

# THE GOVERNOR'S CABINET

*Bill Review, Signing and Veto Override*

CIVICS

GOVERNMENT

CRITICAL THINKING

PUBLIC SPEAKING

## AT A GLANCE

|                 |                                                                                                                                                            |
|-----------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>GRADES</b>   | 9-12 (adaptable for younger students)                                                                                                                      |
| <b>TIME</b>     | Four sessions, each 30 minutes long.<br>Uses bills passed in the Floor Debate lesson, or the sample bills included here.                                   |
| <b>HANDOUTS</b> | 1. Sample Bills Sent to the Governor;<br>2. Cabinet Review Form; 3. Governor's Office Meeting Script; 4. Veto Message Template; 5. Veto Override Procedure |

## THE STORY PROBLEM

The Storybook County Assembly has sent five bills to the Governor, including the Humpty Dumpty Wall Safety Act with its egg tax and the Porridge Temperature Disclosure Act with its "burglary defense." The Governor has two days and one pen.

## ► THE PROCESS PRACTICED

The executive branch's handling of passed bills. At a YMCA Youth and Government conference the Governor's Cabinet reviews every bill in subgroups, producing a pro statement, a con statement, questions and a recommendation to sign, veto or wait. The Comptroller's group checks finances and format. The Governor meets sponsors in the Governor's Office, signs bills "into youth law" or vetoes them, and the chamber may override a veto with a two-thirds vote. Students learn that passing a bill is not the end of the story.

## ► LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

- Students will be able to analyze a bill from the executive's point of view: Is it workable, affordable, lawful, and consistent with the county's goals?
- Students will be able to write a balanced Cabinet Review (pro statement, con statement, two questions, recommendation).
- Students will be able to conduct a Governor's Office signing meeting and write a veto message.
- Students will be able to run a veto override under the correct procedure and vote threshold.

## ► MATERIALS:

- Passed bills from earlier lessons, or Sample Bills (Supporting Document 1)
- Handout: "Cabinet Review Form" (Supporting Document 2)
- Handout: "Governor's Office Meeting Script" (Supporting Document 3)
- Handout: "Veto Message Template" and "Veto Override Procedure" (Supporting Documents 4 and 5)
- A stamp or sticker reading "Signed into Youth Law" (optional, fun, and the real conference uses one)

- Bill status tracker on the board: Waiting to Be Heard, Governor Deciding, Ready to Be Signed, Signed, Vetoed, Defeated

## ► PRE-PLANNING:

- **Assign Roles:**
  - **Governor** (1 student): leads Cabinet, makes final decisions, runs signing meetings.
  - **Lieutenant Governor** (1 student): chairs Cabinet discussions, keeps the status tracker current.
  - **Comptroller** (1 student) and **Comptroller's Group** (2 students): fiscal review and format check (the Seal of State Approval).
  - **Attorney General** (1 student): reviews each bill for conflicts with existing Storybook County law and the Constitution (fairness, due process, equal treatment of eggs and non-eggs).
  - **Commissioners** (remaining students in subgroups of 3): Housing and Hazards, Woodland Affairs, Agriculture and Porridge, Transportation and Beanstalks, Public Safety.
  - **Sponsors**: students who wrote the bills return to defend them in the Governor's Office and at override.
- Cabinet work is confidential until decisions are announced, as it is at the conference.

## SESSION 1 THINKING LIKE THE EXECUTIVE

30 MINUTES

5

**Hook.** "The Assembly just voted 24 to 3 to tax eggs to pay for guardrails. The Governor is an egg." Ask: does the Governor have to sign? Explain sign, veto, and wait.

10

**Three Lenses.** Teach the Cabinet's three questions. Workability: can a county agency actually do this? Money: does the fiscal section hold up? Law: does it conflict with other laws or basic fairness? Give one quick example of each using the Porridge Act (who enforces temperature posting; who pays for thermometers; a "burglary defense" for porridge tasting may undermine the whole burglary law).

10

**Assign Bills to Subgroups.** The Lieutenant Governor assigns each bill to the matching subgroup. Subgroups read their bill and begin the Cabinet Review Form.

5

**Comptroller and AG Briefing.** The Comptroller's Group and the AG begin their separate reviews of every bill.

## SESSION 2 CABINET REVIEW

30 MINUTES

15

**Complete the Reviews.** Subgroups finish: a pro statement (two sentences), a con statement (two sentences), two questions for the sponsors, and a recommendation. The Comptroller's Group marks each bill's fiscal section as sound, weak or missing and grants or withholds the Seal. The AG writes a one-line legal flag or "no concerns."

12

**Cabinet Meeting.** The Lieutenant Governor calls each bill in turn. The subgroup reports in one minute; the Comptroller and AG add their lines; the Governor asks one question and records a tentative decision. Decisions stay confidential.

3

**Update the Tracker.** Each bill moves to Governor Deciding or Ready to Be Signed.

5

**Script Walkthrough.** Read the Governor's Office Meeting Script. Note the real conference practice: the Governor asks sponsors why they chose the topic and why it matters to the state, then explains the decision.

20

**Signing Meetings.** Sponsors of each bill are called in for a four-minute meeting. For bills the Governor signs: handshake, question, explanation, signature, stamp, photo (optional), tracker updated to Signed. For bills the Governor vetoes: same courtesy, then the Governor reads the veto message aloud and hands it to the sponsors. At least one bill should be vetoed so Session 4 has work to do; if the Governor would sign everything, the teacher plays a stern Comptroller.

