016! Excited for a week of #civiced learning & discussion #civics #waedu #sschat

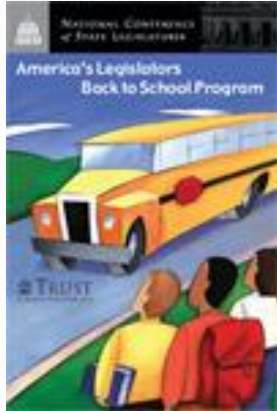
9:30 AM - 11 Jul 2016

2

The image shows a screenshot of a Storify page. At the top, there's a browser tab for '2016 Legislative Scholar' and a user profile for 'Angela'. The URL bar shows 'https://storify.com/WACivicEd/2016-legislative-scholar-program'. The main text reads: 'We kick off the week with welcomes from House and Senate Administration and our Civic Ed program staff and volunteers:'. Below this is a large graphic for the 'Washington State Legislature LEGISLATIVE SCHOLAR PROGRAM'. The graphic features a blue dome icon above a red banner with the text 'Washington State Legislature' and 'LEGISLATIVE SCHOLAR PROGRAM' below it. Underneath the graphic is a tweet from 'WA Civic Education @WACivicEd' with a 'Follow' button. The tweet text says: 'Welcome to our #LegScholars of 2016! Excited for a week of #civiced learning & discussion #civics #waedu #sschat'. The tweet is dated '9:30 AM - 11 Jul 2016' and has '2' likes.



# America's Legislator Back to School Program





# America's Legislator Back to School Program

- America's Legislators Back to School Program kicks off the third week of September and runs throughout the school year.
- NCSL makes available, free of charge, [publication](#) and [video](#) resource materials for high school, middle/junior high school and elementary school students to be used by state legislators visiting classrooms in conjunction with the program.

*"When legislators visit classrooms, students learn to appreciate the pressures, debate, negotiation and compromise that are part of representative democracy."*

*-- Overview of America's Legislator Back to School Program*



# Questions and Follow-Up

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