



Advocacy...Why Bother?

Child advocacy means speaking out or taking action on behalf of children. Since children cannot represent themselves, you must champion their interests. To be an effective advocate, you must educate your legislators about children's development and current services. You must also educate yourself about the legislative process. Your commitment of time and energy can make a difference!

The California Legislative Process

How to be an effective advocate

The legislative process is how an idea becomes a law. Ideas that interest a Legislator may be introduced as legislation (a bill). In each house, a policy committee and a fiscal committee (if it has a fiscal impact) must review the bill before the members vote on it. If both houses pass the bill, it is sent to the Governor for his approval.

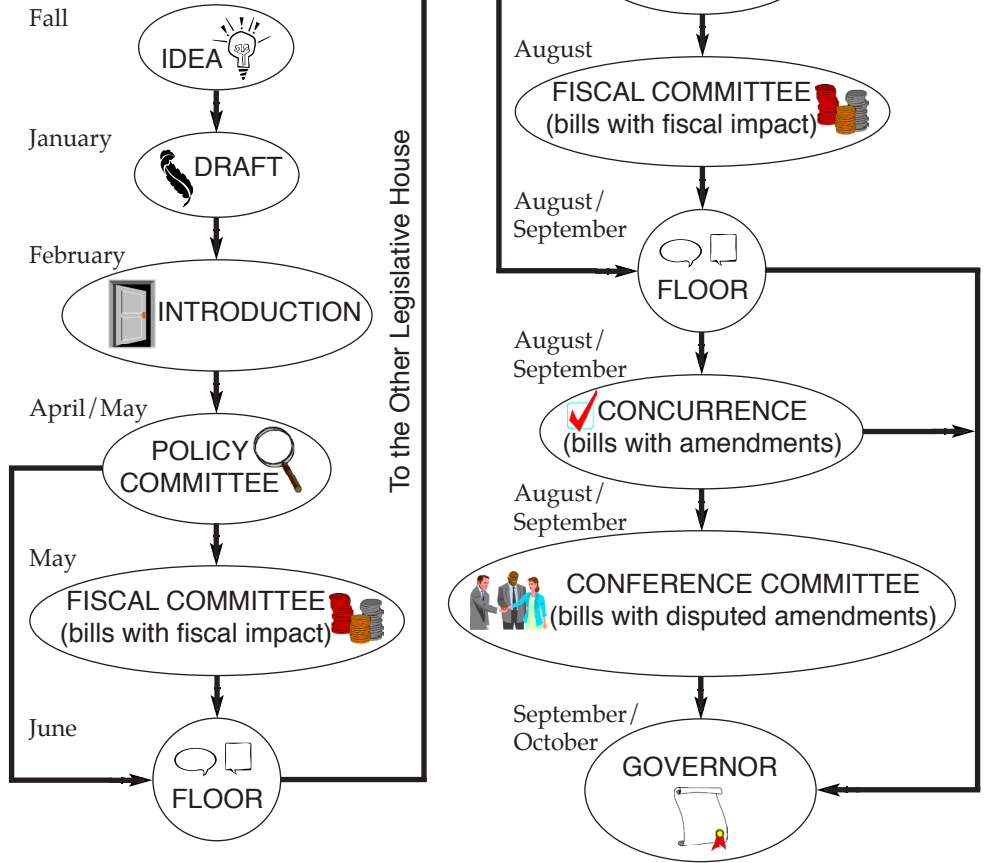
Legislative sessions extend for 2 years, beginning in odd-numbered years (2001, 2003, etc.) and ending in even-numbered years. Most bills that do not meet the deadlines during the first year may be heard during the second year. These bills must pass the house of origin by the end of January; other deadlines are the same.

Idea

Anyone can suggest an **idea** for legislation. If you or your organization has a concern that can be addressed by legislation, you may consider asking a legislator to introduce a bill for you. If a legislator agrees to carry the measure, he or she will be considered the *author* of the bill. You or your organization will be known as its *sponsor*.*

Action

- Thoroughly research your subject. Be sure to investigate the current process and previous legislation to address your identified issue. Be aware of how changing the law would affect other state policies.
- Prepare an outline describing a change you would like to see in existing law or a new program you feel justifies state support. Be as specific as you can.
- Decide whom you want to author the bill. You may want to ask your own Senator or Assemblymember, or another legislator whose constituency would benefit from the bill. You should also consider legislators who have carried similar legislation in the past. If the bill affects a major policy issue or requires substantial funding, consider asking a legislator who is in a leadership position to carry the bill.
- Approach potential authors in the fall, if possible, while the Legislature is out of session. Draft legislation must be submitted to the Legislative Counsel by late January for a bill to be introduced



by the February introduction deadline. Urgency bills may be introduced any time during the session but would have to merit special consideration by committees if the bills miss their regular bill deadlines.

Draft

The bill is **drafted** into its legal form by the Legislative Counsel's office, a

pool of attorneys who work for the Legislature. The Legislative Counsel also prepares a summary of the bill. This summary appears on the front of the bill, preceding the text.

Action

- Be sure the legislator who has agreed to author the bill has a copy of your outline. Work with the consultant from the author's office on preparing the lan-

* If you are supporting or opposing a bill, rather than sponsoring it, you should follow the same action steps beginning with the policy committee.

guage for the bill. The consultant will take care of submitting this language to the Legislative Counsel.

Introduction



After the bill is drafted, the author of the bill **introduces** it on the floor of their own house (Senators introduce bills in the Senate and members of the Assembly introduce bills in the Assembly). It is given a number, such as SB 312. SB stands for Senate Bill, AB for Assembly Bill. The bill is then sent to the printer. There is a thirty-day waiting period between the date the bill is introduced and the date any committee may first hear the bill. This waiting period is designed to give interested parties an opportunity to get a copy of the bill. If you are sponsoring or supporting legislation, this is the time to gather support and plan your advocacy strategy.

Action

- Write a bill information sheet. As sponsor of the bill, this sheet should include your name or your group's name, address, telephone number, fax number, email address, web site, name of the contact person, a short statement of the issue (no more than one paragraph) and a summary of the bill. You may also wish to list the organizations and individuals supporting the measure. This sheet will prove invaluable for distribution to legislators, staff, press, and others.
- Develop a diverse coalition of supporters. An example of such a coalition would be professional associations, corporations, employee associations, church groups, women's groups, students, homemakers, and public interest advocacy groups. The wider your range of appeal, the better your chances of passing the bill.

Policy Committee



After the bill is introduced, it is assigned to one or more **policy committees**. There are 19 standing policy committees in the Senate and 28 in the Assembly. Most legislation affecting young children is assigned to the policy committees covering education and human services (Senate or Assembly Education or Human Services Committees). Hearing dates are published in advance in the *Daily File* [see insert]. However, dates are frequently changed. Contact the author's office for

up-to-the-minute information on the bill. If a bill doesn't pass a committee the first time it may be granted "reconsideration." Bills may be set for hearing up to three times, but the first hearing is your best chance to pass your bill.

Before the committee hearing

Once a bill has been assigned to a committee, you can begin to "work the committee."

Action

- Ascertain each committee member's interest and record on the issue. Request supporters who live in a committee member's district to write a letter. First-hand evidence of why the bill is needed is most effective.
- Request an appointment with each member of the committee to discuss the issue and ask for support. You can meet with members at the State Capitol or in their district office. When visiting a legislator, speak briefly and to the point. Be respectful of the legislator's time. If the legislator is not available, ask to speak with a consultant. Be sure to give them your bill information sheet and offer to supply them with more information. If a legislator expresses opposition, ask which provisions he or she opposes and why. Understanding the opposition will help prepare you for answering questions during the committee hearing.
- Find out if your bill will affect any state departments. Contact their legislative liaisons and ask how they will testify, if at all. Departments likely to be affected by children's legislation are the Department of Education, the Department of Social Services, and the Department of Health Services. It is vital to work with these departments and solicit their support. If they testify against your proposal in committee, it may be more difficult to win the Legislature's approval.
- Contact the committee office to speak to the consultant on the bill. Ask if they have any questions or concerns about the bill and offer to provide them with any information they need. Find out if any other organizations have taken a position on your bill. Be sure that supporters send letters to the committee a week before the hearing so that their support can be reflected in the analysis. Arrange to coordinate your testimony to avoid unnecessary duplication. Contact opposing groups and attempt to work out your

differences *before* the committee hearing. Legislative staff may also propose amendments to your bill. Be flexible, keeping in mind the basic purpose of your bill.

- If you oppose provisions of a bill, always contact the author's office to attempt some resolution before you testify. Be sure to send a letter of opposition to the committee stating your reasons. You may also want to contact legislators before the hearing to explain your opposition. Committees like opposing parties to try to come to a compromise prior to hearing the bill. Even if you still oppose the measure, you are more likely to have your concern addressed in some manner if you are able to meet with the author beforehand. Catching a legislator off-guard can also cause you future problems.
- Prepare your testimony in coordination with the author's office. Work with the author's consultant on the bill to organize and develop an effective presentation. Make copies of your testimony to hand to the committee members when you appear.
- Obtain a copy of the bill analysis from the committee office or on the Internet when it is available [see insert]. Sometimes it will be available the day before the hearing, other times it will not be available until the committee hearing. This analysis is prepared by the staff to assist committee members. Modify your testimony, if necessary, to address any concerns raised.

At the committee hearing

The author will present the bill to the committee. Those who support the measure are given the opportunity to testify first. The committee chair will then ask if there is any opposition. Committee members may also ask questions. Discussion on a bill may last for a few minutes or several hours, depending on the degree of controversy and the importance of the issue. A majority vote is needed to pass a bill out of policy committee.

Action

- When the committee chair calls the bill number, rise and take a seat at the table in front of the committee. When you are asked to speak, turn on the microphone and introduce yourself. You may want to limit your remarks to the key points only, depending on the mood of the committee. If a legislator asks a question you cannot answer, of-

Communicating with Your Legislators

Finding Information

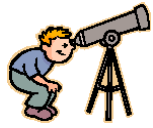
Widespread use of computers and the Internet makes information about legislation much more



accessible and has turned computers into very effective advocacy tools. State government web sites include contact information for each legislator and other valuable resources. The California State Legislature web site is <www.legislature.ca.gov>, the Assembly web site is <www.assembly.ca.gov>, the Senate web site is <www.sen.ca.gov>, and the Governor's web site is <gov.ca.gov>. Phone numbers of local legislators and the county election's office are also listed in the Government section (blue pages) of your telephone book.

Your Legislators All three legislative web sites provide links to a web-based program to determine who your legislators are - either by

typing your address or clicking your location on a map of California. On the State Legislature web site, go to "Legislators," on the Assembly web site, click on "Find My Representative," and on the Senate web site,



look under "Find My Senator" at the bottom of the page. You can also find out who represents you by calling your local county election's office.

Biographies Each legislator has a short biography linked to their web site. These biographies contain background on your legislator's experience prior to becoming an Assembly member or Senator and other personal information about themselves. This information can be valuable when trying to advocate for their support. These biographies are also available from your legislator's district and capitol offices. The Cali-

fornia Legislative Handbook includes biographical information on each legislator and is available from the Legislative Bill Room in the basement of the Capitol: (916) 445-2323.

Legislation Usually you can find out about legislation introduced by your legislator through a link on their web site. You can also search for legislation by bill number, author, or key words at <www.leginfo.ca.gov/bilinfo.html>. The actual text of the bill, status, history, analyses, and any votes taken are available through the bill search. Bills are also available from the Bill Room in the Capitol. Up to 100 single copies of bills are free. A Legislative Index of all introduced bills categorized by subject is periodically updated during the session and is available on the web at <www.leginfo.ca.gov/legpubs-legindex.html> or from the Bill Room.



Advocacy Tools

When contacting your legislators, either in person or in writing, be prepared to back up your position. Know your issues and facts, including doing any necessary research. Be able to answer questions about how a proposed bill will affect the early education field or services to children and families. Children are not well represented at the Capitol, so your voice on their behalf is very important. For up to date information on child care cost and availability in your county, consult the California Child Care Portfolio published by the California Resource and Referral Network <www.rnetwork.org>.

In general, receiving multiple copies of the same message from different people doesn't have the same impact as individual communication in your own words. Be sure to include your personal stories relating your experience with the issue and how the legislation will

impact real families. Since most people don't contact their legislators at all, almost any communication is considered to represent a broader constituency.

Email Email is a quick, effective way to show support or opposition to legislation. Be sure to be descriptive in the subject line. Be polite, specific, and brief. Because email can sometimes get overlooked (and some legislators don't have public email addresses), it is best to reinforce your message through other methods, such as a letter or fax. Include your home address so their office can verify that you live in their district. Most legislators have email addresses linked from their web site, web-based forms by which you can send them a message, or both. *On the Capitol Doorstep* (OTCD) publishes a Fax/Email Roster that is available from: <www.otcdkids.com> or (530) 297-5420.



Telephone Calling legislators to urge their support or opposition to a specific measure can be effective if it is well-timed with an upcoming vote, particularly in large numbers. Calls should be made to legislators voting on the bill (members of the committee hearing the bill). Usually you can simply leave a message with the person who answers the phone with the bill number and your position. If you have specific information that might make a difference in how the legislator would vote, ask to talk to the legislator or the consultant on children's issues. Remind them of any previous contact, stick to the point, be brief, well prepared, and courteous. OTCD publishes a Legislative Roster that includes phone and room numbers for each legislator. If you can, follow up in writing.

continued on next page

Communicating with Your Legislators

Fax This is a fast, inexpensive way to convey your perspective on a particular issue or to urge your legislators' support or opposition to a bill. Be clear about what action you want them to take, briefly outline the reasons for your position, and include your own experiences with the issue.



Letters Legislative offices give special consideration to personal letters. However, due to mailing time and security concerns, this method can be much slower than others. Letters should outline your position and encourage your legislator to support your position. Even more effective are letters that take into account your legislators current positions. If your legislators agree with your position, write to confirm their support. If they disagree with your position, indicate your familiarity with their record and explain why a different position would be appropriate. Be sure to include your own experience with the issue and explain how the bill will affect children and families.



Invitations Inviting your legislator to visit your child development center or family child care home helps develop a relationship with him or her. Observing your program also gives your legislator a better idea of what you do and how state policies and funding levels impact the quality of services for children. Good times to set up a visit are during breaks in the legislative schedule and Fridays, when legislators spend more time in their districts.

District Visits Schedule an appointment to meet with your legislator in his or her local district office. This is a good way to work on building a relationship with your legislator and to educate them about important current issues affecting children. If a legislator

is not available, ask to talk with a Field Representative or District Director. Prepare materials to leave for your legislator beforehand, making sure that you include your contact information. Know what you want to say, stick to your issues, and be respectful of their time. Follow up your contact with a short note encouraging them to continue to support the interests of children and thanking them for meeting with you.

Capitol Visits The State Capitol is where the Legislature meets to hear and pass bills. It is also where hundreds of lobbyists meet with Legislators to represent special and public interests. Before coming to Sacramento, call ahead and set up appointments with your Assembly Member and Senator. If your legislator is not available, ask to meet with the consultant that covers your issues. Prepare materials to leave for your legislator (including your contact information). This is a good time to talk about specific legislation and the reasons to support or oppose bills. Know what you want to say, listen to what your legislator has to say, and be respectful of their time. Follow up your visit with a 'thank you' note, with which you may include additional information that might address concerns brought up during your visit.

Hearings During your visit to Sacramento, you may wish to attend committee hearings at which bills of interest are going to be heard. The public (including you) may testify during consideration of any bill. The schedule of hearings and other legislative business is published in advance in the Senate and Assembly Daily Files. Each hearing's date, time, place, and bill agenda are listed. Available on the web at <www.leginfo.ca.gov/dayfile.html>, from your legislators, or in the Bill Room.



Writing to State Officeholders

The Honorable Maria Garcia
California State Senate
Dear Senator Garcia:

The Honorable John Lee
California State Assembly
Dear Assembly Member Lee:

The Honorable Jerry Brown
Governor's Office
Dear Governor Brown:

All:
State Capitol
Sacramento, CA 95814

Other Resources

On the Capitol Doorstep (OTCD) Child Development Legislative Update A weekly bill tracking service on legislation affecting early childhood programs, including a current bill summary and status. *On The Capitol Doorstep*; P.O. Box 73601; Davis, CA 95617; (530) 297-5420; <www.otcdkids.com>.

