

# Legislators

## Make the Grade

**S**chool principals, teachers and students give state legislators an “A” when they bring civics to life during America’s Legislators Back to School Program. They agree it’s a good way for students to learn about American democracy.

The annual event encourages elected officials in all 50 states to meet personally with young constituents to answer questions, share ideas, listen to concerns and impart a greater understanding of the legislative process. Most states set aside one week in September, others participated throughout the school year. And the Oregon legislature set aside one day in April where more than three quarters of the members visited classrooms.

More than 1,400 lawmakers participated in 2004. They met with a record number of students—some 320,000—to deliver this message: “Your Ideas Count!” Teachers and principals say that when lawmakers come, students take their words to heart.

“This program is an excellent way to introduce students to the legislative process,” says educator Aretha Hargrove Brown from Greenville, Miss. “It is helpful for students to have an ‘up-close and personal’ presentation from someone who represents them.”

Plans are under way for the 2005 America’s Legislators Back to School event, a program of NCSL’s Trust for Representative Democracy. This year NCSL will kick off the program the third week of September and it will run through the school year. To get involved contact your state legislative coordinator listed online at [www.ncsl.org/public/trust/contacts\\_bsw.htm](http://www.ncsl.org/public/trust/contacts_bsw.htm). Let the students in your district know that their ideas count.

### THE TOP 10

These are the states with the most participation in the 2004 America’s Legislators Back to School Week.

State	Percentage of Legislature Participating
Louisiana	83.3%
Arizona	78.0%
Utah	74.0%
Hawaii	67.0%
Alaska	53.3%
Nebraska	53.1%
New Mexico	53.0%
Mississippi	44.0%
Massachusetts	41.0%
Nevada	36.5%