

Program 8 CONGRESSIONAL ROLE PLAYING SESSION: ENDANGERED SPECIES ACT

Topic: American government / Politics

Level of students: Grades 4 and up

Grouping of students: One group with individuals acting independently within group

Skills/knowledge addressed: Prior knowledge of the 3 branches of government and their duties, especially the Congress

Verbal communication skills

Ability to work as group and compromise

Decision-making

SOCIAL STUDIES TEKS:

The students will learn how Congress works.

5.17A (TEKS/SE) Identify and explain the basic functions of the three branches of government.

5.17B (TEKS/SE) Identify the reasons for and describe the system of checks and balances outlined in the U.S. Constitution.

SCIENCE TEKS:

5.9C (TEKS/SE) Predict some adaptive characteristics required for survival and reproduction by an organism in an ecosystem.

5.907 Describe environmental changes in which some organisms would thrive, become ill, or perish. (3.8C)

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS TEKS:

5.5F (TEKS/SE) Clarify and support spoken ideas with evidence, elaborations, and examples (4-8). (D)

5.5B (TEKS/SE) Demonstrate effective communications skills that reflect such demands as interviewing, reporting, requesting, and providing information (4-8). (D)

5.5A (TEKS/SE) Adapt spoken language such as word choice, diction and usage to the audience, purpose and occasion (4-8). (D)

Description: Students will role-play a Congressional session. Students are provided with a bill, bill background information, and profiles of the individual representative they will be playing. Profiles include pertinent information such as home state, constituency, position (if any) on the bill, and what is important to them (or necessary to get their vote.) One profile is specially marked to designate the Speaker. (For grades 4-6, the guide may serve as speaker to facilitate the activity, if needed.) Another profile is specially marked to designate the Congressman who will read the bill on the floor. The docent introduces the activity with discussion of Congress and the various profiles. After students are given their profiles, a few minutes are allotted to allow them to read and become familiar with them. The docent discusses the bill to make sure it is understood by all. Then the Speaker calls the House to order and the bill is read by designated representative. Time is allowed for debate on the floor following basic rules of order. The Speaker chairs the session. Some profiles may be specially marked to designate those members who must speak. Others who wish to speak are called on by the Speaker, time permitting. The Speaker then calls a brief recess. During the recess, the lobbyists should attempt to persuade Congressmen. The Speaker then calls the House to order and calls for a vote on the bill. Vote is taken, recorded, and results announced. Time is allotted for class discussion at end of the session.

Post-CLASSROOM Activity: Continue discussion about the role-playing session. What did the students learn? Were they surprised at the influence lobbyists and senior Congressmen have? Do they think that most representatives vote their individual conscience, or for what is best for their district/state? Their session was time-compressed - how long do they think a debate over an important issue can last in Congress? Can they think of any real-life controversial issues similar to the one they played out? Teachers may want to have the class view a Congressional session on C-SPAN and compare/contrast it to their expectations of a session and the session they performed at the museum. Teachers may wish to use this activity as a starting point to explore **how** Congress works as a supplement to usual classroom lessons on the duties of Congress.

Briefing on the bill

Places the fish *Pristis microdon* (Sawfish) on the Endangered Species

- The fish species known as *Pristis microdon* (Large tooth Sawfish) was commonly found along western Pacific and Indian Ocean shallow coastal waters, river mouths, and freshwater rivers and lakes. Historically, populations of the fish lived near the coasts of Florida, Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, and Texas, mostly in coastline estuarine waters. Once populous in Australian, Indonesian, and Eastern African waters, the Sawfish population is nearing extinction in many of its natural habitats. Though not considered prize game fish, Sawfish are still caught for game due to their interesting appearance, and many have been accidentally caught by fishermen after other game fish. Their saws were commonly sold as tourist souvenirs. While the Sawfish taste is not as desirable as other game fish, it was still commonly consumed in households and restaurants.
- Several years ago, National Fisheries and oceanic groups began to document a decline in the population of *Pristis microdon*. They were unable to determine the cause for decline in such numbers of fish. The numbers continued to decrease and, the *Pristis microdon* was placed on the threatened species list. Fisherman were required to release any Sawfish they caught, restaurants were prohibited from serving the fish, and it was banned from fish markets throughout the United States. Most experts believed this would be enough to stop the population decline. Initially the protective measures seemed effective, as the population increased slightly in the first few years after they were enacted.
- Over the last few years however, the number of *Pristis microdon* in southern coastal waters has dropped dramatically close to extinction. There is considerable debate over the cause of this rapid decline. Many environmental groups, such as Save our Coastal Resources, claim that the decline of the Sawfish is due to the large numbers that are accidentally trapped and die in shrimp nets. The National Fisheries agrees that some *Pristis microdon* are killed in shrimp nets in the coastal south, but they aren't convinced that this is the cause of the fish's decline. They argue that requiring shrimpers to use special devices would be an unnecessary cost to the industry. They point to the trapping and selling of the fish's unique saws as tourist items for the decline. It is agreed upon that if the population of *Pristis microdon* continues to decline, the fish will become extinct within 15-20 years.
- The bill before congress will regulate the fishing practices of commercial shrimpers in the belief that these practices have contributed to the decline. It requires shrimpers to use special nets and devices designed to minimize the number of *Pristis microdon* caught in shrimp nets. The bill also places the *Pristis microdon* on the Endangered Species list, recognizing the need for drastic measures to preserve the species of Sawfish.

