



Skit #3: Checks and Balances

Roles:

President
Legislator #1
Legislator #2
Legislator #3

Summary:

The President's friend wants a new law that will help his business make more money. The President asks the legislature to pass the law. He assures the legislators that Bob Smith will reward them for their cooperation. Nobody is worried that the law won't hold up because the court system is too disorganized. Even if someone does take the law to court, the President or the legislators can just bribe the judges.

Skit:

PRESIDENT: Hi, guys. Listen—Bob Smith came to see me. His coal business isn't making enough money, and he wants us to let up on the safety rules. It costs a lot to keep those mines safe. I told him we could pass a law doing away with some of those mine safety rules.

LEGISLATOR #1: Maybe we could, but what's in it for us?

PRESIDENT: Don't worry. He said he would be sure to take care of you.

LEGISLATOR #2: Sounds good to me. What do you want the law to say?

LEGISLATOR #3: Wait a minute—can we do that?

LEGISLATOR #1: Who's going to stop us?

LEGISLATOR #3: The judicial branch. Somebody might challenge the law in court.

LEGISLATOR #2: Let them try! The court is so disorganized, it loses track of half the cases.

LEGISLATOR #1: Yeah. Most of them never even go to trial. And we hardly have any judges. We may as well not have any judicial branch at all.

PRESIDENT: Which makes things a lot easier for us. But don't worry. If someone does challenge the law in court, we'll just do the judge a little favor, if you know what I mean.

LEGISLATOR #3 [to the President]: Yeah, I know what you mean. But I've got a letter here from a guy who says he voted for me. He works in the coal mines and he says a lot of people are getting hurt. He says we need more safety rules, not less.

LEGISLATOR #2: How much money is he going to give us for passing more safety laws?

LEGISLATOR #3: Aw, come on. Aren't some things more important than money?

PRESIDENT: Look here. You'd better get on board with this or you might not be representing anybody. Bob Smith can do a lot for us. Besides, he's a family friend.

LEGISLATOR #3: [Looks at the letter, then at the President] You think he'll let me use his yacht for a couple weeks? My kids could use a vacation.

LEGISLATOR #1: Sounds like we're going to get this law passed without any problems.

PRESIDENT: Don't you worry. You'll be sunbathing on the waves before you know it. Send me the bill as soon as it's passed, and I'll sign it right away.