Child Development Policy Institute Email Updates These periodic updates provide information about what is happening in the state Legislature regarding early childhood education. To subscribe, visit their web site at <www.cdpi.net>.

OTCD Guide to State Agencies A directory of phone numbers and addresses for state agencies serving children and families. *OTCD*; (530) 297-5420.

California Lobbyist and Employer Registration Directory Available from the Bill Room. This information is also available on the web at <cal-access.ss.ca.gov>.

Federal Information

U.S. House of Representatives <www.house.gov>; (202) 225-3121.

U.S. Senate <www.senate.gov>; (202) 224-3121.

U.S. President <www.whitehouse.gov>; (202) 456-1414.

Bill Information <www.congress.gov>; (202) 707-5079.

Anatomy of a Bill

- 1 **Amendment date(s)**, if any.
- 2 **House** in which bill was introduced (Assembly or Senate).
- 3 **Bill number**.
- 4 **Author(s)** and coauthor(s). This bill has both Assembly and Senate coauthors.
- 5 **Introduction date**.
- 6 **State code(s)** affected. If the bill includes an **urgency clause** or **appropriation**, they are declared here. Urgency bills are not subject to most legislative deadlines and take effect immediately upon becoming law. Most other bills take effect the January 1st after becoming law (bills may specify later effective dates for all or part of the bill).
- 7 **Summary** written by attorneys that work for the Legislature. It describes current (existing) law and new provisions proposed by the bill. **Italics** indicate the bill has been amended to add these provisions. **Lined-out words** indicate the bill has been amended to delete these provisions.
- 8 The bill number and primary author are repeated here as well as the **bill subject**.
- 9 The summary first describes current law.
- 10 The summary then explains how the law would be different if this bill passed.
- 11 Bills which specifically appropriate funds or contain an urgency clause require a **2/3 vote**. Others require a simple majority. This bill does not allocate any funds (no **appropriation**) but may require additional state expenditures and therefore will be referred to **fiscal committees**. It does not place a **mandate on local government** to establish a program, which would be declared here.
- 12 Beginning of actual **bill text**. Each bill **SECTION** makes changes to or adds a different section of law. In a bill that has not been amended, **italics** indicate proposed additions and **lined-out words** indicate proposed deletions to existing law. In amended bills, they indicate changes to the previous version of the bill.

1 AMENDED IN ASSEMBLY MAY 23, 2014
AMENDED IN ASSEMBLY MARCH 17, 2014

2 **ASSEMBLY BILL**

3 **No. 1454**

4 **Introduced by Assembly Member Ian Calderon**
(Principal coauthor: Assembly Member Rodriguez)
(Coauthors: Assembly Members Ammiano, Atkins, Bocanegra, Brown, Buchanan, Dababneh, Dickinson, Lowenthal, Maisenschein, Rendon, Salas, Stone, Ting, Waldron, Weber, and Wiecewski)
(Coauthors: Senators Cannella and Gaines)

5 January 9, 2014

6 An act to amend Sections 1534, 1569.20, 1569.33, 1597.09, and 1597.55a of the Health and Safety Code, relating to care facilities.

7 **LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST**

8 AB 1454, as amended, Ian Calderon. Care facilities: regulatory visits.

9 Under existing law, the State Department of Social Services regulates the licensure and operation of community care facilities, residential care facilities for the elderly, child day care centers, and family day care homes. Existing law requires that these facilities be subject to unannounced visits by the department that occur at least once every 5 years. Existing law requires the department to conduct an annual unannounced visit under specified circumstances, including when a license is on probation, and to conduct annual unannounced visits to no less than 20% of the facilities not subject to an evaluation under those specified circumstances.

