

Name _____



Veto Power!

The President of the United States has many important powers, but one of the most important is the veto. A veto allows the president to reject a law passed by Congress if they believe it is not good for the country. The word "veto" comes from a Latin word that means "I forbid." This power helps balance the government by making sure that no single branch has too much control.

What Happens When a President Uses a Veto?

When Congress passes a law, the president has three choices:

- Sign it – The bill becomes a law.
- Do nothing – If the president ignores the bill for 10 days, it automatically becomes law, unless Congress is not in session.
- Veto it – The president rejects the bill and sends it back to Congress with a reason for the veto.

If the president vetoes a bill, Congress can try to override the veto by voting again. But this is very difficult—it takes a two-thirds majority in both the House of Representatives and the Senate to make the bill a law without the president's approval.

Andrew Jackson and the Bank of the United States (1832)

President Andrew Jackson used his veto to stop the renewal of the national bank, which he thought gave too much power to wealthy people.

Franklin D. Roosevelt's Record Number of Vetoes (1933-1945)

President Franklin D. Roosevelt (FDR) vetoed 635 bills during his time as president! He believed it was necessary to protect his New Deal programs that helped people during the Great Depression.

Gerald Ford and Education (1976)

President Gerald Ford vetoed a bill that would have given more money to schools because he was worried about government spending. Congress disagreed and overrode his veto, making the bill a law anyway.

George W. Bush and Healthcare (2007)

President George W. Bush vetoed a bill that would have given more health insurance to children from low-income families. He said the government should not spend more money on healthcare programs.

The Importance of the Veto

The veto is a way for the president to check the power of Congress. However, Congress also has power because they can override a veto. This system keeps the government balanced and fair. Over time, vetoes have shaped important decisions in education, the economy, and even war.