for more information: <http://www.fishbase.org/summary/speciessummary.cfm?genusname=Pristis&speciesname=microdon>

Prospects on the passage of the bill:

At present, approximately one-third of the House is in favor of the bill and one-third is against it. The rest are undecided. Lobbyists and senior members of the House are expected to visit the undecided members and persuade them to vote in favor or against the bill, as the fate of it rests in the hands of those undecided members.

H. R. 11597, A Bill for the Protection of the *Pristis Microdon* (Sawfish)

Whereas it has been determined by acknowledged experts in the field of fisheries and marine science that the fish species known as *Pristis Microdon* is experiencing a rapid, complete and alarming drop in population in the Coastal waters of the United States.

And whereas these same acknowledged experts have warned that a continuing population decline will render the *Pristis Microdon* extinct at least in the coastal waters of the United States.

And whereas the placement of *Pristis Microdon* on the threatened species list has failed to restore population levels to normal in the coastal waters of the United States.

It is Hereby Resolved that anyone catching a *Pristis Microdon* in the coastal waters of the United States is prohibited from killing any *Pristis Microdon* caught in their nets or on their fishing lines and are required to return the *Pristis Microdon* to the water using all care to avoid harming the fish.

The offense described by this bill shall be a Federal Misdemeanor Grade B.

The punishment for failing to use proper care to return the *Pristis Microdon* to the water without harming it shall be a fine not to exceed two thousand dollars (\$2000.00) and confinement in a federal facility for a period not to exceed 180 days.

PROFILE - U.S. CONGRESSMAN

Name: Britt Irving

Party Affiliation: Bison Party

Home State: Connecticut

Constituency: Irving's district is mainly middle class and upper middle class. Predominantly white-collar jobs, although there are some blue-collar workers. His largest base of support is couples aged 28-46.

Position on the bill: Irving wrote this bill and truly believes that this is the only way to prevent the fish from becoming extinct.

Past voting record on similar issues: Irving has a strong record of supporting environmental initiatives. He believes that protection of our environment on land, in the sea, and in the air is vital to the continued existence of mankind, as well as animal and plant species.

Other pertinent data: Irving is determined to see this bill passed, even if it means getting support from other Congressmen by promising them favors in the future.

- As a boy, Irving spent his summers with his grandparents on the coast of North Carolina. His grandfather founded the first environmental conservation group in North Carolina.

Special actions during this session:

**Irving must read this bill on the floor of the House.

**He needs to persuade the undecided members of Congress to vote for the bill if it is to pass the House.

**It may be necessary for Irving to defend the bill during discussion on the floor.

PROFILE - U.S. CONGRESSWOMAN

Name: Camellia Thompson

Party Affiliation: Elk

Home state: Virginia

Constituency: Thompson represents a poor to middle class district in Virginia. Most of her constituents are blue-collar workers. She is very popular in her home district because she works hard and listens to their concerns.

Position on the bill: Undecided. Her constituency has no strong feelings either way on this bill. Thompson is inclined to go with her own conscience on this and vote for the bill. However, she has not committed either way.

Past voting record on similar issues: Thompson's vote on environmental issues is mixed. She has supported some environmental protection bills and opposed others. She usually tries to use her own common sense when deciding on such matters.

Other pertinent data: Thompson often votes her own conscience on bills that are not a big concern to the people back home in her district. She has occasionally voted according to the wishes of her party leaders - usually on bills where the vote splits along party lines. Party leadership will likely try to convince her to vote against this bill.

- Thompson grew up in an urban area and has lived in large cities all her life. Her husband is an avid outdoorsman and has started taking Camellia with him on camping and fishing trips.

Special actions during this session:

**None expected

**Can expect to get pressured by party members and shrimp lobbyists

PROFILE: U.S. CONGRESSWOMAN

Name: Elizabeth “Sunny” Holmes

Party Affiliation: Bison

Home state: California

Constituency: Holmes’ district is in western California. Five years ago a study determined that a large part of her district would run out of water supply if conservation methods were not implemented. Since then, the majority of her district has become more environmentally aware and many have dedicated themselves to preserving and protecting the environment.

