



Engaged Citizens:
 SS.7.CG.2.10
Public Policy Problem Solving
READING #1

Name: _____

Date: _____



SS.7.CG.2.10 Benchmark Clarification 1: Students will identify the appropriate level of government to resolve specific problems.

This material is adapted from resources developed by the Center for Civic Education.

Government at all levels (local, state, or federal) is responsible for protecting and providing for its citizens. When a problem or issue comes up, the citizens can get the help of the government to solve these problems. Many of these government solutions come in the form of **public policy** – which is a policy (rule or law) that is made in response to an issue or problem that requires attention.

U.S. citizens have the right to say what they think government should do about problems in their communities. Citizens have the right to say what they think about problems in their state and nation, as well as international issues. Citizens also have the right to try to influence the decisions government officials make about all of those problems.

To be able to participate effectively, citizens need to know which level of government and which **government agencies** are responsible for changing, carrying out, or developing specific public policies. For example, state legislatures may tell agencies to carry out policies that came from federal legislation. Or local governments may create policies to carry out the responsibilities they are given through laws passed at the state or federal level.

Below are a few additional examples of problems or concerns that could be addressed by the various levels of government:

Problem: There have been a lot of car accidents at the same intersection.

Solution: Involve the local government in placing a traffic light or stop signs at the intersection to prevent future accidents.

Problem: Florida has a large increase in the number of high school dropouts.

Solution: Contact the state representative or state senator who leads the appropriate legislative committee to introduce a bill that will fund a statewide dropout prevention program in public high schools.

Problem: Elderly citizens cannot afford to pay their medical bills.

Solution: Contact the Congressman/woman who leads the appropriate legislative committee to introduce a bill that helps the elderly with these expenses.

governmental agency - an organization in the government that is responsible for a specific area of the government (for example, the Florida Department of Health, Florida Department of Citrus)

public policy - government actions in the form of laws, rules, or regulations

Sources

Birkland, Thomas A. "What is public policy?". *New.Civiced.org*. The Center for Civic Education, 2011. Web. 11 March 2014. <<http://new.civiced.org/pc-program/instructional-component/public-policy>>

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