



**“Girls In Government”
Interest Project
Tres Condados Council**

Skill Builders:

1. Research the following areas concerning your state: the capitol city, when it declared statehood, and the state symbols including the state motto, bird, song, tree and flower. Make a mural of these items to form a new state seal including the information found. It can be a mosaic, or collage of prints; use your imagination add any symbols that are meaningful to that state.
2. Find a picture of your state capitol building. Some states have had more than one, some in different cities. Find why your state’s capitol building is in its present location. Discover the facts about the building itself. The age of the building, how long it took to construct, and the architectural style and the cost of construction.
3. Women have only been eligible to vote in the United States since 1920! It was a long struggle for women to acquire the right to vote. Make a time line of women’s suffrage and list the high and low points leading to the ratification of the 19th Amendment of the U.S. Constitution.
4. Many states have two Houses. This is where the work is done and you can find information about the current activities at the National Conference of Legislators at http://www.ncsl.org/programs/press2004/backgrounder_fullandpart.htm Look over the profiles and find your local district number and how many people represent you. Each of these persons have their biography, committee membership, and where their offices are located. By finding this information you can better get to how they can speak for you. Many of them have local *offices and offer tours and internships. See if this is available in your area.*
5. You may someday need to write to your legislator. It is important to know how to write to get your view across. Just one letter with either a new perspective or a clear persuasive argument can often influence a legislator’s approach to an issue. A legislator may pay

more attention to a matter on which he or she has received a large amount of mail. Many will also reply to your letter if you include the return name and address. Research a bill that is pending in your area. Write a convincing letter that you feel strongly about and submit it to your legislator. Include in the form letter, your personal opinion for or against the bill and how it may affect you in the future. You may also be able to attend hearings and workshops if they are available in your local area. Many states have web sites of the state assembly, which is an excellent place to start.

6. Bills are how laws begin. Many Bills, can affect young people and it is important to keep up on what Bills are in the Committees of your state government. Recently bills about violent video games, Internet guidelines, child abuse, education and health issues all have an impact on young people. Look up the lifecycle of how a Bill gets from the starting point with the assembly or senate member through the different committees, ratification process and its final resting place on the Governors desk and how it can be signed in to law.

Technology:

7. The movie Iron Jawed Angels, a HBO movie, depicts a group of activists that fought for the rights of women. This movie is based on the sacrifices that Alice Paul, a main figure in the women's suffrage movement endured to make the women's vote come to life. NOTE: Leaders may want to rent the DVD of this HBO movie, due to the fact that it is not rated. This way, you can go through the movie ahead of time and select the key scenes, and discuss their importance with your troop afterwards.
8. If you live close to your state capitol, travel to the capitol building and take a tour of the building. These buildings are full of history and information. Some states also have a governor's mansion. If so, this is also a very good tour that is rich in history and facts about your state. If you do not live near your capitol, you may investigate books from the library the Internet.
9. Define a lobbyist and advocate. Find how a lobbyist and an advocate can influence the votes of politicians. As a group of Girls Scouts, outline how you would lobby for a bill that was important to you. Make a step-by-step listing of how you would go about this and whom you would need to engage help from.

Career Exploration:

10. Susan B. Anthony, Lucy Burns, Inez Milholland, Alice Paul, Carrie Chapman and Ida Wells-Barnett all were advocates for women's suffrage. They were all well educated, successful women of their time. Find a book or research online about one of these brave ladies. Write about the courage they showed and some of the steps they took to win the vote for women.

11. Many women are now involved in government jobs. Find out if you have any women in your local, state and federal levels. Call and set up an interview with one of them. You may want to ask what sparked their interest in government, the activities they were involved in during their school years, the classes helped them to further their education, and how they came to the position they now hold, etc. Many politicians have staff members, interns and publicists that may also help you. See if anyone was a Girl Scout how this experience has influenced them as adults.

Service Projects:

12. In your Girl Scout troop, school club or organization, put into effect a democratic system of government for 3 months. Elect members and record job descriptions. Each person should be responsible for their position, and duties should reflect the needs of the group. At the end of their terms, evaluations should be reviewed and the political process evaluated. Did this work to your advantage or against it and why?

13. For the many girls that are not close enough to their state capitol to visit, here is a fun service project. Research your own state capitol as in # 1 and 2. Plan a meeting to teach Brownies or Juniors about your capitol. You can find facts and you may want to make up coloring sheets or word search activities for them. Most state capitol offices have materials that they may be able to provide you with.