

Teen Curfew



For full lesson plan details, access: www.lawday.org click on: **lesson**

Overview

Students discuss the intent of city ordinances and identify the role citizens play in advocating in policy debate

Background

Explain to the students that they will consider a proposed teen curfew law in a mock city council session. They will play the roles of city government officials and community groups who are weighing the proposal. Ultimately, the city council will decide if there should be a curfew law for teens.

Resources

- Sufficient distribution copies of Proposed Curfew Law
- Invited resource personnel to assist the various groups in the mock city council (optional)
- For detailed facts and statistics about curfew and crime, go to:

www.ncjrs.org/pdffiles/curfew.pdf www.ojjdp.ncjrs.org/pubs/reform/ch2_c.html

PROPOSED CURFEW LAW

It will be illegal for persons under the age of 18 to be out of their homes from 11 P.M. to 6 A.M. Sunday through Thursday nights. On Friday and Saturday nights, the curfew shall be extended until midnight. Violators will be fined \$100. Young people chaperoned by adults, attending a planned community activity, or traveling to or from work are exempt and will not be fined or penalized.

Procedure

1. Start by asking the following questions.
 - Do your parents or guardians impose a curfew on you? Should they? Why or why not?
 - Should the government impose a curfew on young people? Why or why not?
2. Distribute Proposed Curfew Law. Read aloud and clarify any basic questions that arise.
3. Ask: Who would probably oppose this law? Who would probably support this law?
4. Explain to the students that they are going to participate in a mock city council meeting and will play the roles of either a city council member or a community group concerned about the proposed curfew law.
5. Divide the class into teams of 3-5 students. Assign each team to represent a community group.
 - The first team is the city council. Their job is to run the council meeting, question presenters, and make a decision on the proposal. If you have a city council member present, have him or her sit with the group to help them prepare.
 - The other teams are community groups testifying before the council. Their job is to present their persuasive arguments to the city council to consider.
 - Police Officers
 - County School Board
 - Families Against Violence
 - Students for Rights of Youth
 - Local Merchants Association
 - Other groups
6. Conduct the mock city council meeting. Allow each group three minutes to present its position.
7. Once the presentations are complete, the city council should discuss the arguments and reach a decision. The council should base its rationale on the most compelling testimony presented. Have the council announce their decision and the rationale.

