

American Government & Politics: A Christian Worldview.
Implied Powers Domino Disaster (18–20 Minutes)

TEACHER INSTRUCTIONS

Goal

Students see how the “implied powers” belief (as expressed by Justice John Marshall in *McCulloch v. Maryland*) leads to absurd conclusions on the limits of government powers.

Instructions

1. Put students in pairs/small groups.
2. Allow 10–12 minutes for groups to complete the activity.
3. Discuss as a class via volunteers.

Suggested Key (AWV)

Scenario #1

- Armies need healthy soldiers.
- Healthy soldiers eat nutritious food.
- Children become future soldiers.
- Therefore government may require vegetables.

Scenario #2

- Commerce depends on productive workers.
- Productive workers need education.
- Video games can distract from education.
- Therefore government may limit gaming.

Scenario #3

- National defense requires strong soldiers.
- Strong soldiers come from healthy citizens.
- Exercise makes citizens healthier.
- Therefore government may require jogging.

Scenario #4

- Naturalization creates new citizens.
- Good citizens contribute to society.
- Good citizens should be healthy and responsible.
- Brushing teeth is a healthy habit.
- Therefore government may require toothbrushing.

Discussion/Debrief

Ask students these questions (and any other s you think are appropriate):

- Which domino in each chain is where the argument first becomes questionable?
- What’s the lesson of this activity?

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For each scenario, fill in 3–5 dominoes showing how someone with a very broad view of “implied powers” in the U.S. Constitution might start with the listed U.S. power and follow some distorted, twisted steps to make the conclusion at the end of each scenario. Have fun!

Scenario #1: The National Vegetable Law

Congress may “raise and support Armies.”

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Therefore, the U.S. government may require every student to eat two servings of vegetables at lunch.

Scenario #2: The Federal Gaming Limit

Congress may regulate commerce among the several states.

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Therefore, the U.S. government may limit teenagers to one hour of video games per day.

Scenario #3: The National Jogging Program

Congress may provide for the common defense.

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Therefore, the U.S. government may require every American to jog one mile each morning.

Scenario #4: The National Toothbrushing Program

Congress may establish a uniform rule of naturalization [the process to become a citizen].

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Therefore, the U.S. government may require every American to brush his teeth twice each day.

