

# Project Citizen Students Practice Active Citizenship at the Arizona State Capitol

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**PHOENIX, Ariz.** (April 5, 2004) – The Office of Citizen is one of the highest privileges bestowed upon "*We the People*". Throughout our lives, we are called upon to perform our civic duty, to honor social responsibilities, and to be politically active. The Project Citizen program, conducted locally by the Arizona Foundation for Legal Services & Education, teaches students to practice active citizenship by leading them through the public policy process.

Such active citizenship is on display today at the Arizona State Capitol. Students from last year's winning Project Citizen classroom from Mansfeld Middle School who launched an Anti-bullying bill are set to testify before the Senate Education Committee this afternoon. At the same time, projects from 23 Arizona classrooms participating in this year's Project Citizen program are on display in the Capitol Gallery through April 14th, 2004.

The anti-bullying bill (HB 2514) was a result of Mansfeld Middle School's Project Citizen team identifying a problem prevalent on their campus and then working to affect positive changes to existing Arizona law. The students researched the issue of bullying and found that some states had instituted laws compelling school districts to adopt bullying policies. Over the summer, the students worked with their local legislators (Reps. Phil Lopes and David Bradley) to craft a bill for the legislative session. Although their original bill (HB 2533) stalled earlier in the session, the measure has been resurrected in the Arizona State Senate and will be heard by the Senate Education Committee today at 2pm in Senate Hearing Room 109.

It is hopeful that this year's Project Citizen classes will produce more positive change to Arizona public policy. Visitors to the Arizona State Capitol may view the 23 student portfolios from middle school classes participating in this year's Project Citizen program during regular Capitol hours in the Capitol Gallery through April 14th, 2004.

## **About the Project Citizen Program**

Project Citizen is portfolio-based civic education project for middle grade students sponsored nationally by the Center for Civic Education and the National Conference of State Legislatures. The program helps young people learn how to monitor and influence public policy. Students work cooperatively to identify a public policy problem in their community. They then research the problem, evaluate alternative solutions, develop their own solution in the form of a public policy, and create a political action plan to enlist local or state authorities to adopt their proposed policy. Participants develop a portfolio of their work and present their project in a hearing showcase before a panel of civic-minded community members.

## **Helpful Websites:**

- [Arizona Project Citizen](#)
- [Arizona State Legislature](#)
- [Center for Civic Education](#)
- [National Conference of State Legislatures](#)

## **About the Foundation**

The Arizona Foundation for Legal Services & Education plays a leading role in preparing Arizona

## Arizona Foundation for Legal Services & Education

students for civic responsibility. The Foundation reaches more than 100,000 children by training teachers, school resource officers and probation officers about our laws, justice system and the foundations of democracy. It is also home of [www.LawForKids.org](http://www.LawForKids.org), America's first Web site dedicated to teaching students about the law. The Foundation also awards nearly \$2 million in grants to more than 20 non-profit organizations providing legal services to those in need, so all people in Arizona can have a voice in our justice system.