Position on the bill: Holmes is a staunch supporter of the bill to protect *Pristis microdon*

Past voting record on similar issues: Holmes usually supports bills that protect the environment.

Other pertinent data: Once she reaches a decision on a bill, Holmes rarely changes her position.

- While she was in high school, Holmes worked summers at Sea World in San Diego. In college she was president of the campus branch of Marine Mammal Rescue.

Special actions during this session:

**Holmes plans to speak in favor of this bill during House discussion.

**Doubtful that she will be lobbied.

PROFILE - U.S. CONGRESSMAN

Name: William "Billy" McCormick

Party affiliation: Elk

Home state: South Carolina

Constituency: McCormick represents a district of South Carolina that extends to the coast. Many of his constituents are shrimpers. People of his district keep returning him to office although he is not personally popular. The people from his home state are very strongly opposed to this bill because of the potential negative impact it could have on their incomes. Shrimpers claim that this measure would cost them a lot of money to invest in expensive new shrimping nets and devices to protect the fish. They also contend that the protective measures required in this bill would slow down their fishing, thus making it more difficult each day to catch enough shrimp to cover their operating costs and still make money. The shrimpers have written numerous letters to McCormick urging him to vote against this bill.

Position on the bill: Opposes. McCormick opposes this bill on the grounds that it would create an undue hardship on shrimpers, and possibly cause them economic ruin.

Past voting record on similar issues: McCormick has voted in favor of some environmental measures in the past.

Other pertinent data: McCormick is up for reelection next year and is expected to face a stiff challenge. He needs the support of the shrimpers if he is to be re-elected.

- McCormick comes from a long line of commercial fisherman. He has cousins who are shrimpers today.

Special actions during this session:

**Will probably ask for time on the House floor to speak against this bill.

**Unlikely to be lobbied.

PROFILE - U.S. CONGRESSMAN

Name: Mike Ramsey

Party affiliation: Elk

Home state: Montana

Constituency: Ramsey's district includes ranch land and some urban areas.

Members of his district are very diverse in regards to age, race, and economic status. His constituents are generally no-nonsense people who rely on their common sense.

Position on the bill: Undecided. Ramsey has not yet decided which way to vote on the bill. His constituents will not be affected by the bill and have not expressed feelings one way or another.

Past voting records on similar issues: Ramsey usually votes with the wishes of his constituents in his district on environmental matters. Most often the people of Montana favor measures to protect the environment and wildlife. As a result, Ramsey has voted favorably for environmental initiatives in the past.

Other pertinent data: Ramsey has a reputation for voting independently of his party. He usually listens to the arguments of both sides before deciding which way to vote on bills. He relies on his own common sense to decide how to vote on many bills.

- Ramsey grew up on a cattle ranch in Montana. He and his brothers went on many hunting and fishing trips as boys. After college, Ramsey spent 12 years in Newark, New Jersey as a corporate lawyer. He left the company and returned to Montana six years ago. He started in politics five years ago.

Special actions this session:

**None

**Likely to be lobbied by both sides on this issue.

PROFILE - U.S. CONGRESSWOMAN

Name: Lydia Armstrong

Party affiliation: Bison

Home state: Florida

Constituency: Armstrong represents a district in western Florida; part of her district runs along the Apalachicola region. Fishing - including shrimping - is the largest industry in the Apalachicola area. Armstrong has received countless phone calls, letters, and personal visits from constituents urging her to vote against this measure.

Position on the bill: Opposed.

Past voting record on similar issues: Armstrong has a record of supporting measures to protect the environment.

Other pertinent data: Armstrong personally believes that these regulations are necessary for the survival of *Pristis microdon*. However, she knows that a vote for the bill would guarantee that she is NOT returned to office during the next election. Thus, she has decided to vote against the bill.

- As a child, Armstrong dreamed of becoming a Congresswoman. Her whole life is centered around her career in Congress. She loves politics and can't imagine what she would do if the people of Florida voted her out of office.

Special action this session:

**None anticipated, but she may try to turn fellow representatives from southern states against the bill. Does like to speak on the floor of the House.

**Doubtful she will be lobbied.

PROFILE - U.S. CONGRESSMAN

Name: Curtis Jackson

Party affiliation: Bison

Home state: Tennessee

Constituency: Jackson represents a rural area of Tennessee. Many of his constituents are minorities, most of them low to middle income. People of his district are usually concerned more with social and civil rights issues.

Position on the bill: Undecided.

Past voting record on similar issues: Mixed. Jackson has a strong record on pollution prevention, but has failed to support several bills aimed at protecting wildlife.

Other pertinent data: Many party members feel that a strong pressure from party leaders may win his support for the bill. However, the shrimp lobby and House members from southern states feel that they have a good chance to persuade him to vote against the bill.