10 This bill would instead make every facility of the types described above subject to an annual unannounced visit by the *department on and after July 1, 2017*. ~~The bill would require the department to conduct more frequent unannounced visits under specified circumstances. The bill would delete revise the provisions requiring the department to conduct annual unannounced visits to no less than 20% of the facilities and by instead requiring the department to conduct annual unannounced visits to no less than 30% of facilities on or before July 1, 2015, and no less than 20% of those facilities on or before July 1, 2106. The bill would also delete the provisions requiring an unannounced visit at least once every 5 years.~~

Existing law requires the department to immediately request a fire clearance and notify an applicant to arrange a time for the department to conduct a precicensure survey if an application for initial licensure is complete.

This bill would provide that the precicensure survey is optional at the discretion of the department if the department determines that an application is for licensure of a currently licensed facility, ~~as specified, for which there will be no material change to the management or operations of the facility.~~

11 Vote: majority. Appropriation: no. Fiscal committee: yes. State-mandated local program: no.

The people of the State of California do enact as follows:

- 12 1 **SECTION 1.** *Section 1534 of the Health and Safety Code is amended to read:*
2 1534. (a) (1) Every licensed community care facility shall be subject to un-
3 nounced visits by the department. The department shall visit these facilities as
4 often as necessary to ensure the quality of care provided.
5 (A) The department shall conduct an annual unannounced visit to a facility

Bills may be obtained from the Legislative Bill Room, State Capitol, Sacramento, CA 95814 (916) 445-2323. If you want the original and all amendments of the bill, ask for "all amended versions" when ordering. Otherwise, you will receive only the most recent version of the bill. Bills are also available on the web at <www.leginfo.ca.gov/bilinfo.html>.

Legislative and Budget Calendar

2015

2014

Dec 1 Legislature convenes the 2015-16 Biennial Session with an organizational session. New members welcomed, rules adopted, and legislative and committee structure set. Legislature recesses upon adjournment.

2015

Jan 1 Bills without Urgency Clauses passed in 2014 take effect.

Jan 5 Legislature reconvenes.

Jan 10 Governor's Proposed State Budget for 2015-16 must be submitted to the Legislature.

Jan 30 Last day to submit 2014 legislative bill requests to Legislative Counsel.

Feb 27 Last day to introduce new bills in 2014.

Mar 26 Spring Legislative Recess begins upon adjournment.

Apr 6 Legislature reconvenes

May 1 Last day for policy committees to hear and pass bills introduced in their own House for referral to fiscal committees.

May 15 Last day for policy committees to hear and pass non-fiscal bills introduced in their own House to the Floor.

May 22 Last day for policy committees to meet prior to June 8.

May 29 Last day for fiscal committees to hear and pass bills introduced in their own House to the Floor.

May 29 Last day for fiscal committees to meet prior to June 8.

June 5 Last day for the Floor of each House to pass bills introduced in that House.

June 8 Committee meetings may resume.

June 15 Legislature is required by the State Constitution to pass the budget bill by midnight.

July 1 Beginning of the 2014-15 state fiscal year. If the Governor has not yet signed the budget, the state does not have spending authority.

July 17 Last day for policy committees to meet and pass bills introduced in the other House.

July 17 Summer Legislative Recess upon adjournment, provided the Budget Bill has been enacted.

Aug 17 Legislature reconvenes.

Aug 28 Last day for fiscal committees to meet and pass bills introduced in the other House to the Floor.

Aug 28 Last day for all bills, including Constitutional Amendments and Urgency Measures, to be heard by any committee except for conference committees.

Sept 11 Last day the Floor of either House may pass bills.

Sept 11 Last day of the 2015 Legislative Session. Interim Legislative Recess begins upon adjournment.

Oct 11 Governor must sign or veto all bills passed by the Legislature by midnight or they go into effect without his signature.

2016

Jan 1 Bills without Urgency Clauses passed in 2015 take effect.

Jan 4 Legislature reconvenes.

fer to provide the needed information after the hearing.

- Note how each committee member votes. You will want this information when the bill gets to the floor. The *Daily Journal* [see insert] provides a history of all the previous day's actions, including committee and floor votes.

