A Juicy Problem

Oregon has the pear. Georgia has the peach. West Virginia has the Golden Delicious apple. Now, thanks to Janet Shapiro's fourth grade class, Florida finally has its own official state fruit—the orange.

Shapiro's class took on the task of persuading state lawmakers to name the orange Florida's state fruit. The class saw the fruits of their labor in spring 2005. That's when Gov. Jeb Bush signed the orange bill into law.

For Shapiro's students, the act of naming the orange Florida's official fruit was obvious. Florida loves its oranges. The state has orange trees, orange juice, and even the Orange Bowl (a college football game).

"We were completely surprised that the orange wasn't the state fruit of Florida," Shapiro, a teacher at Southside Elementary School in Sarasota, Florida, told Senior Edition.
Shapiro's social studies class wrote letters to Florida state Rep. Donna Clarke. Clarke, who thought the idea was sweet, introduced the students' idea as a *proposed*\(^1\) law.

That was only the first step. Shapiro's class got an up-close look at how the *legislative*\(^2\) process works. They had to persuade other lawmakers to support the proposal.

To that end, students conducted a campaign to collect 800 signatures on a *petition*\(^3\). They even wrote a song about the fruit. "Vote Orange!" they sang. Shapiro says waiting was the hardest part. The bill had to go through many legislative committees. But in the end, it was worth all the trouble.

"We made history," Kia Gentile, 11, told *Senior Edition*. "It was awesome."

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\(^1\) *proposed*: put forward for consideration  
\(^2\) *legislative*: lawmaking  
\(^3\) *petition*: an official written request