- Jackson's father was a farmer so he has great respect for people who earn their living by their own hands.

Special actions this session:

**None anticipated

**Can expect to be lobbied hard from both sides.

PROFILE - U.S. CONGRESSMAN

Name: Henry Garcia

Party affiliation: Bison

Home state: Colorado

Constituency: Garcia comes from a mixed district. His district includes both urban and rural areas and the income of people in the district is moderate to high. Included in his district is the quaint and exclusive community of Snowsville. The people of Snowsville are fighting against developers who want to put up a large ski resort on the outskirts of town. Residents like their town as it is - beautiful, quiet and undeveloped.

Position on the bill: Undecided.

Past voting record on similar issues: This is Garcia's first term in office, so there is no past voting record. However, one of his campaign promises was to protect the environment.

Other pertinent data: Garcia is eager to please his constituents desire to protect wildlife and the environment. Because he is a shrewd politician, many observers think that he is likely to withhold his support of the bill until he is promised something in return.

Special activities this session:

**None anticipated

**Likely to be lobbied by Bison party members who want him to vote for the bill.

PROFILE - U.S. CONGRESSMAN

Name: Andy Takamura

Party affiliation: Bison

Home state: Hawaii

Constituency: In their fight to protect Hawaii's natural beauty against over-development, Hawaiians became convinced of the need to preserve and protect wildlife and the environment. Regardless of their income or personal backgrounds, most people of Hawaii share a desire to protect the earth and the animals inhabiting it.

Position on the bill: Very strongly supports it.

Past voting record on similar issues: Takamura is seen as a leader on environmental issues. He rarely votes against any environmental measures.

Other pertinent data: Takamura led the fight to prohibit construction of a 350-acre resort and spa on one of Hawaii's beautiful uninhabited beaches. He was instrumental in having it named a national park instead. He will not back down from his support of this bill.

- As a private citizen, Takamura has been a champion of the environment for many years. He ran for public office because he thought he could do even more for the environment as a Congressman.

Special actions during this session:

**Will likely try to persuade members of his own party, as well as independent members, to support this measure.

*Should speak out for this bill on the floor of the House.

PROFILE - U.S. CONGRESSWOMAN

Name: Melanie Drew

Party affiliation: Bison

Home state: Utah

Constituency: Drew's district is in southern Utah, where there are many state and national parks. Opinions on the bill are mixed in this district.

Position on the bill: Supports out of necessity, rather than a true conviction that the bill is the right thing to do.

Past voting record on similar issues: Mixed. Drew has supported legislation to help conserve water and other natural resources. However, she voted against measures to protect the spotted owl in Oregon.

Other pertinent data: Drew owes Britt Irving (sponsor of the bill) a political favor for his support of her in the past. Irving has called in the favor for her support of this bill.

- Drew was president of Future Business Leaders of America in college. Before becoming a Congresswoman, she worked as a plant manager at an oil refinery. Originally, she was going to oppose this bill. However, Irving reminded her that she owed him a large political favor. (Irving secured her appointment to a powerful House Committee.)

Special actions this session:

**None expected

PROFILE - U.S. CONGRESSMAN

Name: Jonathon Avery

Party affiliation: Elk

Home state: Iowa

Constituency: Avery represents a mostly rural section of Iowa. Most of his constituents are middle income farm families. Most people of his district are conservative and practical. Since this is a rural district, it has not yet come face-to-face with conservation issues.

Position on the bill: Supports

Past voting record on similar issues: Has generally supported measures that favor the protection of the environment, with only a few exceptions. His vote on these matters seems to be a matter of a personal decision, rather than a reflection of any pressure from political leaders or his constituents.

Other pertinent data: Avery has never been known to cave in to pressure from party leaders or lobbyists.

- Avery grew up in the country. His mother was a naturalist and taught him that every living thing (plant and animal) has a value and a purpose in the world. She always said that human society was but a part of a larger circle of life that included all living things.

Special actions this session:

**Avery will attempt to persuade undecided members of the Elk party to support the bill.

PROFILE - U.S. CONGRESSMAN

Name: Alan Knowles

Party affiliation: Elk

Home state: Pennsylvania

Constituency: Knowles district lies mostly in the western part of the state and encompasses both urban and rural areas. His constituents range from low to high income. The district is gradually becoming more environmentally aware, largely due to the efforts of a few environmental protection and conservation groups.

Position on the bill: Supports.

Past voting record on similar issues: Knowles has an overall poor track record when it comes to protecting the environment.

Other pertinent data: As members of his district have become more interested in saving environmental resources, Knowles has become the object of frequent criticism for his voting record on environmental measures. Knowles has decided to vote in favor of this bill in the hope that it will ease criticism of his past votes and put him in good favor with conservationists.

