

COVENTRY



Photo by Kendra Leigh Miller

Senator Lou Raptakis and Representative Patricia Serpa spoke to the third-grade class at Tiogue Elementary School on Tuesday about the election process and read "Grace for President."

Political primer

Tiogue students get lesson on elections

KENDRA LEIGH MILLER

kmiller@ricentral.com

COVENTRY — The third-grade class at Tiogue Elementary School got the opportunity to get up close to two local politicians, learn about government and ask some great questions.

Third-grade teacher Donna Raptakis explained that over the past few weeks, students have been studying about how the election process works through writing stories about what they would do if they were President, holding mock elections and reading current events in the newspapers with their parents and to close out the lessons, she invited Senator Lou Raptakis and Representative Patricia Serpa to offer some of their experiences.

In their stories, students had various ideas of what they would accomplish if they sat in that important seat.

One student said she would do away with car tax, another said she would make peace in the world, another suggested making things more affordable for those who can't afford things such as cell phones and cars.

Raptakis explained how both senators and representatives represent all different districts in cities and towns and in some cases, overlap their areas.

Serpa explained that both sides combine to form the General Assembly

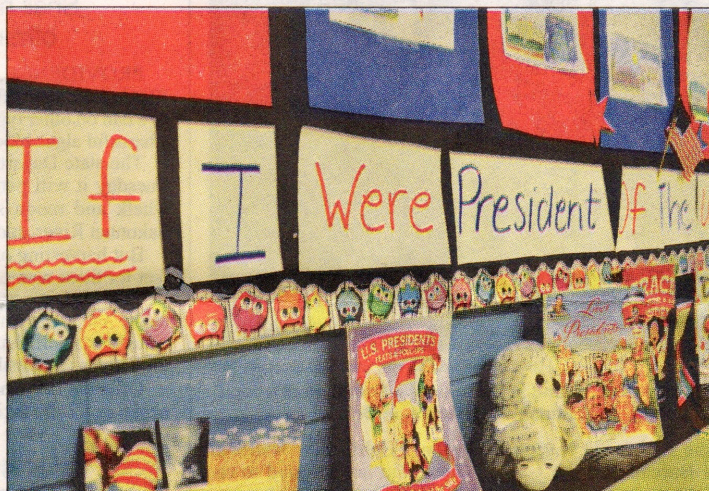


Photo by Kendra Leigh Miller

Students have been studying government at Tiogue for several weeks.

where budgets and laws are worked out and passed.

One of the more recent laws that had been passed is the recess extension to 20 minutes.

"That affects every one of you who comes to school and every other child in the state that goes to an elementary school," she said.

Both figures pointed out the signifi-

cance of the electoral college.

"Many years ago, when many people lived far away from towns, out in the country, they couldn't get into town to vote, so to help them out and make sure they had a voice, the electoral college was created so there would be people to represent them," Serpa said.

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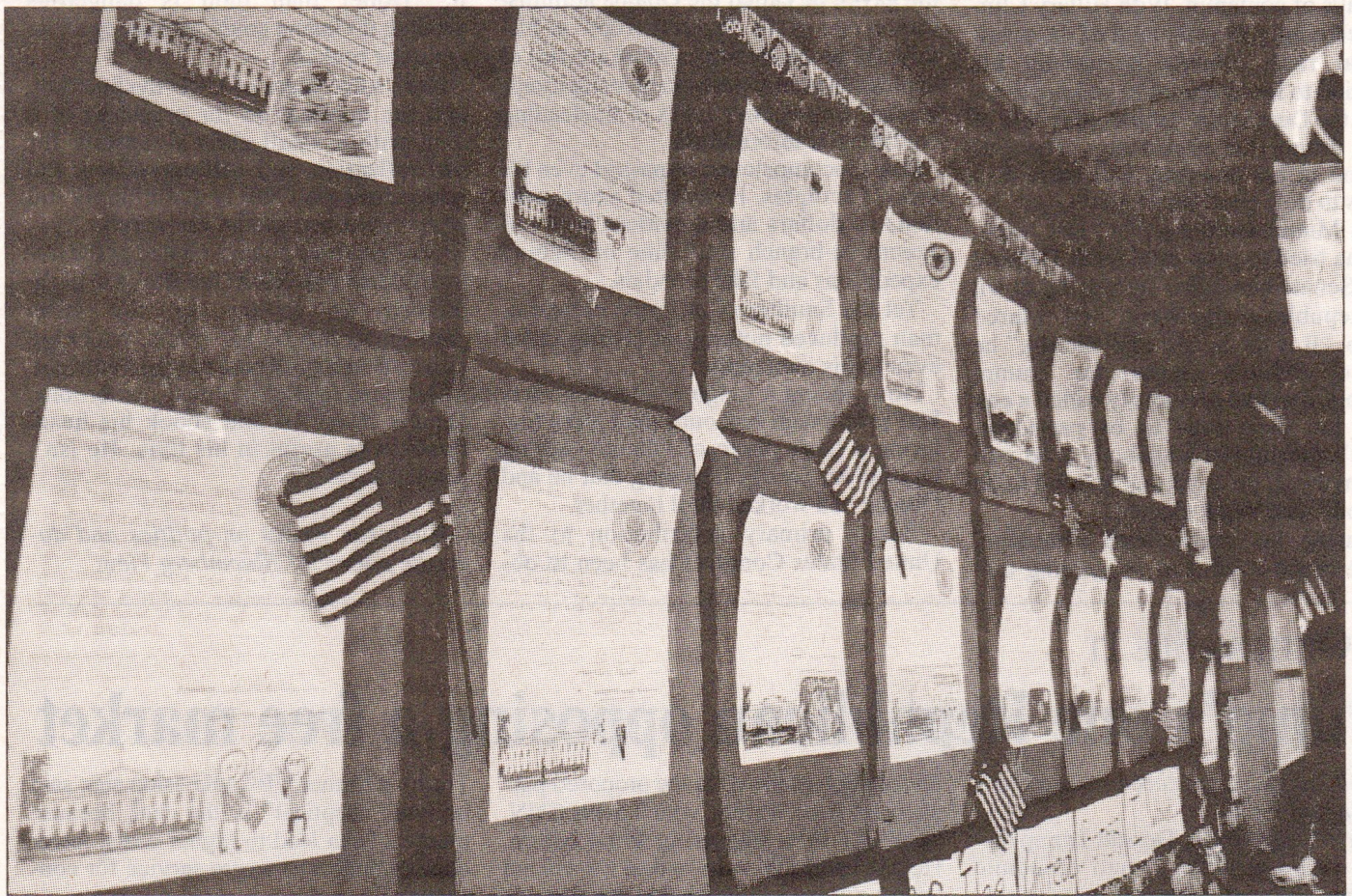


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Students wrote essays about what they were do as President of the United States.

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“Every state has electoral votes and every state is important, but the number of votes changes, depending on the size of the state,” Raptakis said. “Rhode Island, because its such a small state, only has four, but bigger states have much more.”

While the two were answering questions, they held a mock interview and the class was just about split in half with 27 standing for Presidential Candidate Clinton and 20 for Presidential Candidate Trump.

“That shows how important this election is,” Raptakis said. “Every country needs a leader so it’s our job to elect someone for that.”

Both were happy to be there to wrap

up the lesson.

“I think kids always learn from live experiences when you see the people up close,” Serpa said. “You always see the politicians on a television screen but here, they can questions and meet us and get up close.”

“We’ve had other political people come and speak to the students, so this is a continuation of that,” Raptakis said. “This is a real-life experience for them.”