

Program Name: How Freedom Works

Artist: Laughing Matters

Special Requirements:

Two 6' or 8' tables
The assembly must be preceded by a workshop with a group of 20-30 students and a teacher who then participate in the show.

Special Points of Interest:

This is Jay and Leslie's first program that requires a cast of dozens.

Performance Description

Good citizens understand how their government works. In this program, Jay and Leslie, plus a cast of students (see Special Requirements), illustrate basic concepts of American Government.

Leslie is the personification of a good idea that wants to become a law. The workshop students and their teacher are the House of Representatives, the Senate, the President, and the Supreme Court. After overcoming many obstacles, Leslie finally becomes a law.

The way we elect our president can be confusing. Jay and Leslie and their big map help explain the math behind the Electoral College.

Next, they illustrate the Presidential Order of Succession with students portraying a series of ill-fated presidents. A humorous American history quiz rounds out the show.



Educational Objectives & Standards

Students will:

- see the many obstacles a bill faces before becoming a law
- learn how someone can be elected president while losing the popular vote
- know that we have a plan of succession if something happens to the president

Standards addressed:

- Knows how government makes it possible for people to work together to accomplish goals they could not achieve individually
- Identifies people, events, time, and place in a classroom dramatizations

Artist Bio: Jay & Leslie Cady



Leslie and Jay Cady have been full-time performing artists since 1980. They have performed their engaging blend of juggling, mime, magic, and wacky dialogue in 32 states and seven foreign countries.

Jay and Leslie enjoy using their big bag of tricks to illustrate and reinforce curriculum concepts. Their infectious sense of fun is a hit with students, teachers, and administrators.

In 1984 they studied with legendary mime Marcel Marceau. They were two of 60 students chosen to study

with Marceau in the first two-week workshop he taught in the United States.

They have two daughters who join the act in the summer. When Jay and Leslie were PTA Cultural Arts Chairpersons they saw the need for school assemblies that reinforce curriculum.

Jay and Leslie have twice been nominated for the “Best of Kansas City Theater Awards”. They have performed for ESPN, the National Theater of Guatemala, and the U.S. Department of Defense Overseas Tours.

List of Resources:

Online Resources:

www.school-house-rock.com

The America Rock video has many good selections including “I’m Just a Bill”.

www.archives.gov/federal/register/electoral-college/

Lots of good resources including an Electoral College calculator

<http://www.politicaljunkie.com/succession.asp>

A handy list of the Presidential Order of Succession. You can click on each position and find out more about the person who holds that office.

Contact KCYA for more information about this and other programs

816.531.4022
KCYA.org

Vocabulary

Electoral College: The method we use to elect our presidents and vice-presidents. In every state, except Maine and Nebraska, the popular vote winner always wins all of that state’s electoral votes.

Executive Branch: The part of our government that enforces laws. The president and governors are part of the executive branch.

Judicial Branch: The part of our government that interprets laws in court. The Supreme Court is the highest court in the country.

Legislative Branch: The part of our government that makes laws. The U.S. Congress has two chambers—the House of Representatives and the Senate.

Override: The power of congress to overcome a presidential veto and pass a rejected bill into law with two-thirds majorities in both chambers of congress.

Veto: The power given to the president to reject a bill passed by Congress, rather than signing it into law.

Post-Performance Activities

1. Find out who represents you in the Senate and the House of Representatives.
2. Find out who represents you in your state government.
3. How many electoral votes did your state have in the last presidential election? How many votes did your state have when Abraham Lincoln was elected in 1860?
4. Look in the newspaper for articles about bills that are in Congress. If you have an opinion about whether the bills should become laws, write to your congressional representatives and let them know what you think.
5. If you could pass any law you wanted, what would it be? Who would benefit from your law? Would anyone be hurt by your law?