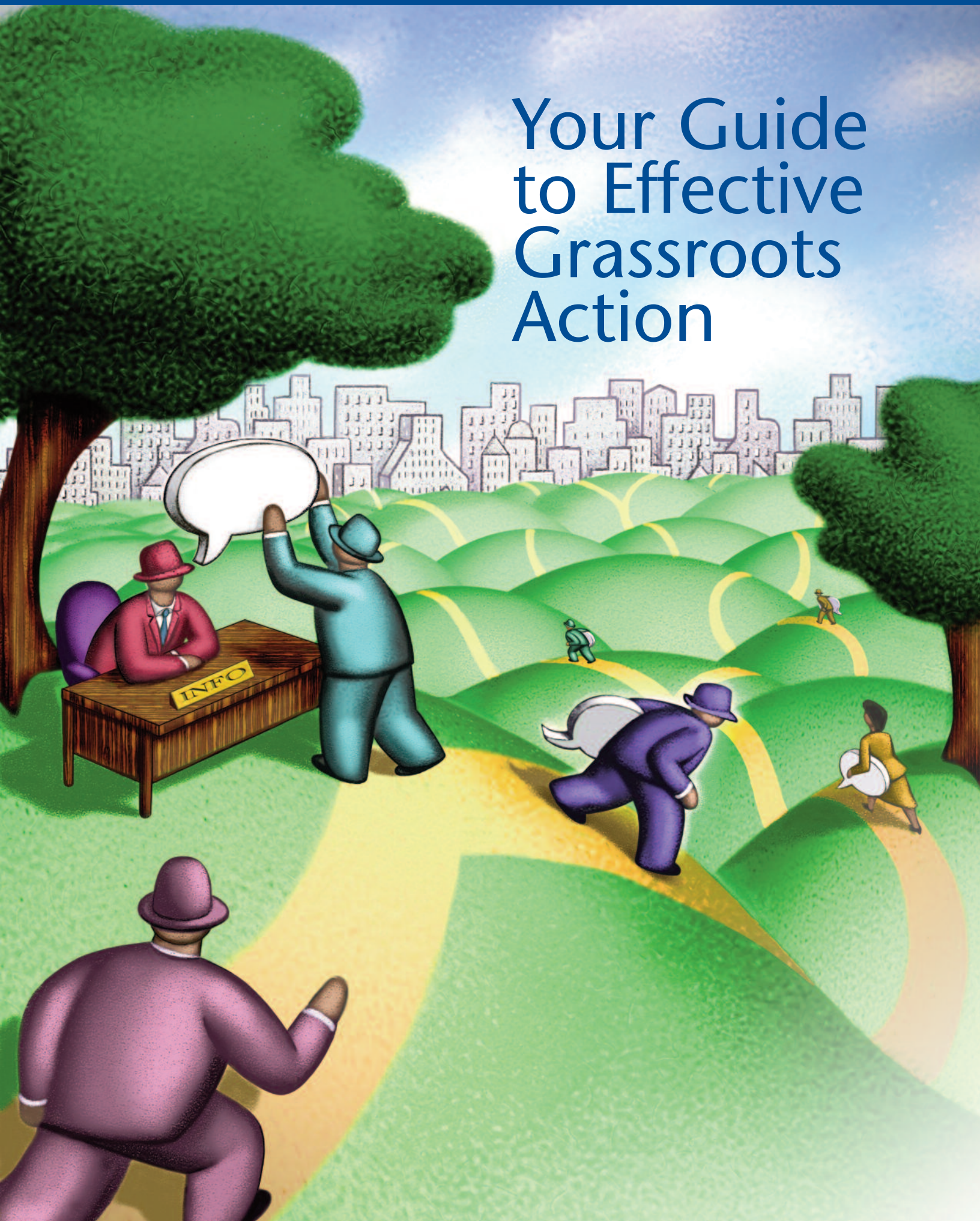


# Your Guide to Effective Grassroots Action







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# Why Lobby?

