

The Ladybug Story

A Story About Lawmaking



Published by
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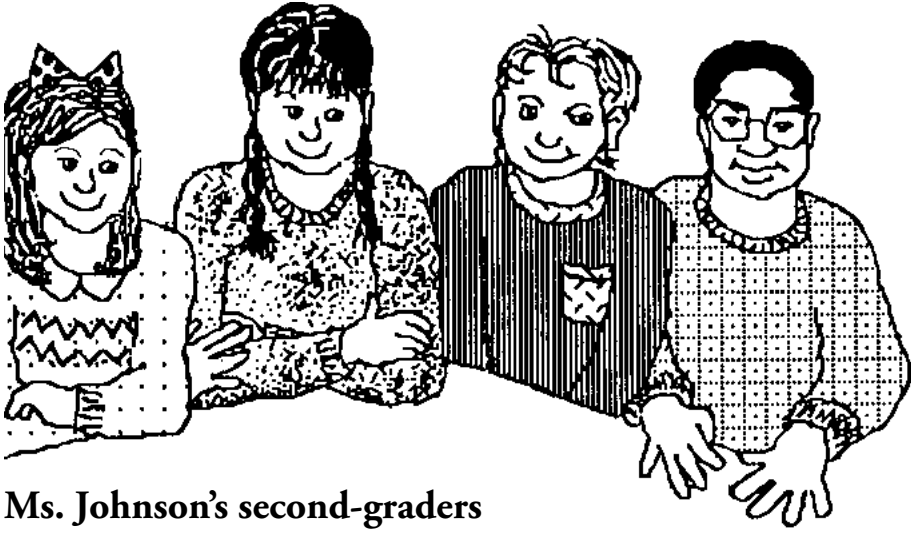


This book is a true story of how a second grade class helped to make a new state law. It shows how anyone with a good idea can change the world a little bit. I hope you enjoy reading it and understand how rewarding the legislative process can be.

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Ms. Johnson's second-graders

This is a true story about Ms. Palma Johnson's second grade class at the Kennedy School in Franklin, Massachusetts.

One day, Ms. Johnson told the class that, by law, there is a state bird – the chickadee – and state tree – the American Elm – and a state fish – the cod.

“What about a state bug?”, somebody asked, “do we have one?”

“No,” said the teacher.

“I think there should be a state bug,” said one little boy.



A good idea...

“I think so too,” said a little girl, “and I think it should be a ladybug.” All of the children agreed.

“What a good idea,” said their teacher. “Maybe our class can make the ladybug the state bug. Maybe we can help make it a law!”

All of the boys and girls began to talk excitedly. They agreed that they would like very much to try. It would take a long time, the teacher told them, but in the end it would be worth it.

The class learned that everyone who lives in Massachusetts has the right to give legislators, the men and women who make the laws, ideas for new laws.

PETITION HOUSE

Rep. _____
 of _____
 presents the petition of _____

Accompanied by bill, House
 No. _____

House of Reps. _____ 197

Referred to the Committee on _____

Sent up for concurrence.
 _____ . Clerk.

The Senate concurs. _____ 197

_____ . Clerk.

This right is called the **right of free petition**.

So Ms. Johnson wrote to the **State House**, the capitol building in Boston, and in a few days the class received a petition form. They wrote their idea about a state bug on the special form.

Then, Ms. Johnson told them, they would have to get their petition signed by a legislator. She explained that there are two

kinds of legislators: **representatives**, who speak for one or two towns, and **senators**, who speak for several towns. They found out that their town, Franklin, has its own senator and its own representative. So the children wrote to their representative.



