

HOW CITIZENS MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN MATTERS AFFECTING NEIGHBORHOODS

PUBLIC ISSUE #1 (Past)

The Point Elliot Treaty of 1855: Forced the Native Americans of the Lake Washington area to move from this area and onto reservations.

Position #1:

Native Americans had lived on these lands for thousands of years. The treaties forced them from their homelands where they had hunted and fished and gathered other necessary foods and materials to live. After the treaties were signed, most were relocated to reservations. They were very sad that they were not able to carry on with their traditional lifestyles.

Position #2:

The pioneers felt they should be able to choose any land that was available because of the Donation Land Claim Act of 1850. They selected the best land for their homes, farms, and businesses. Most of these sites were already inhabited or used by local Native American groups including the Lakes Duwamish. Even though there were not very many settlers in this area in 1855, they agreed with the treaties because they felt the treaties would make their ownership of the land more secure and they would be safer.

I agree with Position # ___. These are my reasons:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

Does this position support an individual's personal rights or the common good? Why?

Sources I used for this assignment:

Source #1:

Title:

Author:

Date of Source:

Source #2:

Title:

Author:

Date of Source:

How might things have been different today if there had been more opportunity for the tribes to negotiate an agreement with the settlers?

PUBLIC ISSUE #2 (Past)

Miller Street Landfill: Garbage and waste disposal in early Seattle was badly needed because of construction projects and tremendous population growth.

Position #1:

Residents: We need a place to dump all the garbage created by homes, businesses, and industry. It would be very expensive to move it very far. Besides, the city is growing so fast, we will need to have areas where garbage can be dumped away from homes to prevent disease and filth. We also will need the new level land created by these dumps.

Position #2:

Native Americans: The water of this lake is important to us. What is being dumped is hurting the fish. It is also damaging the shorelines where we pick berries and harvest materials for our baskets and other

needs. Continued use of the dump will not allow us to use those areas of the lake. It has transformed a place that has been important to our community for generations.

I agree with Position # ____. These are my reasons:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

Does this position support an individual's personal rights or the common good? Why?

Sources I used for this assignment:

Source #1:

Title:

Author:

Date of Source:

Source #2:

Title:

Author:

Date of Source:

How might things have been different today if there had been more opportunity to voice an opinion about these matters?

PUBLIC ISSUE #3 (Current)

The Evergreen Point Floating Bridge needed to be replaced to ensure that it would continue to be a safe way to cross Lake Washington. This process will be very expensive. To help pay for the costs of rebuilding this bridge, there is now a fee to cross the lake using the bridge.

Position #1:

Government: The tolls are necessary to help pay for the repair and updates to the bridge. It is the responsibility of the bridge-users to help pay for these type of projects.

Position #2:

Taxpayer: It is not fair that we have to pay for the bridge in taxes plus pay a toll to cross the bridge.

I agree with Position # __. These are my reasons:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

Does this position support an individual's personal rights or the common good? Why?

Sources I used for this assignment:

Source #1:

Title:

Author:

Date of Source:

Source #2:

Title:

Author:

Date of Source:

Contact information for local, county, or state representative that I plan to write a letter to in order to voice my opinion about this public issue:

Here is a sample form for your letter:

Contact name

Address

City, State Zipcode

Date

Dear ____,

Paragraph 1: Who I am and why I am writing this letter. Mention that you are studying a civics lesson and you are using your rights as a citizen to voice your opinion.

Paragraph 2: Describe the public issue as you see it and what your opinion is regarding how it is being handled.

Paragraph 3: Describe what your suggestions (if any) for a better solution are.

Conclusion: Thank them for their time and/or the opportunity to have your opinion heard.

Sincerely,

(Sign here)

Your name, grade

Your school