Government can be a huge cost of doing business when you consider what you pay in local, state and federal taxes, state workers compensation insurance, and complying with state and federal regulations. Participating in the lawmaking process at the local level (or grassroots lobbying) means that you have the opportunity to reduce these expenses, create a favorable business environment, minimize unfavorable legislation, and establish contacts within government before a crisis arises.

Grassroots lobbying is not difficult to do. We all already lobby — or persuade others to our point of view — in family settings with spouses and children, in discussing campaign issues or when we ask for a raise. Our role as a grassroots lobbyist is the same though somewhat more formal.

**“All politics  
is local”**

*Tip O’Neil, former  
House Speaker*

## How Do You Start?

There are several ways to take the first step and become politically involved in the natural products industry. Don't ignore opportunities to visit with your lawmaker at home. Arrange for them to visit your business while they are in town, or invite them to speak at a local industry event. Begin educating your lawmaker about issues by arranging for a town meeting of your customers and other business people to discuss topics important to your success as a businessperson. Offer to become an informational source for your legislator on industry issues. Finally, remember to give a little back by contributing time or financially to your legislator's campaign.

### What lobbying can do for you:

- Create or maintain a favorable business environment
- Enhance a legislator’s opinion of your industry
- Minimize unfavorable legislation
- Establish contacts within government before a crisis arises
- Become involved and build relationships

# Rules of the Game



Communicating with lawmakers requires an understanding of how business gets conducted. If the objective is to get your point across then it is important to understand these rules of the game:

- Time is precious. Letters, phone calls, and office visits to your lawmaker should be concise and to the point.
- A lawmaker's staff is very important since they are often the ones who prepare the issue summary and vote recommendation. Don't be offended if you are scheduled to meet with a staff member instead of your legislator.
- Take advantage of the strength of numbers. Many issues are decided on the volume of individualized communications a lawmaker received on a topic.
- The more responsibility and involvement you assume, the more vigorous the commitment and support you can expect from your lawmaker.
- Always follow-up with letters, calls, and any information you promised to provide. This demonstrates a commitment to your cause.
- Understand the issue or principle you are fighting for so you can explain it in simple and straightforward terms.
- Learn as much as you can in advance about the legislators that you are trying to influence. To be most effective, tailor your approach to what you know about these people.
- Use any opportunity to provide your lawmaker with a position paper.
- Be patient since the process is designed to move slowly sometimes.
- Do be a good winner and a good loser since your adversary on one issue might be your ally on the next.
- Acknowledge the rough spots of your position early and work on them with your lawmaker instead of just "glossing over" the tough questions.
- Understand that compromise is part of the legislative process.
- Use the news media (letters to the editor, guest editorials, news stories, etc.) to help create public support for your positions. Send copies of positive coverage to your legislators.
- Always write a thank you note to the lawmaker.
- Be sure the information you provide is accurate so you establish and maintain credibility. Never lie since anything less than full honesty will erode your lawmaker's faith in you.
- Stay professional and avoid partisan positions or comments.

Communicating with State and Federal Legislatures takes an understanding of how the game works...



# Meeting With Your Lawmaker

When you initially contact your lawmakers to propose a meeting introduce yourself and make it clear that you are a constituent. Tell them precisely who you are, what the purpose is, and mention others who will attend the meeting.

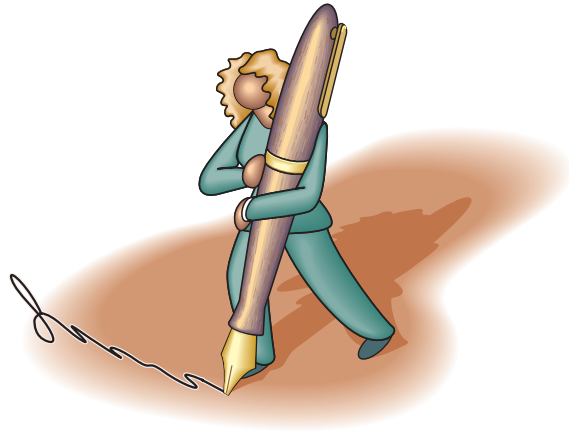
Be courteous and relaxed. While we should show respect for our governmental officials, we do not need to be intimidated by them. They are neighbors, friends, parents and real people with real concerns and problems similar to your own. They are genuinely interested in how their constituents feel and are eager to learn relevant facts.