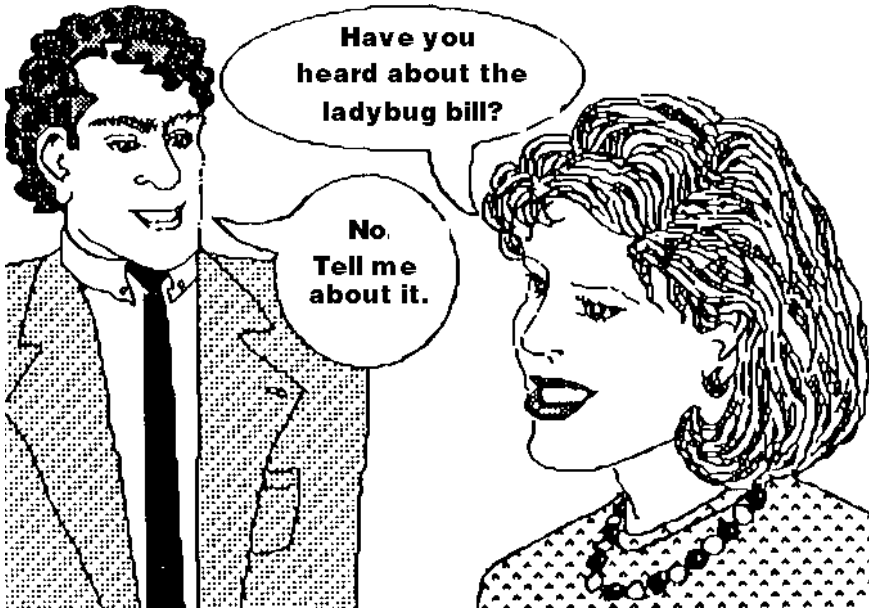
Signing the petition...

He wrote back to say that he would be glad to sign the petition.

After their petition was signed, it began its long journey to becoming a law.

The class decided to find out everything that would happen to their petition on its journey and make sure to be there when anything important happened along the way.

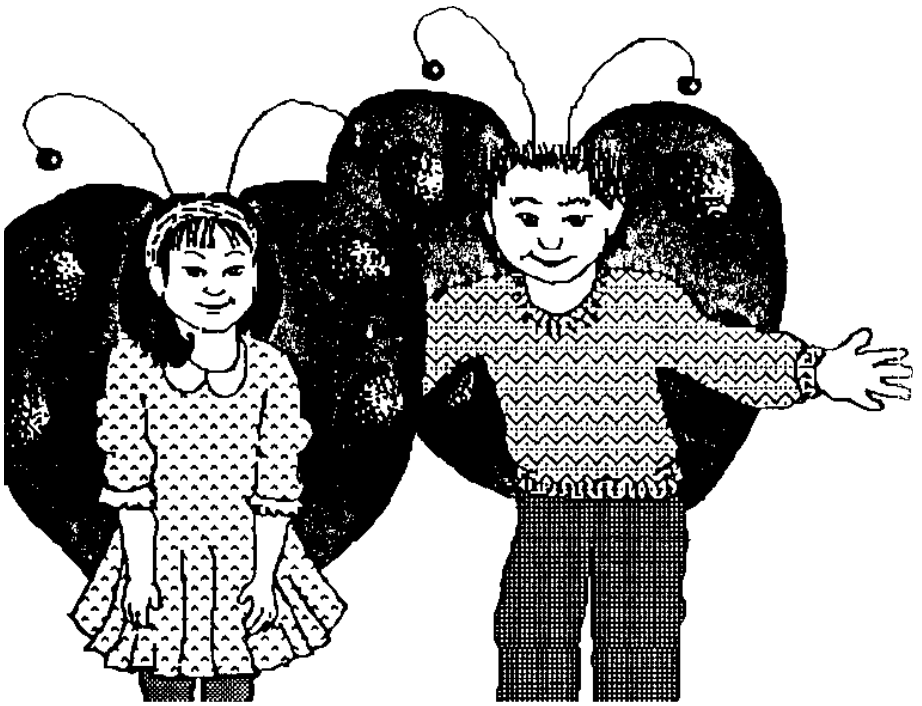
First, their petition had to become a **bill**. The House Clerk in the House of Representatives takes care of this. He read their ladybug petition and gave it its own number, H.5155.



Talking about the bill...