Special actions this session:

**None expected

**Will Elk party leaders attempt to persuade him to change his vote?

PROFILE - U.S. CONGRESSMAN

Name: Richard Newsome

Party affiliation: Elk

Home state: Minnesota

Constituency: Newsome's district includes Minneapolis/St. Paul and the surrounding area. The majority of people in his district are middle to upper income professionals. Though many people dislike him, he has never faced any stiff competition in Congressional elections and therefore has been returned to office four times.

Position on the bill: Supports

Past voting record on similar issues: During his first two terms, Newsome rarely supported conservation initiatives, usually siding with big business and developers instead. However, in during his past two re-election campaigns, he has received large donations from environmental protection groups. Not surprisingly, he has increasingly voted in favor of bills such as this one over the past three years.

Other pertinent data: Newsome was inclined to vote against this bill until he was pressured by the lobbyist from Save Our Coastal Resources. This is one of the groups that made a large contribution to his last campaign. Newsome often plays two sides against one another in order to get larger donations to his political re-election committee in return for his vote.

Special actions this session:

**None expected

PROFILE - U.S. CONGRESSMAN

Name: Ed Urbanski

Party affiliation: Elk

Home state: Delaware

Constituency: Residents range from lower middle income to upper income, and come from a diverse ethnic background. Most of Delaware's economy comes from white-collar businesses. Wealthy corporate leaders are among Urbanski's top contributors and supporters.

Position on the bill: Opposes

Past voting record on similar issues: Urbanski is very pro-business and industry. He usually votes against any bill that would impose further regulations on businesses/industries.

Other pertinent data: Urbanski is not necessarily opposed to measures that protect the environment or wildlife. However, he does believe that the needs and concerns of businesses should be placed ahead of the environment when the two are in conflict. He feels that this bill places undue burdens on shrimpers that could result in lower catches (of shrimp) and lower income for shrimpers. He is further afraid that restaurants and sea markets would eventually be negatively affected by a reduction in the number of shrimp caught.

- Urbanski's parents were immigrants to the United States. They built a small, successful business through hard work and determination. As a boy, Urbanski listened to his father complain that excessive government regulations made it hard for the small businessman to be successful.

Special actions this session:

**Urbanski likely will voice his reasons for opposing this bill on the floor of the House.

**Unlikely to be lobbied, because his mind is settled on this issue.

PROFILE - U.S. CONGRESSMAN

Name: Quentin Smith

Party affiliation: Elk

Home state: Mississippi

Constituency: Smith represents the rural delta region of Mississippi. Most of his constituents are farmers, or somehow associated with agriculture. The area is still somewhat economically depressed, so most residents are more concerned with trying to make ends meet than with environmental issues.

Position on the bill: Opposes

Past voting record on similar issues: Mixed. Smith has voted in favor of measures to increase funding for national parks and provide funds for a program to restore the gray timberwolf to the wilderness of Wyoming. However, he has also voted against the environment on several issues - such as the Northern Spotted Owl controversy.

Other pertinent data: The shrimpers and other Congressmen from his home state have pushed hard to get Smith's vote on this. They have appealed to his concern for all residents of Mississippi, not just his district. Smith felt their concerns were valid, so he decided to oppose the bill.

- Smith believes that he was elected to Congress for one reason - to help people. He feels it is his duty to help **all** the people of Mississippi, not just the residents of his district.

Special actions this session:

**None expected

PROFILE - U.S. CONGRESSWOMAN

Name: Katherine Greer

Party affiliation: Elk

Home state: Oregon

Constituency: Greer's district lies within the timberlands of Oregon. Her constituents make their living primarily from the timber and logging industry. They have been through a very bitter environmental battle over protection of the spotted owl and the resulting loss of jobs and timber. Because they have lived through such a situation, they are very sympathetic to the shrimpers. Members of Greer's district have been very vocal in their support of the shrimpers and opposition to the bill. They view a vote against this bill as a vote against all restrictive environmental protection regulations.

Position on the bill: Opposed

Past voting record on similar issues: Greer voted against protective measures for the spotted owl, for fear that they would adversely affect the livelihood of her constituents.

Other pertinent data: Greer cannot be re-elected to office without the support of the timber industry.

Greer grew up in a northern Oregon town that depended on the timber industry. She saw many friends lose jobs, businesses, and homes when logging in that area was stopped in order to protect the spotted owl. She vowed to never let wildlife come before jobs again, if she could help it.

Special actions this session:

**None expected, but nobody would be surprised if Greer did not join forces with others opposed to the bill and speak on the floor, or try to get the votes of undecided representatives.

