**You’re Outa There!**

States Exercise Direct Democracy

**Governor Gray Davis**

In 2003, California recalled its governor, Gray Davis, over a loss of faith in his handling of the state’s financial affairs.  This is a form of direct democracy.  Direct democracy is when all citizens have the opportunity to participate in decision making.  (By the way, the ancient Greeks coined a word for those who don’t participate . . . idiot.)  Other forms of direct democracy are:

* Initiative - a way citizens may force a public vote on a constitutional amendment or other legal question with a petition
* Proposition - a legal amendment set forth to be voted on by the electorate, rather than their representatives
* Referendum - a direct vote by the electorate or poll on a legislative, constitutional, or political question

Normally, though, our representative democracy handles the day-to-day operation of our government.

Complete the following questions/activities for this assignment:

* Was the recall of California's Governor Davis too severe a reaction to that California’s financial problems?  Support your answer.

Grey Davis was recalled for the wrong reason. He was recalled for the large deficit that California faced, however he was not directly responsible for it. California’s financial problems were severe; however the root of the problem was related to the energy (electrical) crisis that was a result of market manipulation by companies such as Enron. Enron created a situation where an artificial electrical shortage was created by buying up energy and selling it out of state. Grey Davis and the state government did not cause this problem, he was guilty however of not taking decisive action against this manipulation by the free market. I believe that he should have been recalled for not addressing the manipulation; he was recalled for the deficit.

* Search online news sources to find at least two (2) examples of direct democracy at work in your state or in one of the states around you.  Briefly summarize each of the examples.  Cite your findings fully.  What is common to the examples you cited?

California referendum to soften “3 strikes” put away criminals for life on their 3rd offence.

http://www.nytimes.com/2012/11/25/opinion/sunday/california-horror-stories-and-the-3-strikes-law.html?\_r=0

California referendum to raise bonds to fund stem cell research. This was a direct result of the Bush administration banning further stem cell research on new stem cell lines.

http://ballotpedia.org/California\_Proposition\_71,\_Stem\_Cell\_Research\_(2004)

* Name an issue that, in your opinion, requires direct democracy right now.  Why do you believe the issue warrants direct democracy.

Currently government or state jobs have benefits that are out of proportion to their civil counterparts. The list of benefits for firemen and police outweigh what the private sector offer. This imbalance needs to be corrected to balance government spending and reduce state and city taxes.