Then, he had to decide which of the committees in the House of Representatives to send the bill to. Different committees study different kinds of subjects. When the House Clerk picked the right committee, he had copies of the bill made and sent to all of the senators and representatives on the committee, so they could study it.

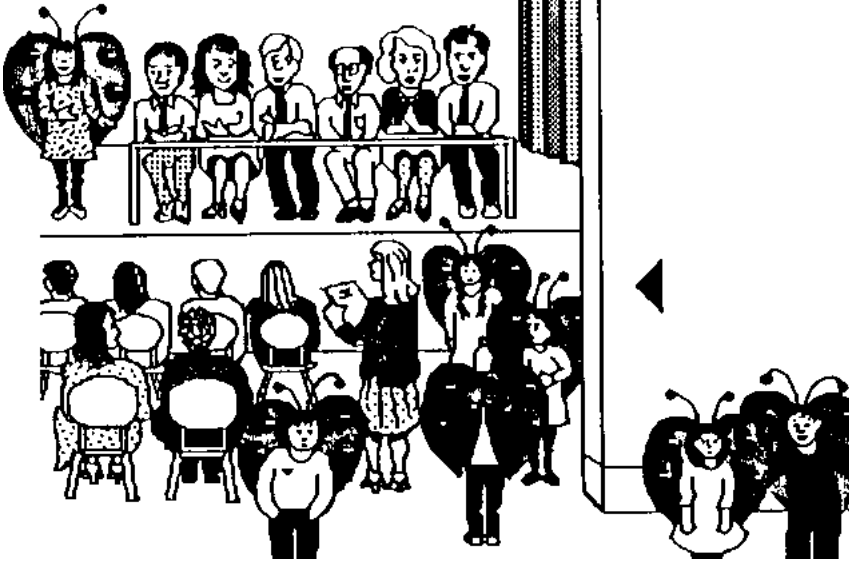
Meanwhile, at school, the children in Ms. Johnson's class were busy making ladybug costumes to wear when the time came for them to visit the State House. They wanted to show everyone there how much they really cared about making the ladybug the official bug!



Dressed in their costumes...

When the class heard which committee was studying their bill, they wrote to find out when their bill would be “heard.” A committee has a **public hearing** for each bill it studies. At a hearing, anyone can come and say why he or she thinks a bill should or should not be made a law or **passed** into law.

On the day of the public hearing, Ms. Johnson’s second grade class dressed in ladybug costumes got on the yellow school bus and rode all the way to Boston to the State House. They walked inside the enormous

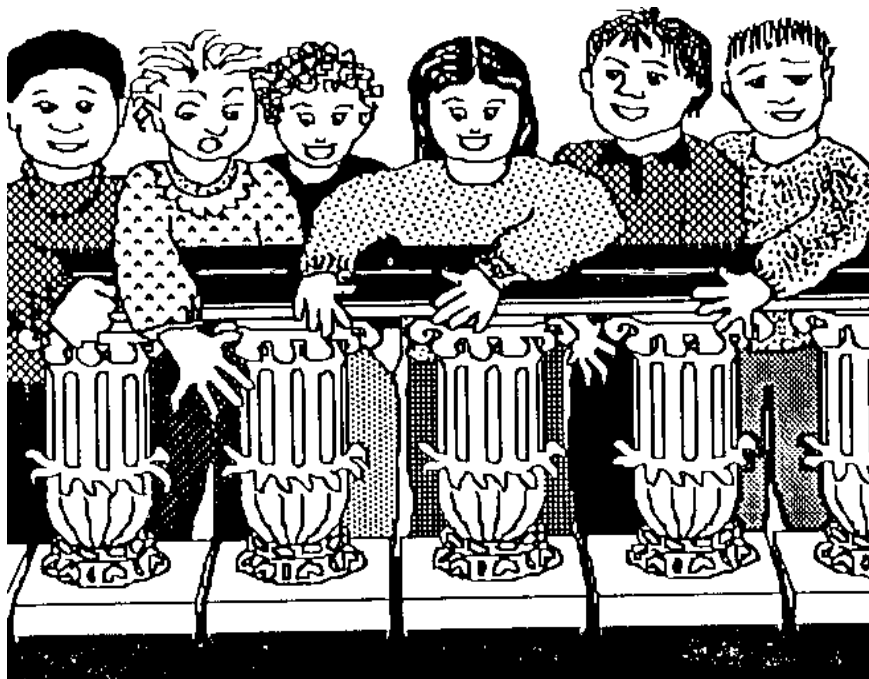


At the hearing...