PROFILE - U.S. CONGRESSMAN

Name: Brad Chaney

Party affiliation: Elk

Home state: Arizona

Constituency: Chaney's district lies in southern Arizona and includes the Tucson area. His district is moderate when it comes to environmental issues. They usually attempt to reach a balance between jobs/industry and environmental protection.

Position on the bill: Opposed

Past voting record on similar issues: This is only Chaney's second term. He has never voted on any major environmental legislation; he was absent during the last vote on a similar issue.

Other pertinent data: The shrimpers lobby and other representatives opposed to this bill convinced Chaney that the statistics and studies showing a fatal decline in the numbers of *Pristis microdon* are flawed. Chaney decided to oppose the bill because he doubts the validity of the statistics and worries that the measure will ruin many who make a living from shrimping.

- Chaney is a stickler for details. He goes over facts and figures with a fine tooth comb. If they don't measure up to his standards, then he won't support any bill they are associated with.

Special actions this session:

**None expected

PROFILE - U.S. CONGRESSMAN

Name: John Marino

Party affiliation: Bison

Home state: New Jersey

Constituency: Middle income blue and white-collar workers. The state of New Jersey just passed a tax increase; the funds are to be used to clean up New Jersey's shoreline. The state has also imposed stiff fines for factories not complying with pollution emission standards. The blue-collar workers in Marino's district are grumbling about the money being spent on the environment, rather than on programs to benefit the people. Because of this, Marino feels that his constituents do not support this bill (even though it is federal legislation, and the other measures were imposed by the state).

Position on the bill: Opposed

Past voting record on similar issues: In the past Marino has supported some bills to conserve wildlife.

Other pertinent data: Marino often votes with the opposing party rather than with his own.

- Marino believes that the government is too involved with business and industry. He thinks that businesses will act responsibly on their own and that most government regulation is unnecessary. He feels that all this unnecessary government regulation causes many businesses to fail.

Special actions this session:

**None expected

PROFILE - U.S. CONGRESSMAN

Name: Joe Ramirez

Party affiliation: Bison

Home state: Louisiana

Constituency: Ramirez's district is in the northern part of Louisiana. It includes the Shreveport area. By and large, his constituents do not take much interest in environmental issues, although there are a few environmental groups now in the area.

Position on the bill: Undecided

Past voting record on similar issues: Mixed, with more votes against conservation legislation than for it.

Other pertinent data: Ramirez is under a lot of pressure from representatives of the coastal areas in the South to vote against this bill. The Congressman from lower Louisiana is trying to convince Ramirez that the bill is bad for the shrimpers of southern Louisiana, and therefore bad for the entire state. On the other hand, Ramirez has a lot of respect and admiration for Elizabeth Holmes, who is urging him to support the measure. The few environmental groups from Louisiana, as well as national groups like Save Our Coastal Resources, are urging him to take a stand for the environment, before it's too late.

Special actions this session:

**Ramirez expects to be lobbied from both sides.

PROFILE - U.S. CONGRESSMAN

Name: [your own name]

Party affiliation: Independent - you do not belong to either the Bison or Elk parties

Home state: Texas

Congratulations! You get to be yourself! Read the information in the dossier carefully and listen to all the arguments made on the House floor. You may even talk with lobbyists and leaders from both parties. Then make up your own mind about the bill. When the Speaker of the House calls for a vote, you may vote either for or against the bill - it is your choice and your decision. Remember, your vote could decide whether or not the bill passes.

Write your own name on your nametag. You may very well get visits from people who want your vote.

PROFILE - U.S. CONGRESSWOMAN

Name: [your own name]

Party affiliation: Independent - you do not belong to either the Bison or Elk parties

Home state: Texas

Congratulations! You get to be yourself! Read the information in the dossier carefully and listen to all the arguments made on the House floor. You may even talk with lobbyists and leaders from both parties. Then make up your own mind about the bill. When the Speaker of the House calls for a vote, you may vote either for or against the bill - it is your choice and your decision. Remember, your vote could decide whether or not the bill passes.

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PROFILE - PROFESSIONAL LOBBYIST

Name: Jason Ellis

Lobbyist for: Save Our Coastal Resources

About Save Our Coastal Resources:

This group was formed almost 20 years ago. They are dedicated to protecting marine life species in coastal areas and to preserving coastal environs. They fight to stop pollution of harbors and other coastal waters. This group assists in marine mammal rescue coordination. Save Our Coastal Resources also assists in retrieving waterfowl and marine mammals damaged by oil spills; they clean the animals and release them back into the wild once the spill is cleaned. They also monitor population levels of animal life near our coasts.

Position on the bill:

Save Our Coastal Resources were the first ones to notice a decline in the population levels of *Pristis microdon*. They have continued to monitor the fish over the last seven years. After careful study of the fish, its environment, its life cycle, and uses of the fish by the American public, they concluded that the decline of Sawfish is due to the huge numbers that are caught and killed in shrimping nets each year.