You probably know more about the natural products industry than your legislator

## Tips For Face-to-Face Meetings:

- While you should have only one primary spokesperson, it's always a good idea to take someone with you if you are discussing an issue that affects the industry. It demonstrates broader support and also provides you with a witness as to what the legislator says.
- If you are there to discuss an issue then know it thoroughly. Also know what your opponent's position and arguments. Explain why the issue is important to you or your industry. Convey personal experiences as to how this issue has affected you.
- If you don't know the answer to a question, don't bluff. Just offer to supply them with an answer at a later date and then promptly do it.
- Ask lawmakers to state their position. If it differs with yours, ask what information or show of public support is necessary to change that position. If they've not decided, ask what information and public support you can supply to help with the decision making. Listen carefully to their answers.
- Ask the legislators if they will let you know when something comes up which involves your business. Offer to be a resource and provide them with a business card.
- Always have "position papers" or "leave behinds" which clearly state your positions and logic.
- Write a follow-up letter. Thank them for meeting with you and, if appropriate, for their support. If they are opposed, ask them to rethink their position. Respond to any unanswered questions.

# The Written Letter



Letters do make a difference! Legislators read and in most situations respond to the letters they receive. They gauge their response to issues from the position of their constituents.

Remember the basics: personal, concise and correct. Use your own personal stationery or office letterhead. Identify the bill number and the name of the bill early in the letter you are writing. Avoid exceeding the one page/subject per letter limit. Additional material can be provided in attachments to your letter.

State your reasons for writing and explain who you are. Personalize the letter by providing examples of how the subject you are writing about impacts you personally or in your business. If possible, offer solutions and don't take it for granted that the legislator understands the subject matter. Remember you are the expert.

In your letter, ask the lawmakers to state their position and don't be surprised if they give you the run around. If they do, write again or telephone and ask for an appointment. Stress the importance of this issue to you. If their answer is an emphatic "no," don't threaten or "burn a bridge" — they may be with you on future issues. If their answer is "yes," a follow-up letter with a thank you is appropriate.

Don't forget to report the good news too. Tell your legislator about exciting nutritional breakthroughs, for example. If there is an excellent article on a critical issue send a copy to your legislator or their legislative assistant who handles health affairs. Become a "pen pal" — a source of information that your elected officials and their staff can depend on.

If the Natural Products Association is involved in the issue, send a copy of your correspondence to the association office

## Federal Correspondence

### To a Senator:

The Honorable (full name)  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator \_\_\_(last name)\_\_\_:

### To a Representative:

The Honorable (full name)  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative \_\_\_(last name)\_\_\_:



# Communicating by Telephone

The main challenge is to get through to the legislator, especially during the legislative session. It's virtually impossible to reach Congressmen or U.S. Senators so be prepared to talk with staff. However, most state legislators will take your calls. If you do end up talking with a staff member this is not a slight; staff is very important.

- Identify yourself and reason for calling
- State that you are constituent if this is so.
- Mention the bill number, name of the bill, issue, why it is important to you, how it will impact you and your business, and what you are requesting.
- Be prepared. Make notes and organize your comments in advance.
- Thoroughly understand the issue and your position as well as your opponent's.
- Preparation and organization is especially important when making a telephone call because you are interacting with the staff or lawmaker and they may ask some unanticipated or "off the wall" questions.
- If you don't have an answer don't bluff or lie, but say you will get back to them with that answer and be sure to do so promptly. This also gives you another chance for a conversation.
- Be prepared to offer specific solutions if you are opposed to a bill.
- Ask where your lawmaker stands on the issue.
- If the lawmaker opposes your position then try to turn them around, but if they already support your position then thank them and close the call.
- They may want to dodge a commitment. If so, be polite but firm, ask again, or say you will check back soon. Don't forget to follow up.
- Don't make threats of retaliation. You'll need their vote on a subsequent bill.
- Regardless of their position, a follow-up letter and thank you is essential.

Your lawmaker's name and phone number can be found in the Natural Products Association's online Advocacy Action Center at [www.NaturalProductsAssoc.org](http://www.NaturalProductsAssoc.org)

## Federal Telephone Numbers

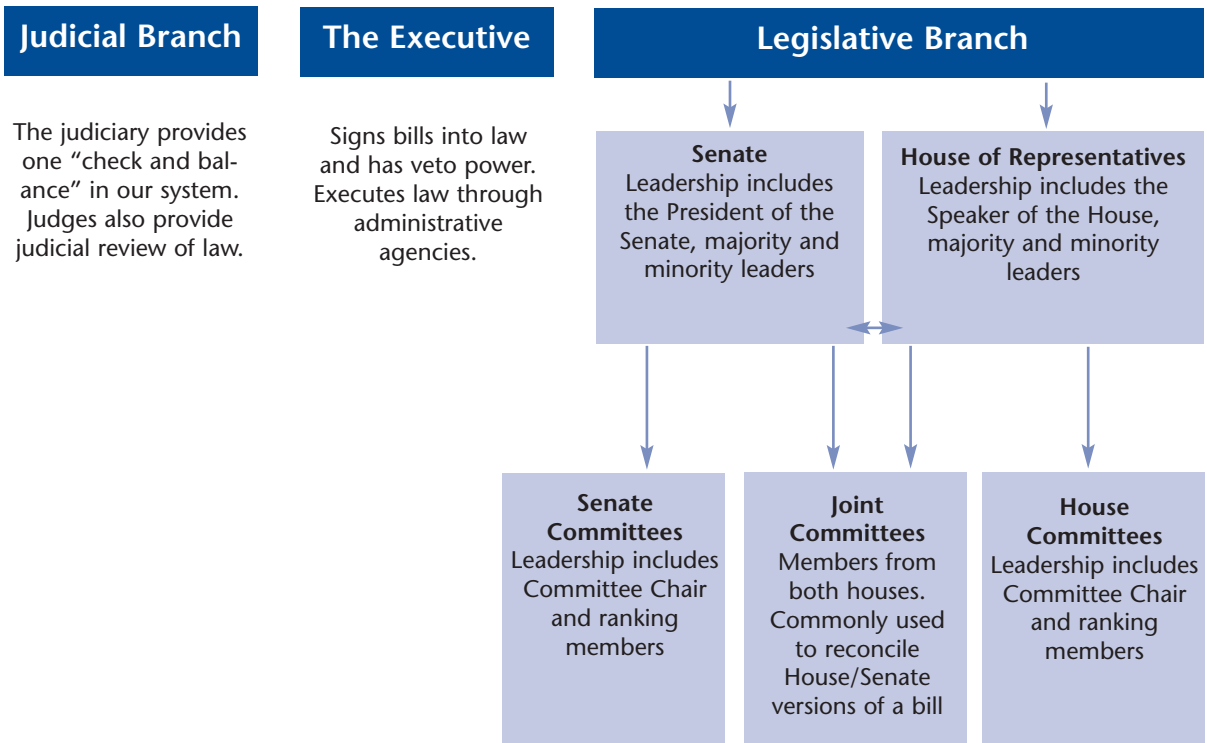
U.S. Capitol Switchboard	(202) 224-3121
Senate and House Bill Status	(202) 225-1772
Congressional Record	(202) 512-1808
Federal Register	(202) 523-5240



# The Three Branches of Government



Both Federal and State Government usually follow the same basic structure. In fact, Congress and all state legislatures are bicameral with just one exception. Nebraska has a unicameral legislature or just one house — the Senate. With that in mind, here is a general overview of the structure and functioning of Congress and most state legislatures.





