

TROL in American Govt: Constitutional or Border Crisis?

High School AP Government & Politics

Learning Objectives: Students will be able to:

CON-4A: Explain how the president can implement a policy agenda.

CON-4B: Explain how the president's agenda can create tension and frequent confrontation with Congress.

Enduring Understanding:

CON-4: The presidency has been enhanced beyond its expressed constitutional powers.

Essential Knowledge:

CON-4A.1: Presidents use powers and perform functions of the office to accomplish a policy agenda.

CON-4A.2: Executive Orders—implied from the president's vested executive power, or from power delegated by Congress, executive orders are used by the president to manage the federal government

Signing statements—informal power that informs Congress and the public of the president's interpretation of laws passed by Congress and signed by the president.

CON-4C.1: Justification for a single executive are set forth in Federalist No. 70.

Approx. Time: Two 90 minute block or four 45 minute blocks

Hook: Ask students which branch of government has the “power of the purse” to appropriate money. Next, ask students what it means for the president to be Commander-in-Chief. Ask them what kind of power is given to the president in that role and what limits, if any, should be placed on the president to use that power in a national emergency.

Explain to the students that today they will be researching President Trump's emergency declaration concerning the southern border and his effort to move money to build the border wall, after being denied the funding by Congress.

OVERVIEW

Students will work in groups to analyze primary sources about President Trump's emergency declaration concerning the southern border and the securing of funds to complete a border wall. Students will present their findings to the class allowing classmates to record the information. Once all materials have been presented, students will divide themselves into two groups either supporting the president and his reasoning or against and will debate their positions. Finally, students will write an argumentative essay on the subject using prior knowledge and the US Constitution, *Federalist 51*, *Federalist 70*, and any relevant court decisions.

ACTIVITY

1. Place the students in groups (10 total) and assign them a document. Some are much longer than others so I would suggest making those groups a little larger.
2. Have students analyze and summarize the documents and create some kind of presentation for the class. If they make posters, then the presentations could be posted around the room like a gallery walk. If they make digital presentations (Google Slides, Prezi) they can be displayed one at a time.
3. Students should record all information on their graphic organizers.

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4. Once all information is collected, have them divide into two groups supporting or opposing the president's actions. Give them time to deliberate as a group and then have them debate the topic for an appropriate amount of time.
5. For a final assessment, assign them the argumentative essay.

DOCUMENTS

All documents are in pdf format and can either be printed out for groups or shared digitally.

1. **Trump proclamation for National Emergency**
2. **10 USC 12302 Ready Reserve Soldiers**
3. **National Emergencies Act Fact Sheet**
4. **Appropriations Clauses**
5. **List of National Emergencies (long—may want larger group)?**
6. **Yes, There is a Crisis at the Border**
7. **Not the Border Crisis Trump Says It Is (very long—need larger group)**
8. **Legal Challenges to Trump Emergency Declaration Face Uphill Battle**
9. **Budget Impoundment**
10. **Iran Contra Affair**

Budget impoundment and Iran Contra Affair are included to see if students can make connections about checks and balances and appropriations to President Trump's action on border security and funding the wall.