

Advocacy 101

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HOW A BILL BECOMES A LAW

A bill is a proposal for the enactment, amendment or repeal of an existing law, or for the appropriation of public money. A bill may originate in either the House or Senate, with the exception of revenue measures, which originate in the House of Representatives.

Introduction

A bill may be introduced by a legislator, a group of legislators or a standing committee. After the 20th day of the session in the House and the 12th day in the Senate, bills may be introduced only by committee. After the 35th day bills may be introduced only by certain committees. In the House: State Affairs, Appropriations, Education, Revenue and Taxation, and Ways and Means Committee. In the Senate: State Affairs, Finance, and Judiciary and Rules.

The original bill is presented to the Chief Clerk who assigns the bill a number. Then it gets introduced in either the House or the Senate for "Introduction and First Reading of Bills."

First Reading

If it starts in the House, the bill is read the first time and is then referred by the Speaker of the House to the Judiciary, Rules and Administration Committee for printing. After the bill is printed, it is reported back and referred to a standing committee by the Speaker.

Reports of Standing Committees

Each committee to which a bill is referred conducts a study of all information that may help the committee determine the scope and effect of the proposed law. Studies may include research, hearings, expert testimony, and statements of interested parties. A bill may be reported out of committee with one of the following recommendations:

1. Do pass.
2. Without recommendation.
3. To be placed on General Orders for Amendment.
4. Do not pass. (Bills are seldom released from committee with this recommendation.)
5. Withdrawn with the privilege of introducing another bill.
6. Referred to another standing committee.

If a committee reports a bill out and does not recommend that the bill be amended or other action to keep it from going to the floor, the bill is then placed on second reading.

Many bills are not reported out by committees and "die in committee." Special rules of the House apply when the committee does not desire to report out a bill for consideration by the entire House.

Second Reading

When a bill is reported out of committee, it is placed on the second reading calendar and is read again. The following legislative day, the bill is automatically on third reading unless other action has been taken.

Third Reading

The Clerk is required to read the entire bill section by section when it is on the Order of Business, "Third Reading of Bills." It is normal procedure, however, for the members to dispense with this reading at length. It is at third reading that the bill is ready for debate and the final vote on passage of the bill is taken. Each bill is sponsored by a member who is known as the "floor sponsor" and who opens and closes debate in favor of passage of the bill. After debate has closed, House members vote on the electronic voting machine.

Each member present can cast either an "aye" or "nay" vote. A bill is passed by a majority of those present. If a bill fails to pass, it is filed by the Chief Clerk. If the bill is passed, it is transmitted to the Senate where it goes through a similar process.

Senate Action on House Bills

After the final action by the Senate on a House bill, it is returned to the House with a message explaining the Senate's action. The message is read to the House. If the bill passes the Senate without amendment, it is enrolled by the House Judiciary, Rules and Administration Committee, signed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives and the President of the Senate and transmitted to the Governor for his action.

Committee of the Whole

When a printed bill is to be amended, it is referred to the Committee of the Whole for amendment. At the proper Order of Business, the House resolves itself into the Committee of the Whole House and the entire membership sits as one committee to consider changes to both House and Senate bills.

When a House bill has been amended by the Committee of the Whole, and the amendment(s) accepted by the House, it is referred to the engrossing committee. Amendments are inserted into the bill and the engrossed bill is then placed back on the calendar to be considered as a new bill.

Governor's Action

After receiving a bill passed by both the House and Senate, the Governor may:

1. Approve the bill by signing it within five days after its receipt (except Sundays), or within ten days after the Legislature adjourns at the end of the session ("sine die").
2. Allow the bill to become law without his approval by not signing it within the five days allowed.
3. Disapprove (veto) the bill within five days and return it to the house of origin giving his reason for disapproval, or within ten days after the Legislature adjourns "sine die."

A bill may become law over the Governor's veto if both houses vote to override the veto by a two-thirds majority vote of the members present in each house.

When a bill is approved by the Governor or becomes law without his approval or over his veto, it is transmitted to the Secretary of State for assignment of a chapter number in the Idaho Session Laws. Most bills become law on July 1, except in the case of a bill containing an emergency clause or other specific date of enactment. The final step is the addition of new laws to the Idaho Code, which contains all Idaho law.

Source: *Idaho State Legislature Website, How A Bill Becomes A Law, 2015:* <http://bit.ly/RTaQDg>

Navigating <https://legislature.idaho.gov/>

1. Tracking/finding bills
2. Find legislators/ committee membership
3. Finding committee agendas
4. Listening online
5. In person navigation basics
 - a. House Side:
 - b. Senate Side:
 - c. Floors:
 - d. Elevators, ramps
6. Other questions about online navigation

Lobbying 101

From your local city council to state legislators to your senators and representatives in Idaho, meeting with your elected officials about issues important to you should be easy and accessible. Remember, they work for you!

What is a lobby visit? A lobby visit is merely a meeting for you to tell your elected representative what you think

about a certain policy, issue or bill, and to try to get him or her to take action on that issue.

Requesting Your Meeting

- Make your request in writing and follow up with a call to the Appointment Secretary/Scheduler.
- Suggest specific times and dates for your meeting.
- Let them know what issue and legislation (by bill number, if it has one) you wish to discuss.
- Make sure they know that you are a constituent.

Prepare for your meeting

- If going in on behalf or with the support of a particular organization, see if they have messaging materials. They will likely have information to help you decide on your talking points, and possibly materials that you can leave with your elected official.
- Decide who will attend the meeting. Bringing more than four or five people can be hard to manage. Keep it small, it can be great to bring people who represent different groups that have an interest in the legislation like doctors, veterans, religious leaders, school board members, etc.
- Agree on talking points. It's tough to make a strong case for your position when you are disagreeing in the meeting! If a point is causing tension in the group, leave it out.
- Plan your meeting. People can get nervous in a meeting, and time is limited. Be sure that you plan out the meeting in advance, including who will start the conversation.
- Decide what you want to achieve. What is it you want your elected official to do - vote for or against the bill? Make a commitment to introduce or co-sponsor legislation? Asking your legislator or his or her staff member to do something specific will help you know how successful your visit has been!

During the Meeting

- Be prompt and patient. Elected officials run on very tight schedules. Be sure to show up on time for your appointment, and be patient - it is not uncommon for legislators to be late or to have your meeting interrupted by other business.
- Keep it short and focused. You will have twenty minutes or less with a staff person, and as little as ten minutes if you meet with your elected official. Make the most of that brief time by sticking to your topic.
- Bring up any personal, professional or political connections to the elected official that you may have. Start the meeting by introducing yourselves and thanking the legislator for any votes he or she has made in support of your issues, and for taking the time to meet with you.
- Stick to your talking points. Stay on topic, and support them with no more than five pages of materials that you can leave with your elected official.
- Provide personal and local examples of the impact of the legislation. This is the most important thing you can do in a lobby visit. They need help in seeing the real impacts of their decisions, actions and often inaction.
- Be honest. Saying "I don't know" can be a smart political move. You need not be an expert on the topic you are discussing. If you don't know the answer to a question, it is fine to tell your legislator that you will get that information for him or her. This gives you the chance to put your strongest arguments into their files, and allows you to contact them again about the issue. Never make up an answer to a question - giving wrong or inaccurate information can seriously damage your credibility.
- Set deadlines for a response. Often, if an elected official hasn't taken a position on legislation, they will not commit to one in the middle of a meeting. If he or she has to think about it, or if you are meeting with a staff member, ask when you should check back to find out what your legislator intends to do about your request.

After the Meeting

- Right after the meeting, compare notes with everyone in your group to compare what the elected official committed to do and what follow up information you committed to send.
- Each person who took part in the meeting should promptly send a personal thank you letter to the elected official.
- Follow up in a timely fashion with any requested materials and information.
- If the elected official or staff member doesn't meet the deadline for action you agreed to during the meeting, ask him or her to set another deadline. Be persistent and flexible!

If you met with policy makers on behalf of a bill that organizations are pushing for, let them know how the meeting went and what the elected official said. Knowing what arguments your elected official used, what issues are important to them, and what positions they took will help us make our lobbying strategy more effective!

Remember that a personal meeting with your elected official is one of the best opportunities to demonstrate that there is a constituency that cares and is watching in your district.

Story Telling

1. See crafting story document
2. Adapting: 1 min and 3 min versions
 - a. In the event during a hearing a committee chair begins to limit the amount of time community members can testify, it can be helpful to already have your main point decided- ensuring you can still get your message across in a minute or just a bit more if necessary. You can still submit that testimony into the clerk; letting its entirety be on record.
3. Using story for lobbying
 - a. These same points crafted into a story will be similar to what you used for lobbying or visa versa. Being honest with what you know, accurate with info you provide, brief and courteous still apply.
 - b. Ensure your messaging is from trusted sources, organizations you know, and personal annotates
4. Submitting online; as mentioned during navigating online, you can submit your testimony
 - a. Individual legislators
 - b. Committee clerks is preferred

In person testimony

1. Expectations
 - a. If possible, have your testimony printed out ahead of time; it's easy to read and submit for record after you've read through it.
 - b. Organizations present today and/or also on the legislative watch page will post where certain specific bills are taking place. You can also look that information up on the leg gov website as shown earlier.
 - c. Once you've located the correct hearing room, you'd typically go inside and to either the right or left usually there is a clipboard with a sign in sheet. You'll be asked to provide your personal information, the bill number, whether you're for or against the bill and if you'd like to testify. If you want to testify, you'll need to sign in. You can sign in and be for/against a bill and not testify as well. **This component may look different depending on how leadership navigates COVID
 - d. Once you've signed in, you can find a seat and wait for proceedings to take place. There may be other business on the agenda or other pieces of legislation before the bill you're hoping to testify on behalf of.
 - e. Decorum and a quiet committee room are expected, (this wasn't true during special session 2020 when a large demographic were allowed to behave unruly and even destroy Capital property. However, most of the movement spaces our organizations will be sharing and bills we are likely to support or defend each other against- our crowds will be held to a different expectation). Turn cell phone ringers off, it's expected that we don't engage in sidebar conversations, that we do not react while others are speaking- even if their words are outrageous. A committee chair can make rash decisions based on the crowd if they are not holding up to the standards that have been set by cutting testimony time or testimony at all, taking a break, removing folks from the committee room and other measures that would limit community members from being heard
 - i. We emphasis to consider these truths along with your self care and wellness before attending
 - f. Testifying: when your name is called you'll approach the podium before the committee, there may be a student page (assistant) with a timer. You'll start by introducing yourself and where you're from. Read your testimony. Once you've completed reading, you can tell the committee "I'll stand for questions," if you're willing to accept questions from the chair or the committee. If you do and they ask something you don't know, you can simply say you don't know.
 - i. When responding to a question asked, it's customary to respond by addressing the

committee chair and the legislator that asked the question.

1. Example: Legislator: "is it cold outside", your response: "chairman/madame chair/chairperson, representative/senator Smith, thank you for that question, yes it is cold outside."
- ii. Once they've asked questions or if they don't, you'll be dismissed back to your seat for the next community member to provide testimony. You can then leave your printed testimony for submission, or email it ahead of time.
- iii. You can stay in your seat to see how things shake out or quietly leave the hearing room.

Safety

1. Today's opposition is a different dynamic
 - a. Open protests
 - b. Declarations of violence
 - c. Confrontational
 - d. Doxxing
2. Cautions
 - a. Buddy system
 - b. Consider community with less access to privilege
 - i. Being armed or confrontational - may bring more harm to those in Black, Indigenous, brown, trans and non binary folks
 - ii. Asking for additional police/security may bring harm to those who experience violence from the police
3. Discretion of the chairs
 - a. They can decide what's a disturbance
 - b. They can have folks removed

Navigating COVID19

1. What precautions are or are not being put into place at the Capitol?
 - a. Masks?
 - b. Distancing?
 - c. Capacity limitations on people in hearing rooms
 - d. Avoiding loitering in the halls
 - e. Meetings space with limited capacity
2. What can we do?
 - a. Masks, distancing, avoiding crowds if being in the building is necessary
 - b. Highlight, encourage and amplify online options
 - i. Remote in testimony
 - ii. Online submission
 - iii. Phone calls
 - iv. Emails
 - v. Engaging networks to do the same

A Handy Guide to Crafting Your Message

You can use your hand to help you structure your message and ensure you say everything you need to.

The first finger –

“Introduce Yourself.”

Tell the legislator/mayor/ city councilmen your name, where you live, and that you are one of his/her constituents.

The second finger-

“What is my issue?”

You want to say, “I’m here to talk with you about _____. Outline the basic topic and describe the bill/ ordinance/ concern.

The third finger-

“Why I care.”

This is where you share your personal story, and you can begin in many different ways. “I care about this issue because” or “This is issue is important to me because...”

The fourth finger-

“Why the legislator /mayor/city councilmen should care.”

This is where you use the talking points from the fact sheet. Be sure you use things that can be backed!

The fifth finger-

“Make the ask.”

This is the part where you ask for their support. You can say, “Will you support bill#___/ the Non discrimination ordinance for our city of _____”

Finally, the whole hand- a hand shake and “Thank you for your time.”

Whether on paper or in person, be sure to express appreciation for their time and consideration on the issue you’ve brought up.

