



## A BODY OF INFORMATION

(30 minutes)

### OBJECTIVE

Students consider all the ways that democracy impacts our lives.

### MATERIALS

Butcher paper, markers, multicolored markers, scissors; government agencies information

### GET READY

- ✓ Have a set of multicolored markers ready for each group of students as well as a generous length of butcher paper (should be as long as your students are tall).
- ✓ Duplicate the page of city, state, and/or national agencies from your telephone directory for each group.

### INSTRUCTIONS

- ✓ Explain to your students that a useful way to think of democracy is to look at the life of one person. A democracy, whether local or national, impacts every member of the community in many ways.
- ✓ Divide your students into groups of four. Inform them that they are going to discover all the ways that democracy impacts them by creating a person on butcher paper. They will create the outline of a person on the butcher paper and within this outline list all the ways this person is impacted by democracy.

- ✓ Students must first brainstorm the qualities of the person they draw. Give each group several minutes to determine things such as age, gender, health status, etc. Prompt the groups with different qualities they might want to consider: retired, differently-abled, etc. They may even name this person if they wish, both for fun and to make referencing easier.
- ✓ Model a completed project for the students. This should be the outline of a person and within the outline various things you wrote about how this person is impacted by democracy. Examples: *This adult needs freeways to get to work; this older person needs health benefits; this man needs a building permit for his house, this baby needs her diaper taken out in the garbage, etc.*
- ✓ Have your students draw the outline of their person and begin to fill it in. They can use the list of city, state, and federal agencies to jog their thinking. Remind the students to think of their own lives and the lives of those they know.
- ✓ When completed, the various figures can be hung on the classroom walls. Invite the class to walk around the room and look at the paper citizens.


**A BODY OF INFORMATION** (continued)

**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

- ★ *Are there any services used by all the paper citizens? (Police, garbage, libraries etc.)*
- ★ *Which services would you miss the most if the community did not provide them? (Garbage collection?)*
- ★ *If our government provides us these services, what is it that we give back? (Taxes, votes, civic engagement)*
- ★ *Politicians often talk about the services they think are most important. Which ones are most important to you? (Education and transportation were the ones on the top of most community agendas.)*
- ★ *Why is it special that a democracy provides these services? (Because they represent the people's interests, etc.)*

**MORE!**

Students can invite a speaker from a city agency (police, refuse, animal control, recreation, libraries, etc.) to talk to the class about the agency's work and how students can make a difference in that work.