5

**Reflection.** Sponsors of vetoed bills meet to decide whether to seek an override. The rest of the class predicts the vote.

5

**Procedure.** Teach the override from the Procedure sheet: a Cabinet member explains the veto (1 minute); the author responds (1 minute); one con and one pro speaker (1 minute each); no technical questions; standing count; two-thirds needed.

15

**Run the Overrides.** The Assembly reconvenes with a student presiding. Each vetoed bill gets the full procedure. The Clerk counts and the Chair announces: "Due to the consensus of the chamber, this veto has been overridden" or "This veto stands."

5

**Final Tracker.** Move each bill to its final status. Count how many of the original bills became youth law.

5

**Wrap-Up.** Discuss: Did the Cabinet catch anything the Assembly missed? Was any veto really about the bill, or about who sponsored it? Which is harder, passing a law or stopping one?

## ► ASSESSMENT

### Cabinet Review Form

30

Pro and con statements fair and specific; questions aimed at real weaknesses; recommendation follows from the analysis.

### Comptroller and AG Reviews

15

Fiscal and legal flags accurate and explained.

### Governor and Lieutenant Governor

20

Ran meetings courteously and on time; decisions explained with reasons, not preferences.

### Veto Message

15

States the reason, cites the section at issue, invites a fix.

### Override Procedure

20

Correct order, time limits, standing count, two-thirds threshold applied correctly.

## ► DIFFERENTIATION

### Support

Pre-fill the Cabinet Review Form with the pro statement so groups write only the con and questions. Give the Governor a decision guide (veto if the Comptroller withholds the Seal or the AG flags a conflict).

### Challenge

Add a "line item" twist: the Governor may propose a change the sponsors can accept to earn a signature, modeling negotiation between branches.

## SAMPLE BILLS SENT TO THE GOVERNOR

- **A-2, The Humpty Dumpty Wall Safety Act** (guardrails; one-cent egg tax).
- **A-5, The Porridge Temperature Disclosure Act** (posting; burglary defense for porridge tasting).
- **S-1, An Act to Regulate Beanstalk Cultivation** (permit; planter liability; Falling Giant Response Team).
- **S-3, The Riverbank Motorcar Responsibility Act** (Mr. Toad must register vehicles to a responsible adult; Badger designated as default adult).
- **A-7, The Twenty-Year Nap Registry Act** (Rip Van Winkle; families may register long sleepers; county checks on them every five years).

# CABINET REVIEW FORM

Bill number and title: \_\_\_\_\_ Subgroup: \_\_\_\_\_

**Pro statement (two sentences, the best case for signing)**

**Con statement (two sentences, the best case against)**

**Question 1 for the sponsors**

**Question 2 for the sponsors**

**Comptroller's fiscal review:** Sound / Weak / Missing. Note: \_\_\_\_\_ Seal of State Approval: Granted  
/ Withheld

**Attorney General's legal review:** No concerns / Flag: \_\_\_\_\_

**Recommendation:** Sign / Veto / Wait. Reason: \_\_\_\_\_

## GOVERNOR'S OFFICE MEETING SCRIPT

Lieutenant Governor: "The Governor will now see the sponsors of Bill \_\_\_\_."

Governor: (stands, shakes hands) "Thank you for coming. Tell me why you chose this topic." (Sponsors answer.) "Why does it matter to Storybook County?" (Sponsors answer.)

Governor: "Here is what the Cabinet found." (One pro, one con, in two sentences.) Then either:

Signing: "I am pleased to sign this bill into youth law." (Signs, stamps, other officers sign, photo.) "Congratulations."

Veto: "I am not able to sign this bill as written, and here is why." (Reads the veto message.) "You may seek an override in the Assembly, and I hope you will consider the fix I have described."

## VETO MESSAGE TEMPLATE

To the Storybook County Assembly: I return herewith, without my approval, Bill \_ entitled "\_\_\_\_\_."

The reason for this veto is: (one or two sentences; name the section).

A version I could sign would: (one sentence).

Signed, \_\_\_\_\_, Governor of Storybook County.

## VETO OVERRIDE PROCEDURE

1. The Presiding Officer announces: "The chamber will consider the Governor's veto of Bill \_\_\_\_."
2. A Cabinet member explains the veto: 1 minute.
3. The author responds: 1 minute.
4. One con speaker and one pro speaker: 1 minute each. No technical questions. No amendments.
5. Standing vote, counted by the Clerk and Sergeant at Arms.
6. Two-thirds of members present and voting are required to override.
7. Announcement: "Due to the consensus of the chamber, this veto has been overridden; the bill becomes youth law" or "This veto stands." Two gavel taps.

### ABOUT THIS SERIES

Storybook County Lesson Plans use public domain stories to practice real YMCA Youth and Government processes: bills, committees, debate, courts, elections, service, and proposals. Every lesson is three or four 30-minute sessions, and all of them live in one folder:

[drive.google.com/drive/folders/1MleLDxVzKNq7QTwjw2EPFDqgMOaaJ2US](https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1MleLDxVzKNq7QTwjw2EPFDqgMOaaJ2US). Part of the YMCA Youth and Government Educator Toolkit at [nysyag.org](http://nysyag.org). Questions: Drew Caldwell, [dcaldwell@ymcanys.org](mailto:dcaldwell@ymcanys.org).