Indiana on the Record

Three paths from Indiana to national policy

IS.5.2 "Examine the actions and policies of U.S. presidents, representatives, and senators from Indiana."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline one action by each Indiana official, circle the change each action sought, and number any limits or other steps needed to make that change.

Three Ways to Shape a Nation

1. In 1890, President Benjamin Harrison signed the Sherman Antitrust Act, a law aimed at business combinations that restrained trade. Harrison had represented Indiana in the U.S. Senate before becoming president. As giant firms gained influence over prices and markets, the law gave the federal government a way to challenge certain anticompetitive conduct. Signing the measure put presidential authority behind a national response, but a signature did not guarantee strong enforcement. Early federal cases had mixed results, and courts sometimes read the law narrowly. Harrison's action shows both the reach and the limits of a president's role in economic policy.

2. Decades later, Representative Katie Hall of Indiana's First District worked on a different question: Whose life would the nation honor? In 1983, she introduced a bill to make Martin Luther King Jr.'s birthday a federal holiday and guided it through the House as chair of the subcommittee handling the proposal. Earlier versions of the holiday bill had stalled for years. Hall's work helped move the measure through the House; the Senate also passed it, and President Ronald Reagan signed it into law. Her action did not create the holiday by itself. It helped turn a demand for public recognition into federal policy.

3. Senator Birch Bayh of Indiana pushed to lower the voting age from 21 to 18 through the Twenty-Sixth Amendment. During the Vietnam War, many Americans argued that people old enough to be drafted should be able to vote. Bayh led the Senate effort to propose the amendment. Congress approved the proposal in 1971, and enough states ratified it that same year, adding it to the Constitution. Unlike an ordinary law, a constitutional amendment required approval beyond Congress. Bayh's work expanded the electorate, but it also depended on support from lawmakers and state legislatures across the country.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. What economic problem did Harrison's action address, and why did signing the law not settle it?

2. How did Hall help turn a proposed holiday into federal policy, and whose actions were still needed?

3. How did Bayh's proposed amendment change voting rights, and why was congressional approval alone insufficient?

4. Compare Harrison's and Hall's roles in making national policy. What could each do, and what could neither do alone?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

An exhibit called “Who Counts in Public Life?” has room for one action by Hall or Bayh. In 4 to 5 sentences, choose an action, compare it with the other official's action, and use one specific detail about each to explain your choice.

ANSWER KEY

Indiana on the Record

HIGH SCHOOL · IS.5.2

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline one action by each Indiana official, circle the change each action sought, and number any limits or other steps needed to make that change. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What economic problem did Harrison's action address, and why did signing the law not settle it?	**The law targeted business combinations that restrained trade. Signing it did not ensure strong enforcement, and early court cases had mixed results.**
2	How did Hall help turn a proposed holiday into federal policy, and whose actions were still needed?	**Hall introduced the bill and guided it through the House subcommittee. The House and Senate passed it, and President Reagan signed it.**
3	How did Bayh's proposed amendment change voting rights, and why was congressional approval alone insufficient?	**It lowered the voting age from 21 to 18. A constitutional amendment also needed ratification by enough states.**
4	Compare Harrison's and Hall's roles in making national policy. What could each do, and what could neither do alone?	**Harrison could sign a law passed by Congress, while Hall could introduce and guide a bill through the House. Neither could make a policy effective alone: Harrison's law needed enforcement, and Hall's bill needed Senate passage and the president's signature.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

I would feature Bayh's work on the Twenty-Sixth Amendment because it changed who could vote in national elections. Lowering the voting age from 21 to 18 gave younger adults a direct voice in choosing leaders. Hall's holiday bill also changed public life by giving Martin Luther King Jr. federal recognition, but it did not give anyone a new vote. Both actions mattered, yet Bayh's most directly changed who could take part in government decisions.

Accept either Hall or Bayh as the exhibit choice if the response accurately compares their actions and cites a specific passage detail about each. For the marking job, accept phrases that identify each action, its intended change, and a necessary step or limit.