

American Government & Politics: A Christian Worldview.
Create a Wasteful Government Program (20–25 Minutes)

TEACHER INSTRUCTIONS

Goal

In this activity, students play the role of local government officials who plan to vote for a bill that pays for a new luxury or financial bonus for them (the government officials). But those officials want to phrase the bill in a way that won't make taxpayers angry.

Instructions

1. Read the instructions together.
2. Put students into groups of 3–4.
3. Give students 12–15 minutes to come up with their ideas for an expensive extra/luxury item/bonus, a name for the bill that includes this item, and short press release of 100 to 125 words that explains away this bill to taxpayers.
4. Let groups present their ideas to the class.

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Create a Wasteful Government Program

You and your group members are government employees of the little town of Juneberry. You have convinced your state's legislature to pass a new bill into law that pays for an expensive luxury or financial bonus for yourselves. The bill is going to be voted on next week, and is guaranteed to pass, and that makes you happy! But you realize that taxpayers will eventually find out about this new law, and that makes you unhappy!

As you sit and ponder this, you get a call from a state's legislator, who says that before they vote on this bill, your group may (a) give the bill a name and (b) write a short press release (about 100–125 words) describing what it does. You decide to take the offer, since you want to control what message initially gets to the public.

EXAMPLE: If your group were to arrange to have a bill passed that paid for a \$25 million-dollar gym, spa, and recreational center for town government officials, you would never name the bill “Government Employee Recreational Center and Spa Bill.” Remember, you want the public's *approval*. The average voter loves supporting certain things (can you think of any “buzzwords” that many Americans respond favorably to?), so you might want to name the bill something using a few of those words.

And the press release you write? It needs to explain to taxpayers how *important* this new expense is, without focusing too much on details of what exactly it is. Of course, it's also important that your group explains that this luxury/bonus was only thought up by those town government officials because they were deeply concerned about how they could better serve taxpayers, whom they dearly love with all of their hearts.

Your Group's Idea for the Luxury/Bonus for You and Your Group of Juneberry Officials:

The Name for the Bill That Pays for This Luxury/Bonus:

Your Group's Press Release of 100–125 Words That Explains to Taxpayers This Bill: