

*Understanding the Legislative
Process
and
How to Become an Effective
Advocate*

Presented by:
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Snapshot of Iowa's Government

**Iowa House
of
Representatives**

100

U.S. House

4

**Iowa
Senate**

50

U.S. Senate

2



GOVERNOR

How a bill becomes a law

Where the ideas come from

- **Individual legislator**
- **Constituent concern**
- **Interest group – ie., Hospital Assoc., Farm Bureau**
- **Initiatives in other states**
- **Federal level**
- **Committee bill – ie., Human Resources, Environment**
- **Leadership bill – House and/or Senate Leader bills**
- **Gubernatorial legislative agenda**
- **State agency prefiles – ie., DHS, DoE**

What's Next?

- Bill is Drafted – By legislative services agency
- Bills are introduced to House or Senate
- House File or Senate File, given a number
- Individual Legislator Bills
- Study Bills
- Companion Bills – same bill in House & Senate
- Resolutions – Honoring a person, organization, or an expression of the legislature on some matter

Assignment of Bills

Speaker of the Iowa House assigns bills to committee – policy or budget committee

- The chairperson works with the ranking member to assign the bill to a subcommittee

President of the Iowa Senate assigns bills to committee – policy or budget committee

- The chairperson works with the ranking member to assign the bill to a subcommittee

Committee Action & Consideration

- Subcommittee Assignment

Subcommittee recommends to report or not report to full committee

- Full Committee Consideration

Full committee can report to full chamber with recommendation or without recommendation

- Re-assignment

Bill Gets Debated

- Placed on House & Senate Calendar
- Daily Debate Calendar
- Amendments
- Deferred

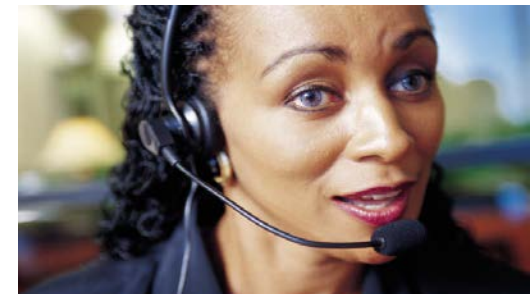
Second Chamber, One More Time....

- Immediately Messaged
- Referred to a Committee
- Subcommittee Assigned
- Debate: Companion Bills/Substitution
- Amendments
- Concur or Resist

Off to see the Governor

- Sign,
Effective July, 1 unless otherwise designated in bill
- Veto – vetoes entire bill
- Item Veto – vetoes portions of a bill
- Veto Message – Why

How to develop your message and talk to your Elected Official



Preparing Your Message

1. Define the Problem
 - Put it in real terms
 - Personalize it – How does it affect you?
2. Identify a possible solution
 - What needs to happen and why?

Preparing your Message

3. Research Your Issue

- Be knowledgeable about the issue
- Put together a fact sheet
- Why is it important?
- What do you want us to do?

Preparing your Message

4. Research your Elected Official

- Know who is your Senator & Representative
- What committees do they serve on?
- What is their background?
- Look for personal connections

Contacting Your Elected Official

- **Call us** on the phone
- **Meet with us**
- Attend forums and talk with us before or after the forum. **We want to meet you and hear from you!**
- **Write us.** Send us a letter or email us.
- Be sure to give us your address and phone number so we can get back to you.

Delivering Your Message

1. Introduce yourself
2. Identify your issue
3. Tell us how the issue affects you
4. Tell us what you want us to do.
5. Let us ask you some questions
6. Ask us questions
7. Leave us some information on the issue
8. Provide us with your contact information
9. Follow – Up!

Best Ways to Advocate

- **Personal Visits**
 - Identify yourself as a constituent
 - Schedule an appointment
 - Visit one-on-one or in a small group
 - Leave something in writing for us to review
- **Personal Letter**
 - Write us a letter
 - Tell us if you're a constituent
 - Explain the issue
 - Provide us with your contact information (phone, address)
- **Telephone**
 - Call us at home - (Legislators can also be reached at the Capitol, but only while in session)
 - Talk with our Staff
 - Provide us with your contact information so we can follow-up

Best Ways to Advocate

- Email

We receive a lot of email – so ask your elected official which way they prefer to be contacted

- Forums & Community Meetings

Talk to us before & after – we want to know you

Get others to attend

Speak up! We need to hear your issue

Things to Avoid

- Threatening comments – (do this or we'll defeat you in the next election)
- Form Letters
- Multiple topics/issues – separate issues to better focus your concerns

From the Legislator's Perspective

- We tend to focus on our constituents first
- We want to know if anyone else cares about the issue
- We want to know who might be against the issue
- We want to know if the group advocating on an issue are reputable
- We want to know what our colleagues think about the issue
- If you don't speak up, we tend to think everything is ok.

Opportunities Start Now

1. Call your State Representative and your State Senator
2. Contact your U.S. Senator and U.S. Congressman
3. Meet your State Representative and State Senator, (ie., one-on-one, forum)
4. Establishing those relationships NOW helps when you want to advocate on an issue.

Links

Iowa General Assembly

<http://www.legis.iowa.gov>

Governor's Web Page

<http://www.governor.iowa.gov>

County Government

www.storycountyiowa.gov

www.boonecounty.iowa.gov

www.franklincountyiowa.gov

www.co.hardin.ia.us

www.hamiltoncounty.org

US Senator & US Congress

<http://www.congress.org>

www.co.marshall.ia.us

www.co.jasper.ia.us

www.poweshiekcounty.org

www.warrencountyiowa.org

www.madisoncountyiowa.us