This group believes that the Sawfish will become extinct if no steps are taken to protect it. They argue that the special nets and excluder devices required by this bill would not reduce the number of shrimp caught. Therefore, they don't feel that this bill would cause any economic hardship to the shrimpers. (They do agree, however, that shrimpers will have to initially invest some of their profits from previous years in the purchase of the new nets and excluder devices.)

Save Our Coastal Resources argues that humans can't go on allowing animal and plant species to become extinct in the belief that they are not needed for the support of human life or endeavors. The group argues that **all** life on our planet is connected and therefore dependent on one another. They fear that people will realize this only after thousands of species are extinct and human life has been affected. And by then, they say, it will be too late to correct past inaction.

Your Job as Lobbyist

Your job is to persuade those Congressmen who are undecided to vote for this bill. You should use all of the above arguments and any others that you can think of. Frequently, your organization makes campaign contributions to politicians. Perhaps you would be willing to have Save Our Coastal Resources make a contribution to the fund of one or more Congressmen in exchange for their vote. However, you have only \$200,000.00 to contribute, so use this form of encouragement wisely!

You ARE NOT a member of Congress, so you cannot take part in any discussion on the floor of the House and you cannot vote on the bill.

PROFILE - PROFESSIONAL LOBBYIST

Name: Allison Lowder

Lobbyist for: the shrimping industry

About the Shrimping Industry and Allison Lowder

The U.S. Shrimpers Association is made up mainly of private commercial fisherman - men whose families have been shrimpers for generations. Most members have a wife and family who depend on them for the family income. Until now, the association has primarily been non-political. Their chief function was to serve as a central clearinghouse for information and ideas relating to the shrimping industry. Now, the U.S. Shrimpers Association has hired a professional lobbyist - Allison Lowder - to try and persuade members of Congress to vote against the bill. This is the first time that the shrimping industry has hired a professional lobbyist. Lobbyists are expensive to hire and the Shrimpers Association does not have a lot of money. However, they feel that defeat of this bill is very important to their future. So they hired you (Allison) for a one-month time period to convince undecided members of Congress to vote against this bill.

Allison Lowder is a professional free-lance lobbyist. She does not work full-time for any one group or organization. Instead she contracts out to groups who need a lobbyist on a one-time-only basis. She is very good at her job because she is direct and does not easily accept defeat. She has been a lobbyist for years, so she knows many members of Congress and the best means to persuade them.

Position on the bill

The shrimping industry, as represented by the U.S. Shrimpers Association and Ms. Lowder, feels that this bill would do great harm to those who earn a living by catching shrimp. They argue that, first of all, there is no concrete evidence that shrimping practices are causing the decline in population of the *Pristis microdon*. Therefore, they believe that further studies should be conducted by scientists before any legislative action is taken. They also contend that this bill would cause financial hardship, and possibly financial ruin, for many shrimpers for two reasons. First, the special nets and excluder devices required by this bill are expensive. They say that many shrimpers cannot afford the devices without mortgaging their houses or boats. Second, they contend that the use of these nets and devices would decrease the number of shrimp caught in the nets during a day. The decline in catch ultimately causes a decline in income. The decline in income would cause hardship for all shrimpers, but would lead to economic ruin and poverty for those who have obtained loans in order to purchase the special equipment. The bank would repossess the houses and boats of those who were unable to make payments. This could leave hundreds without homes or a means of earning a living. The shrimping industry argues that these people would likely end up on welfare rolls, thus costing the taxpayers money.

Your Job as Lobbyist

Your job is to persuade those Congressmen who are undecided to vote against this bill. You should use all of the above arguments and any others that you can think of. Unlike the Save Our Coastal Resources group, the U.S. Shrimpers Association does not have enough money to contribute to political campaigns, so you cannot use the promise of money to obtain votes. However, you can promise that the shrimpers will vote in future elections for those who oppose the bill.

You ARE NOT a member of Congress, so you cannot take part in any discussion on the floor of the House and you cannot vote on the bill.

PROFILE - PROFESSIONAL LOBBYIST

Name: [your name]

Lobbyist for: ???

Position on the bill

Congratulations! You get to be yourself. You must decide which side you wish to represent in this argument. Read the attached profiles of the other two lobbyists to learn about the position of the shrimpers and the position of Save Our Coastal Resources. Then listen to the debate on the House floor. Decide which side you want to lobby for and take that position.

Your Job as Lobbyist

Your job as lobbyist is to persuade those Congressmen who are undecided to vote either for or against the bill. If you have decided to represent the U.S. Shrimpers Association, you must try to persuade Congressmen to vote against the bill. If you have decided to represent Save Our Coastal Resources, you must try to persuade Congressmen to vote for the bill. Use the arguments outlined in the appropriate profile to convince the representatives to vote your way.

