G R A D E

As citizens in a democracy, you'll be confronted with policy questions. Is a tax proposal a good idea? Should you vote for a particular ballot initiative? Government policies can profoundly affect our nation and your life. In a democracy, you have a say on government policies and proposed policies. It's important that you take a critical look at them. Use the following GRADE test to evaluate a policy:

G **oal.** What is the goal of the policy? If you don't know what it's supposed to do, you can't measure its success or failure. Policies are designed to address problems. What problem or problems is this policy supposed to address?

R **ivals** and Supporters. Who might (or does) oppose it? Knowing the rivals can help you understand who the policy might affect and whether the policy favors special interests. Also, rivals are terrific sources for information, but you must check their facts. Who might (or does) support the policy?

A **dvantages.** What are the policy's benefits? What is good about the policy? Does the policy address the causes or effects of the problem? Will it achieve (or has it achieved) its goal? Will it achieve the goal efficiently? Is it inexpensive? Does it protect people from harm? Does it ensure people's liberties?

D **isadvantages.** What are the policy's costs? What is bad about the policy? Does the policy fail to address the causes or effects of the problem? Is it inefficient? Is it expensive? Does it cause harm? Does it intrude on people's liberties? Are there any potential consequences that may cause damage?

E **valuate.** Do you believe the policy is a good one? Why or why not? Weigh the advantages versus the disadvantages. Can you think of an alternative policy response that would be more effective? Keep in mind that one alternative is to leave the policy as is. Most serious problems have various policy proposals. Evaluate them. Look at their goals, advantages, and disadvantages.

Policy Analysis

Proposed Policy:

Problem or issue the policy is attempting to address:

What institution is involved in the policy? What level of government is the institution? (federal, state, local)?

Goal/s

Rivals & Supporters

Advantages

Disadvantages

Evaluate

Civic Action Project