Fiscal Committee



After passage by a policy committee, any bill that impacts state or local funding is sent to the **fiscal committee**. All other bills are sent directly to the floor. The fiscal committees are the Senate and Assembly Appropriations Committees. The fiscal committees often refer bills that are expected to cost more than a specified amount (\$150,000 in 2013) to a *suspense file*. After state budget negotiations are finalized, the Appropriations Committees prioritize these bills. Only the top priority bills are passed on to the floor (usually those for which funding has been provided in the budget). A majority vote is needed to pass bills out of a fiscal committee. Budget Committees hear the budget bill in a separate process (See our publication *The California State Budget Process*).

Before the hearing

Both the Department of Finance and the Legislative Analyst's Office will present testimony on the fiscal implications of the bill at the hearing. The Department of Finance is the fiscal advisor to the Governor and the Legislative Analyst is the fiscal advisor to the Legislature. Their recommendations are critical to the fate of a bill.

Action

- Contact the Department of Finance and the Legislative Analyst's Office and offer to provide them information for their analysis. Be sure to find out what their positions are before the hearing and be prepared to address any concerns during your testimony.
- Follow the same steps you did before the policy committee hearing. Ascertain each committee member's likely position on the bill. Request supporters in member's districts to send letters. Make appointments with members whose support is uncertain. Obtain a copy of the fiscal committee analysis from the committee office or the Internet.

At the hearing

The author will present the bill and the committee chair will ask the Department of Finance and the Legislative Analyst for their recommendations. You may or may not be requested to testify. The committee will primarily consider the fiscal consequences and **not** the policy issues.

Action

- Be prepared to answer the following questions: Has the program demonstrated success that justifies the allocation? Is the program cost-effective? Does the need merit the expenditure? What are the proposed funding sources — state, federal, special funds, increased taxes, or some combination?
- Note how each member votes.

Floor



If the bill passes the fiscal committee, it moves to the **floor** for a vote by the all the members of the house. There are 40 members in the Senate and 80 in the Assembly. When the bill is taken up for consideration on the floor, other legislators may ask questions, propose amendments and debate the bill. The public is not allowed to testify.

Before the vote

At this point, the author becomes crucial to the bill's success. You can help by coordinating and lining up votes. A passing floor vote is the reward for a coordinated, sustained effort from all involved.

Action

- Seek support from the leadership. The leader of the Senate is the President *pro Tem* and the leader of the Assembly is the Speaker. There are also minority leaders of both houses.
- Contact the Republican and Democratic caucuses and offer to provide information to the consultant on your bill for their analysis. Find out what their positions are and make sure to address any concerns in communications with legislators. Party members will use the caucus analysis of the bill, including a recommended vote, when the bill is heard on the floor.
- Request supporters across the state to contact their legislator by phone, fax, email or letter (if there is time). Focus on those legislators who are unsure of their position. Refer to your voting records

from the policy and fiscal committees. Any split or coalition votes in committee will probably be repeated on a larger scale on the floor, depending on how the bill has been amended.

The floor vote

The floor vote is taken by a voice vote in the Senate and by pressing an electronic button in the Assembly. Most bills require a simple majority vote. However, funding measures (except for public schools and the state budget), urgency bills, and constitutional amendments must be passed by a two-thirds vote (27 out of 40 in the Senate and 54 out of 80 in the Assembly). If the bill does not receive the required number of votes, it is placed "on call." The author of the bill has until the end of the day's floor session to round up the needed votes. Otherwise, the bill fails.

A member can ask that a bill failing to pass be granted "reconsideration" (which is almost always granted). This allows time for the author and you to consider amendments to the bill that might get more legislators to vote for it or to lobby additional legislators to support the bill as it is.

Action

- Check with the author to find out what day he or she plans to bring up the bill on the floor. The bill will be called by its item number in the *Daily File*.
- When you enter the gallery, pick up a voting card to tally the ayes and noes. If the bill is placed "on call," check with the author to see how you can be of assistance. Identify legislators that might be persuaded to vote for the bill and contact supporters in these members' districts. Ask them to place an immediate call or fax an urgent message to their legislator's Capitol office.

Other House



If the bill passes the floor vote, it is sent to the **other house**. Bills introduced and passed in the Senate go to the Assembly, and *vice versa*. The same steps — policy committee to fiscal committee to floor — are repeated. The author must choose a colleague to sponsor the bill on the floor of the other house.