# “Just a Bill on Capitol Hill”

Ideas for laws can come from citizens, interest groups, public officials or the Governor

## The Introduction of a Bill

Only a Senator or Representative may propose or “sponsor” a new law. Ideas for laws can come from citizens, interest groups, public officials or the Governor. The idea is next drafted as a bill. If you are aware of this process then this is an ideal opportunity to lobby for your ideas to be incorporated into a bill. The bill is “introduced” when it is filed with the clerk in either the House or Senate. The bill has its “first reading” when the clerk of the “house of origin” reads aloud the bill’s number, sponsor and title on the floor during a legislative session.

## Committee

The bill is then sent to committee, which studies it and makes any changes or “amendments.” Committees almost always have “open meetings” where the public may comment about the bill. This is also another ideal opportunity for you to lobby for your position on a bill. If the bill is “reported unfavorably” out of committee it is considered dead. The bill may also be reported “favorably” or “as amended” and sent to back to the floor.

## To the Floor

If the committee approves the bill, its title and number are read again in the chamber where it was introduced. This is known as the “second reading.” The measure is then scheduled for the “third reading” on the floor, where it is debated and voted on. After a bill is sent to the floor, it may receive immediate consideration or it may sit on the Legislative Calendar for a lengthy period. This is another opportunity to contact your elected officials, to either urge their support or request their opposition to the legislation.

Because of their strict governing rules at the federal level, it is very difficult to amend a bill on the House floor. The House usually considers a typical bill anywhere from several hours to two or three days for a major bill.

Any Senator may offer an amendment on the Senate floor at the federal level, and this often results in a much slower and deliberative legislative process than that of the House of Representatives. It is not unusual for a major bill in the Senate to contain more than one hundred amendments and take up to a week to debate.

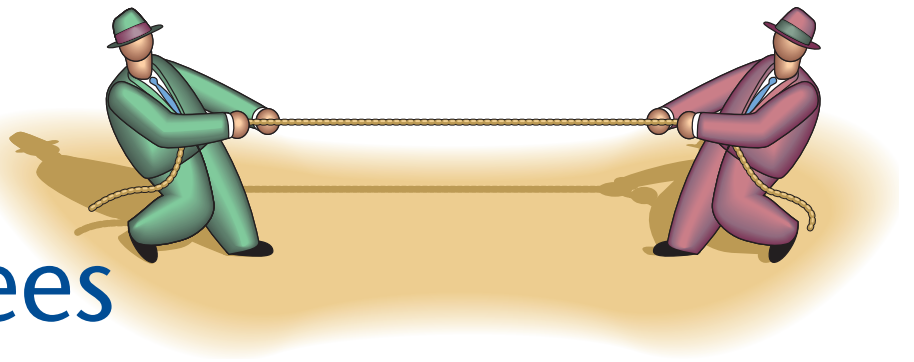
## Two Houses Working Together

In some cases, legislation may be considered simultaneously by the House and Senate. Or in other instances, one chamber acts first and then the bill is referred to the other body or it “crosses over.” Usually there are differences in the House and Senate versions of a bill. In fact, some states require it. If so, Committee members from both Houses meet in a Conference Committee to reach a compromise on the legislation. Both Houses then vote on the agreed upon bill, which is then sent to the President or Governor for their signature.

## To the President/Governor for Signature

The bill becomes law when signed by the President or Governor. The executive officer may also “veto” a bill by refusing to sign it and returning it to the legislature. In some cases, the Legislature can “override” the veto, and the measure becomes law without the signature.

# The Importance of Committees



You will recall that after a bill is introduced it is referred to one or more committees. This is where the vast majority of work is done on a bill and this process is one of the most important in the legislative process. While a bill may be debated for a significant period of time on the floor, it rarely undergoes major change from its committee form. Because so much work is done in committee it is an ideal time for groups to lobby for their position.

Members of a committee, and their staffs, particularly at a federal level, are often the experts on a given issue. A legislator, who is a member of the committee hearing the bill you are interested in, has a much greater opportunity to influence the outcome of that bill. Thus, an understanding of the committee process and relationships with committee members and staff should be top lobbying priorities.

## Committee Staff is Important

Committee staff is a key resource. At the federal level, committee staff members are frequently experts in their field, and often have more congressional experience than that of Members of Congress. Staff duties at a federal level include drafting the legislation, advising and counseling committee members, writing the committee report on the legislation, and other important functions.

## Hearings

Subcommittees and committees will schedule hearings on selected bills. This is your chance to testify, or provide written testimony, in support or opposition to the proposed legislation. It is also a chance to provide input for committee or subcommittee allies.

## Mark-up

After a hearing, the committee makes changes to the legislation as it was introduced. The committee then votes on the bill and orders it to be reported to the floor.

## Committee Reports

Before the bill is sent to the floor, the committee staff usually writes a committee report to accompany the bill. This is a crucial document. It includes instructions on how Congress believes the funds should be spent under a program. It does not have the binding, legal effect of statute, but it carries very significant weight with the Federal Agency responsible for the law's implementation and with the courts if the law is ever challenged.

## But First — An Important Visit to the Congressional Rules Committee

Generally, before a bill is considered on the House or Senate it must be assigned a "rule" by the Rules Committee. This rule will govern how the bill is debated on the floor. An understanding of the Rules Committee and the ability to get a favorable, or unfavorable, rule attached to a bill can mean life or death for many bills.

A committee report includes instructions on how Congress believes the funds should be spent under a program — it carries very significant weight with the Federal Agency responsible for the law's implementation



# The Regulatory Process

Influencing the making of the law is only part of the process. After a legislative body enacts legislation, departments and agencies of the executive branch must implement it. The law provides only the outline of a program, and it is the responsibility of the executive branch, through the regulatory process, to translate the law into procedure. A crucial part of the process for a grassroots organization is to encourage the proper implementation of law.

A crucial part of the process for a grassroots organization is to encourage the proper implementation of the law

There are two stages of regulatory action: rule making and compliance. In the rule-making stage, the agency develops rules or regulations over a particular problem area. This is the legislative process. The problem is identified and a possible solution conceived, formulated and publicly proposed. After the comment period, the proposal is usually modified before the final adoption is made. The final action is often appealed to the courts. This is where grassroots lobbying and political action may or may not be effective; some state and local regulatory officials are elected, but others are appointed, sometime for fixed terms to insulate them from political pressures.

Connected advocates are much more likely to play an informal role in the regulatory compliance stage because no department or agency ever has enough funds, staff, or other resources to saturate the field that it is regulating. Advocates who are acquainted within the agency may be told that certain actions by the advocate's client, company, or members could well result in enforcement proceeding if it is not changed. The entire matter is typically worked out. This process is necessary to ensure that regulatory objectives are met with minimum social, political and economic strain.

An effective way for an individual to participate in the regulatory process is to write letters and attend committee hearings. Writing letters is a way for you to express your position on an issue and the effects it will have on you or your industry. Committee hearings allow you to testify in front of the committee to express your knowledge and position on an issue. Both letters and testimony can have a tremendous effect on a regulatory outcome.

# Glossary of Terms



**Abbreviations:** The following abbreviations are commonly used:

AB	Assembly Bill	ACA	Assembly Constitutional Amendment
ACR	Assembly Concurrent Resolution	AJR	Assembly Joint Resolution
HB	House Bill	HR	House Resolution
SB	Senate Bill	SCA	Senate Constitutional Amendment
SCR	Senate Concurrent Resolution	SJR	Senate Joint Resolution
SR	Senate Resolution		

**Act:** A bill passed by a legislative body and signed by the Executive.

**Adjournment:** To terminate a session of a legislative body.

**Amendment:** An action of a legislative body to delete, alter, or revise the language of a bill or an act. Bills in Congress may be amended by either House at any one of a number of stages in the legislative process.