building with the shiny golden dome and into the room where the hearing was being held. They wanted to **testify** – to tell the legislators about their idea.

When it was their turn, some of the boys and girls stood up and told the legislators why they thought it would be a wonderful idea to make the ladybug the official state bug.

“They’re so beautiful with their shiny orange backs and bold black spots,” they said, “and they can be found in everyone’s backyard.”



High up in a balcony...

The committee listened very carefully while the children explained how they felt. Then the committee had to decide what to tell all the legislators, who would later vote on the new idea. You will be glad to hear that the committee told the House of Representatives that they believed the ladybug bill should be passed into law! The class was very happy.

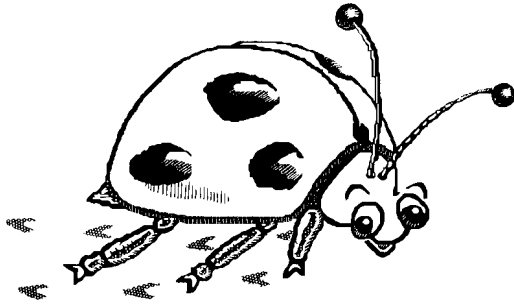
A few weeks later, Ms. Johnson's class got back on the school bus and headed for Boston. It was the day that all of the representatives were going to discuss the ladybug bill for the first time.



Writing to representatives...

This time the class went to the beautiful chambers of the House of Representatives. They stood high up in a balcony where they could see and hear everything that was happening.

The class found out that there are three readings of every bill before a final vote can be taken. So between the three readings, the class visited some of the representatives in their offices and wrote to others to ask them to vote for the bill.



The House of Representatives voted for the ladybug bill, and then sent it to the Senate to be read and voted on again. The children once again returned to Boston and this time they sat in the gallery of the Senate chamber to hear the Senators talk about the ladybug bill. The Senate also liked the bill and wanted it to be made into a new law. The children cheered!

Now the bill was printed on very special paper called **parchment** and sent back to the House of Representatives for a final vote called **enactment**. Soon, the Senate also did the same.

At last, the bill could go to the **governor**. If he agreed that the ladybug should be the state bug, he would sign the bill. The governor agreed! He invited Ms. Johnson's second grade class to be there when he wrote his signature on the bill.



They all wore their best clothes and piled once again into the bus to make the last, familiar journey to the State House in Boston. They walked up the grand staircase to the governor's office and watched as he signed their bill into law.

They were very proud.

And that is how the ladybug came to be the official state bug of Massachusetts.

Can you match these new words to their meanings?

- | | |
|---------------------------|--|
| 1. law | A. A legislator who speaks for one or two towns. |
| 2. legislators | B. What a petition becomes before it can become a law. |
| 3. right of free petition | C. A special form. |
| 4. State House | D. A place where anyone can come and say why a bill should or should not become a law. |
| 5. petition | E. Men and women who make laws. |
| 6. representative | F. Approved |
| 7. bill | G. Capitol building with a gold dome. |
| 8. public hearing | H. To tell legislators at a public hearing about your ideas for a new law. |
| 9. testify | I. Official rule. |
| 10. passed | J. The right to give your own ideas for a law to a legislator. |

Just for fun...

Can you think of an idea for a new law?

New words to unscramble.

Write the answers on the lines beside each word.

1. TESAT _____
2. WLA _____
3. TEPIONTI _____
4. LIBL _____
5. ATENSRO _____
6. YESFITT _____
7. SEDSAP _____
8. GIRAHEN _____



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