Action

- Work with the author to develop an appropriate plan of action in the other house. Although advocacy efforts will still be needed, the strategy may be different.
- Consider which legislator you would like to see sponsor the bill on the floor of the other house and work with the author on this choice.

Concurrence



If the bill passes the second house without amendments, it is sent to the Governor for approval. If there were any amendments, it must return to the house of origin for **concurrence**. Generally, if the amendments were not significant or if the bill received wide support during the first floor vote, the vote on concurrence can be a formality. Otherwise, consolidating support for the bill can be very important to its passage.

Action

- Identify any legislators that were swing votes the first time around. Make sure that supporters in their district contact them to ensure their continued support.
- Try to meet with legislators that changed their vote between the committee and the floor to see if you can provide them additional information that would enable them to support your bill this time around.
- Ask the author's office if there are any other legislators that might support the bill if there were sufficient support from their district or if they had additional information.

Conference Committee



If the house of origin does not concur in the new amendments, a **conference committee** is appointed to reconcile the controversial provisions of the bill. The author of the bill usually chairs the conference committee, which consists of three members of each house. Two members from each house must approve a compromise version. The *conference report* is then sent back to the floor of both houses for a final vote. The conference report cannot be amended on the floor.

If either house refuses to adopt the compromise, a new conference committee is appointed. A passing floor vote in each house sends the bill to the Governor.

Action

- Prepare testimony, if requested by the chair.
- Visit each committee member.
- Decide what is crucial and think creatively. At this point, compromise is the only way the bill can survive. Try to preserve the original intent of the bill while being willing to address the problem in a different way.

Governor



Once both houses pass the bill, it is sent to the **Governor**. The Governor has twelve days to sign or veto the bill during the regular session and 30 days if the Governor receives the bill after the Legislature adjourns in late August or early September. If the Governor does not act on the bill within the required time, it becomes law without his or her signature. If the Governor vetoes the bill, a two-thirds vote of both houses can override it. This is seldom done. Legislation containing an *urgency clause* takes effect immediately. Other legislation takes effect on January 1 of the following year, unless it contains provisions that specify a later date.

Action

- Don't wait for the bill to reach the Governor's desk before starting your campaign for her or his signature. Begin working with the Governor's legislative staff as the bill moves closer to passage. The author of the bill can tell you the appropriate contact in the Governor's Office. Offer to provide background information for their file on the bill. The Governor will refer to this file when it comes time to sign or veto the bill.
- Find out if there are other key people in the Governor's administration, such as analysts for the Department of Finance. Make an appointment to discuss the bill.
- It is customary for the author to write a letter to the Governor requesting his or her signature. Work with the author on this letter.
- Write your own letter to the Governor.
- Use your contacts throughout the state

to coordinate a letter writing campaign. Request letters from key associations and leaders in the community. Phone calls are effective only in mass. They are tallied by the Governor's Office to measure the volume of support or opposition. Sometimes they are the only option, if time is short.

If Your Bill Doesn't Pass



A bill can fail passage in a committee, on the floor, or be vetoed by the Governor. More often, a bill that doesn't have enough support doesn't come up for a vote. If a bill fails to make a deadline for passage out of a committee or off the floor, it dies for that year. If it is the first year of a two-year session, the bill becomes a two-year bill and may be taken up again during the second year.

Action

- Decide why your bill didn't pass. (Not enough support, the purpose of the bill wasn't clear, too costly, too much or influential opposition?)
- Meet with any opposition to clarify why they oppose your bill and explain the purpose of your bill. Ask them to suggest improvements to the bill.
- Consider changing the bill to appeal to a greater constituency, either by expanding or narrowing the focus of the bill.
- Build support during the legislative recess. Meet with legislators or invite them to experience the problem firsthand. Reach out to other potential supporters.
- If necessary, reintroduce the bill or introduce a new bill. Unless vetoed, legislative rules prohibit the introduction of the same bill twice in a two-year session. You may need to make sufficient changes to the bill to justify introducing it again.

Thank you



Whenever the Governor signs a bill or legislators work to get a bill passed, they deserve a "thank you." Always thank the author and the consultant, regardless of the outcome of the bill. A simple note expressing your appreciation is appropriate.