You ARE NOT a member of Congress, so you cannot take part in any discussion on the floor of the House and you cannot vote on the bill.

PROFILE - SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE

Name: Bill Quigley

Party affiliation: Bison

Home state: Ohio

Constituency: Blue collar and white collar middle class families. The people of Quigley's district keep re-electing him because he looks after their interests on issues that affect them and he uses his own common sense when voting on issues that do not directly concern them.

Position on the bill: Quigley has decided not to vote (to abstain) on this bill unless there is a tie vote. If that happens, Quigley will vote to break the tie. He will vote for the bill, if necessary.

Past voting record on similar issues: He usually votes for conservation measures.

Other pertinent data: none

Special actions during this session

*****1.** As Speaker, you will call the session to order after everyone has read his or her material. Your guide will tell you when it is time. You will bang your gavel twice and say, "The session is hereby called to order."

*****2.** You will then say, "The Speaker recognizes the gentleman from Connecticut, Mr. Irving." (The person playing Mr. Irving will stand up and read the bill.)

*****3.** You then say, "Thank you, Mr. Irving. The floor is now open for a fifteen-minute discussion on this bill."

*****4.** Individuals will raise their hand to be called upon. You call on a person by saying, "The Speaker recognizes the (gentleman or lady, depending on who they are playing) from (the state on their name badge)." You have 22 minutes. You must time each person who speaks. Nobody is allowed more than two and a half minutes. They do not have to use all of their two minutes.

*****5.** After the 15-minute discussion, you bang your gavel and say "We will now have a roll call vote on H.R. 11597, A Bill for the Protection of the *Pristis microdon*. Those in favor of the bill say aye, those opposed say nay." You go down the roll (next page) and call the name of each member. The member will say either aye or nay. You record their vote on your roll sheet. After the vote is completed, you count the vote and announce the results by saying, "The bill is hereby passed." Or by saying, "The bill is hereby defeated." (depending on the vote count) *NOTE: If the vote was tied you announce that there is a tie vote. Then you call your own name and say aye or nay. You then announce the results.*

*****6.** You then bang your gavel and say, "This session is now adjourned."

ROLL CALL

CONGRESSMAN	AYE	NAY
Armstrong, Lydia		
Avery, Jonathon		
Chaney, Brad		
Drew, Melanie		
Garcia, Henry		
Greer, Katherine		
Holmes, Elizabeth		
Irving, Britt		
Jackson, Curtis		
Knowles, Alan		
Marino, John		
McCormick, William		
Newsome, Richard		
Ramirez, Joe		
Ramsey, Mike		
Smith, Quentin		
Takamura, Andy		
Thompson, Camellia		
Urbanski, Ed		
<i>TOTAL</i>		

ALL NAMES AND CHARACTERS CONTAINED IN THESE DOCUMENTS ARE FICTIONAL. ALL DATA AND INFORMATION CONTAINED IN THESE DOCUMENTS IS ALSO FICTIONAL. ANY RESEMBLANCE TO ACTUAL PEOPLE, PLACES, OR EVENTS - EITHER REAL OR IMAGINED - IS PURELY COINCIDENTAL.

SUMMARY OF THE MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

CONGRESSMAN	PARTY	POSITION ON BILL
Armstrong, Lydia	Bison	Opposed
Avery, Jonathon	Elk	Supports
Chaney, Brad	Elk	Opposed
Drew, Melanie	Bison	Supports, but not strongly
Garcia, Henry	Bison	Undecided
Greer, Katherine	Elk	Opposes strongly
Holmes, Elizabeth	Bison	Supports strongly
Irving, Britt	Bison	Supports strongly
Jackson, Curtis	Bison	Undecided
Knowles, Alan	Elk	Supports, but is not known for protecting the environment
Marino, John	Bison	Opposed
McCormick, William	Elk	Opposed
Newsome, Richard	Elk	Supports
Ramirez, Joe	Bison	Undecided
Ramsey, Mike	Elk	Undecided
Smith, Quentin	Elk	opposes because of pressure from other Congressmen
Takamura, Andy	Bison	Supports strongly
Thompson, Camellia	Elk	Undecided
Urbanski, Ed	Elk	Opposes strongly
	Independent	Undecided
	Independent	Undecided
	Independent	Undecided
	Independent	Undecided
	Independent	Undecided

******IMPORTANT******

If your Congressman/Congresswoman has taken a position on the bill, you should either speak on the floor during House discussion, or try to persuade undecided representatives, especially those from your own party and the Independents. If your Congresswoman/Congressman is undecided, you should listen carefully to arguments from both sides and then decide, based on your profile, what you have heard, and what (if anything) you have been offered in return for your vote.