How to Advocate for Legislation

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Agenda

Legislative Process in CA
Analyzing Bills
Lobbying & Advocacy Tools
Points to take action
What can and can’t 501c3’s do?
Planning visits, roles, and strategizing
Role Play Workshop
Legislative Process

How an Idea Becomes a Law: The Legislative Process

1. Someone comes up with an idea for a law.
2. A legislator agrees to author the idea and take it through the official steps.
3. Lawyers who work for the legislature write the idea into legal language. It is now called a bill.
4. The bill is taken to the Assembly or the Senate. The title is read and the bill is given a number. Every bill number begins with AB or SB to show in which house it started.
5. The bill goes to a committee, which holds meetings that people can attend to tell how they feel about the bill.
6. People also tell the legislators what they think about bills by writing letters, sending email messages, or telephoning them.
7. If the committee recommends the bill be passed, it goes back to the full Assembly or Senate for debate and vote.
8. If a bill gets enough votes to pass in the house where it started, it goes to the other house and goes through steps 5-7 again.
9. If a bill does not get the number of votes it needs from each house, it dies. It can be started again from the beginning at another time.
10. Bills that have passed in both houses go to the Governor. The governor can sign the bill into law or veto it, which means to reject it, or . . .
11. . . . choose not to sign or to veto it. After 12 days the bill becomes law without the governor's signature.
12. Finally, the bill becomes a law for the State of California. Most laws take effect on the first day of the following year.
Budget Process

Why is the budget process important?

How is it different from the legislative process?
Analyzing a Bill

www.leginfo.legislation.ca.gov

- Where is the bill?
- What is its fiscal impact?
- Who is in support and who is opposing?
- Who has voted in support or against it?
Lobbying & Other Advocacy Tools

What is lobbying?

Knowing who’s who?

In person visits
- Sacramento
- In District

What are some other advocacy tools?
Points for Action

What are the most important points in the process to take action?
501(c)(3) Status

**Yes**
- Endorse or oppose legislation
- Lobby but with limits
- Endorse or oppose referenda or ballot initiatives
- GOTV
  - Host candidate forums as long as invite all candidates to participate and can’t mention your org’s views on issues

**No**
- Endorse candidates
- Best to not invite them to speak while they are running for election
Strategy for Lobby Visits

Do your homework!

What have they voted on in the past that is similar to this bill/issue?
  ◦ How did they vote?
  ◦ Have they voted on this specific bill already?
  ◦ What are their priority issues and interests?
Organizing Lobby Visits

Scheduling

Organizing your visit
- Roles for members/volunteers
- What do you need to prepare?
- Make sure everyone is on time
- Meeting with a staff person is okay
- Bring a folder with info to leave with them
What to cover...

Who are you? Why are you there? Who do you represent?

Discuss each bill/issue

◦ Why is this important?
◦ Add in a personal story
◦ Make a direct ask
◦ Thank you, take a photo, post on social media
◦ Take notes and follow up
Follow Up

Send a thank you including:
◦ A reminder of issues discussed
◦ A reminder of your ask to them
◦ Follow up materials if requested

Your notes
◦ Keep track of your visit
Role Plays