**Appropriation:** A legislative grant of money for a specific purpose.

**Assembly:** The lower House of some legislatures.

**Authorization:** A legislative action that establishes a substantive program, specifies its general purpose and the means for achieving it, and indicates the approximate amount of money needed to implement the program. In Congress, an authorization bill is ordinarily enacted before the appropriation bill providing financing for the program is considered.

**Bill:** A proposed law. Most legislative proposals before a legislative body are in the form of bills. Bill drafting is the process of formulating legislative proposals.

**Calendar:** An agenda or list that contains the names of bills or resolutions to be considered before committees or in either chamber of a legislature. The placement of a bill on a calendar is no guarantee that the bill will be consid-

ered by that chamber or that it will be taken up in the listed order.

**Caucus:** An informal meeting of a group of the members, sometimes called on the basis of party affiliation.

**Committee Chairperson:** The member of the majority party who heads a standing or select legislative committee.

**Committee of the Whole:** An informal procedure used by a legislative body to expedite business by resolving itself into a committee for the consideration of bills and other matters.

**Concurrent Resolution:** A special measure passed by one house with the other concurring, but not requiring the President/Governor's signature.

**Conference Committee:** A special joint committee appointed to reconcile differences when a bill passes the two Houses in different forms.

**Consent Calendar:** File of noncontroversial bills which it is unanimously agreed should be passed.

**District:** A political-geographical division of a state from which a legislator is elected.

**Engrossment:** Comparison of the printed bill to assure its likeness to the original and that amendments are properly inserted. The official proofreading which follows 2nd reading and/or the adoption of the amendments.



**Enrollment:** The filing of resolutions with the Secretary of State, and of bills with the Governor, following the final proofreading by the House of origin.

**Floor:** A colloquialism describing the interior of either House.

**Held in Committee:** Bill fails to get sufficient votes to pass out of committee.

**Hearing:** A public session of a committee of a legislative body to obtain information on a proposed law or resolution.

**Hopper:** To toss a bill in the hopper is to present it for formal introduction and first reading.

**Interim:** The interval between regular sessions, or a long recess within a session.

**Interim Study:** A bill referred for interim study is dead for the session. The subject matter of the bill is assigned by the Rules Committee to an appropriate committee for study during the period the Legislature is not in session (the interim).

**Joint Committee:** A legislative committee composed of members of both Houses.

**Joint Resolution:** A measure, similar to a bill, that must be approved in both Houses and by the President or Governor.

**Majority Floor Leader:** The chief spokesperson and strategist of the majority party, who directs the party's forces in legislative battles.

**Motion:** A formal proposal offered by a member while the House is in session.

**Position Papers:** The written position of an organization or a person on a particular issue. Usually brief.

**Ranking Member:** That member of the majority party on a legislative committee who ranks first after the chairperson.

**Readings:** The three readings of a bill required at different stages of the legislative process. In

Congress, the first reading occurs when the bill is introduced and printed by title in the Congressional record. The second, often a reading in full, takes place when the bill is brought out of committee for consideration before the chamber. The third reading, usually by title only, comes after amendments have been voted on and the bill is up for a final vote. State legislative procedure is similar.

**Representative:** A member of the House of Representatives in Congress or of the lower House of a state legislature.

**Senate:** The upper house of the United States Congress and of forty-nine state legislatures.

**Senator:** A member of the United States Senate or of the upper house in state legislatures.

**Session:** The period during which a legislative body assembles and carries on its regular business.

**Speaker of the House:** The presiding officer in the House of Representatives and in the lower chamber of state legislatures.

**Veto:** Vote of an Executive in disapproval of a measure. May be overridden. A "pocket veto" occurs when a Governor fails to sign a bill after final adjournment and cannot be overridden.

**Whip:** An assistant floor leader who aids the majority or minority floor leader of each party in each House of Congress and state legislatures.







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