

How a Bill Becomes a Law in Wisconsin
Role Play
by Ava L. McCall

Roles:

Wisconsin citizens in favor of bill
Wisconsin citizens against the bill
Wisconsin State Representatives
Wisconsin State Senators
Wisconsin Governor

Wisconsin citizens in favor of bill

1. Decide on **one bill (proposed law)** that will be good for all children in public elementary schools in Wisconsin.

Example: All public elementary schools will serve pizza for school lunch once a week.

Example: All public elementary schools will provide a 60-minute recess for students each day. (Only 30 minutes of recess each day is considered part of instructional time. If schools give more than 30 minutes of recess each day, they cannot count more than 30 minutes as instructional time.)

2. Think of all the reasons why this new bill will be good for children in Wisconsin.

Possible reasons: Pizza is a healthy food that most children like. Children won't waste their food if the school serves food most children like. Children need healthy food to learn.

Possible reasons: Children get important exercise and fresh air during recess. Exercise and fresh air help children's brains work better so they can learn.

3. Write the bill.

4. Give the bill to your state representative and explain why it will be good for children in Wisconsin.

Wisconsin State Representatives

1. Read the bill to other state Representatives in the Assembly.

2. Ask citizens who want the bill to pass or do not want the bill to pass to tell Representatives in the Assembly why they either want the bill to become a law or do not want the bill to become a law.

Wisconsin citizens in favor of bill

1. Tell the Representatives in the Assembly why you want the bill to pass.

2. Explain all the reasons why the bill is good for elementary students.

Possible benefits: If schools serve pizza every week, Wisconsin's dairy industry will benefit because cheese is an important ingredient in pizzas. Pizzas provide vitamins and minerals children need to grow and learn.

Possible benefits: If schools have a 60-minute recess each day, children get the exercise they need for building strong bodies. Children who exercise 60 minutes each day are less likely to be obese (extremely overweight) and unhealthy.

Wisconsin citizens against the bill

1. Tell the representatives in the Assembly why you do not want the bill to pass.

2. Explain all the reasons why the bill could be harmful for elementary students.

Possible harm: Children need to eat a variety of foods to get all the nutrients their bodies need for growth and learning. If children eat one type of food each week, their bodies may not have the variety of nutrients they need for growth and learning.

Possible harm: Children attend school to learn. If they spend 60 minutes a day in recess, they have less time to learn in their classrooms. They may not learn all the content they need to be successful. If schools have 60 minutes of recess each day, they may need to make the school day longer or have students attend school more days each school year in order to provide students with all the instructional time elementary schools are required to have.

Wisconsin State Representatives

1. Listen to the citizens state their reasons for supporting the bill or opposing the bill.

2. Ask questions to understand why citizens want the bill to be approved or do not want the bill approved.

Example question: Why do we need a law to require public elementary schools to serve a specific food?

Example question: Why can't school districts decide on all the foods they serve?

Example question: How will schools make sure to provide all the instructional time required for students if they have 60 minutes of recess each day rather than 30 minutes?

Example question: Why isn't 30 minutes of recess enough exercise for elementary children?

3. Present the bill to all Representatives in the Assembly and ask them to vote to approve it, change it, or not approve it.

Possible change: All public elementary schools will serve pizza for school lunch once a **month**.

Possible change: All public elementary schools will provide a **45-minute** recess for students each day.

4. Give the approved or changed bill to the Senate.

Wisconsin State Senators

1. Read the bill to other state Senators in the Senate.

2. Ask citizens who want the bill to pass or do not want the bill to pass to tell state Senators in the Senate why they either want the bill to become a law or do not want the bill to become a law.

Wisconsin citizens in favor of bill

1. Tell the state Senators in the Senate why you want the bill to pass.

2. Explain important reasons why the bill will benefit all elementary students.

Wisconsin citizens against the bill

1. Tell the state Senators in the Senate why you do not want the bill to pass.
2. Explain important reasons why the bill could be harmful for elementary students.

Wisconsin State Senators

1. Listen to the citizens state their reasons for supporting the bill or opposing the bill.
Example question: How will this bill help students become educated, productive citizens?
Example question: How will this bill affect the length of the elementary school day or the length of the elementary school year?
2. Ask questions to understand why citizens want the bill to be approved or do not want the bill approved.
3. Present the bill to all Senators in the Senate and ask them to vote to approve it, change it, or not approve it.
Possible change: All public elementary schools will serve pizza for school lunch **once a month**.
Possible change: All public elementary schools will provide a **45-minute recess** for students each day.
4. Give the approved or changed bill to the Governor.

Wisconsin Governor

1. Read the bill.
2. Decide on one action to take:
 - (a). Sign the bill to make it a law in Wisconsin.
 - (b). Veto the bill to keep it from becoming a law in Wisconsin.
 - (c). Do nothing about the bill. The bill will become a law after six days.
3. Explain to the citizens, Assembly, and Senate why you signed the bill, vetoed it, or did nothing about the bill.

Wisconsin State Representatives and Wisconsin State Senators

1. If the Governor vetoed the bill, vote again to pass the bill.
2. If 2/3 of the Representatives and Senators vote to approve the bill, it becomes a law.
3. If less than 2/3 of the Representatives and Senators vote to approve the bill, it does not become law.