From Bill to Law

Trace how a recent law moved through Congress and the presidency.

USG.C.4.3 "Explain the steps of the legislative process, including the authority, responsibilities, and influence of Congress, the President, and special interest groups..."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline actions Congress can take, circle ways interest groups can influence lawmakers, and number the President's options after a bill passes Congress. Use your marks to track who has authority at each step.

The Making of a Chip Law

1. In 2022, a shortage of computer chips made it harder to build cars and other products in the United States. Congress debated the CHIPS and Science Act, which offered federal support for domestic chip manufacturing and research. Members of Congress can introduce bills, and congressional committees can examine proposals, hear witnesses, and suggest changes before a full chamber votes. Lawmakers had to decide whether public spending could strengthen the supply of chips and whether the benefits justified the cost. These choices belong to elected representatives, who may hear from voters before deciding what to support.

2. Chip manufacturers and industry groups urged lawmakers to fund new factories, while critics questioned the price tag. Such groups can lobby lawmakers, share research, and organize supporters, but they cannot cast votes in Congress. After negotiations, both the Senate and the House approved the same text of the CHIPS and Science Act in July 2022. A bill must pass both chambers in identical form before it can go to the President. Debate and votes give representatives from different states and districts a role, although groups with more money or access may gain more attention than other voices.

3. President Joe Biden signed the act in August 2022, making it law. For a bill presented to the President, signing is not the only possible path: if the President takes no action for ten days, excluding Sundays, it becomes law if Congress remains in session. A President can also veto a bill, which Congress can overcome with a two-thirds vote in each chamber. These rules divide power between branches: the President can block a bill, but Congress can override that decision. Public debate and elected lawmakers' votes support representation, while lobbying raises a question about whose views receive the most attention.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. Trace a bill from introduction to the President. What can a committee do, and what must the House and Senate do?

2. How could chip industry groups influence the bill, and what decision could they not make?

3. After both chambers pass identical text, how could the bill become law if the President does not sign it?

4. Which steps in the passage show representation and checks on power? Give one example of each.

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Imagine Congress proposes a bill to fund the replacement of lead water pipes in public schools. In one paragraph of 5 to 6 sentences, explain a committee step, both chambers' role, an interest group's influence, and the President's options, then evaluate one democratic strength and one possible weakness of the process.

ANSWER KEY

From Bill to Law

HIGH SCHOOL · USG.C.4.3

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline actions Congress can take, circle ways interest groups can influence lawmakers, and number the President's options after a bill passes Congress. Use your marks to track who has authority at each step. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Trace a bill from introduction to the President. What can a committee do, and what must the House and Senate do?	**A member of Congress can introduce a bill. A committee can examine it, hear witnesses, and suggest changes. The House and Senate must pass identical text before the bill goes to the President.**
2	How could chip industry groups influence the bill, and what decision could they not make?	**They could lobby lawmakers, share research, and organize supporters, but they could not vote on the bill in Congress.**
3	After both chambers pass identical text, how could the bill become law if the President does not sign it?	**It could become law after ten days, excluding Sundays, if Congress remains in session and the President takes no action. If the President vetoes it, Congress could make it law by overriding the veto with a two-thirds vote in each chamber.**
4	Which steps in the passage show representation and checks on power? Give one example of each.	**House and Senate debate and votes show representation by elected lawmakers. A presidential veto and Congress's power to override it show checks on power.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

A member of Congress could introduce a bill to fund new water pipes in public schools. A committee could hear from health experts and revise the proposal. A public health group might share research and ask lawmakers to support it, but the group could not vote. The House and Senate would each need to pass the same text. The President could sign or veto the bill, or it could become law without a signature after ten days, excluding Sundays, if Congress remained in session. Elected lawmakers' votes support representation, but groups with greater access might receive more attention than affected families.

Accept other accurate committee actions and interest-group tactics described in the passage. For the open task, look for a correct path through both chambers, an accurate presidential option, and a specific evaluation of representation or unequal influence.