

# Bill-to-Law Machine

**Mission:** Run bills through the real process: votes in the House and Senate, the President's signature or veto, override votes, and the Supreme Court. Discover how each branch can CHECK the others.

**Big question:** How does a bill become a law, and how do checks and balances limit each branch?

## Warm-up: Fraction check

Do the math.

More than half of 100 ✓ **51.**

More than half of 435 ✓ **218.**

### Key vocabulary

|                         |                                                      |
|-------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Bill</b>             | A proposed law.                                      |
| <b>Veto</b>             | The President's rejection of a bill.                 |
| <b>Override</b>         | Congress passing a bill over a veto with a 2/3 vote. |
| <b>Majority</b>         | More than half.                                      |
| <b>Unconstitutional</b> | Goes against the Constitution.                       |

## Box 1

### Pass a law

In the simulator: Get Bill 1 signed into law.

How many House votes are needed to pass a bill?

Answer: \_\_\_\_\_ ✓ **218**

## Box 2

### A bill that fails

In the simulator: Make a bill die in the House.

What did you notice?

## Box 3

### Veto!

In the simulator: Override a veto.

How many Senate votes does an override need?

Answer: \_\_\_\_\_ ✓ **67**

### The veto stands

In the simulator: Veto a bill and let the override FAIL.

What did you notice?

#### 4 Box 4

##### Court check

In the simulator: Have the Supreme Court strike down Bill 2.

Why did the Court strike down the Quiet Newspapers Act?

☐ It violates freedom of the press in the First Amendment ☐ The President didn't like it ☐ It cost too much

✓ **It violates freedom of the press in the First Amendment**

#### 5 Box 5

##### Who checks whom?

Which branch uses each check?

Sort: Veto a bill · Override a veto · Declare a law unconstitutional · Approve Supreme Court judges · Nominate judges

| Legislative                                                   | Executive                                    | Judicial                              |
|---------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| <b>Override a veto</b><br><b>Approve Supreme Court judges</b> | <b>Veto a bill</b><br><b>Nominate judges</b> | <b>Declare a law unconstitutional</b> |

#### 6 Box 6

##### Why checks and balances?

Explain why the Founders created checks and balances. Use an example from the machine.

Why

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**Look for: Explains limiting power; at least 12 words**

Example

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**Look for: Uses a check from the machine; at least 14 words**

#### 7 Box 7

##### Legend: fractions Legend only

The House needs  $\frac{2}{3}$  of 435 members to override. What is  $\frac{2}{3}$  of 435? (Round up to a whole number of votes.)

Answer: \_\_\_\_\_ ✓ **290**

Show your thinking:

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##### Exit ticket: answer the big question in your own words

How does a bill become a law, and how do checks and balances limit each branch?

**Look for: A bill must pass the House (218 of 435) and Senate (51 of 100), then the President signs or vetoes it. Congress can override a veto with a  $\frac{2}{3}$  vote in both houses. The Supreme Court can strike down a law that violates the Constitution. Each branch checks the others.**

## # Completion codes

Students see a code like **ABC-I3** when they finish. The first part must match below. The letter is the level (E = Explorer, I = Investigator, L = Legend), and the number at the end is how many stars they earned.

| Level                                                                                          | Code starts with |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------|
|  Explorer     | <b>JZL-E</b>     |
|  Investigator | <b>A01-I</b>     |
|  Legend       | <b>GRG-L</b>     |

## ! Watch for these misconceptions

- "The President is the boss of the whole government." The three branches are equal and check each other.
- "The Bill of Rights gives people rights." It protects rights people already have from government interference.
- "Freedom of speech means you can say anything anywhere with no consequences." It limits government, not every consequence.