

# Getting involved in the Legislative Process

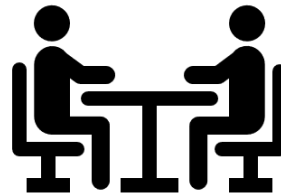
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# Overview of Presentation

- Why get involved?
- Overview of the Legislative Process
- Challenges
- Ways to Get Involved

# Why get involved?

- You can shape public policy.
- Your voice matters.
- Your legislators want to hear from you and help you.
- You can make a difference.



# Big Picture: You are critical!

- You are a stakeholder; your voice is important.
- Legislators want to help their constituents.
- You can and should influence policy decisions.

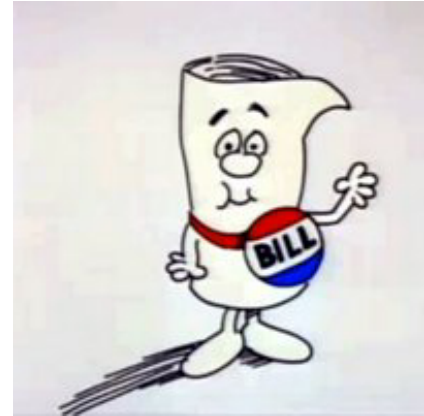


# Overview of Minnesota's Legislative Process

- Meets every year from Jan-May (odd years, budget) or Feb.-May (even years)
- Bicameral: House and Senate
  - 134 State Representatives, 67 Senators
- Minnesota is the only divided legislature in the country
  - House of Representatives – DFL
  - Senate – Republican

# How a Bill Becomes a Law

- Legislator agrees to author the bill.
- Two versions of the bill (identical) are introduced in the House and Senate.
- Legislators agree to co-author the bill to show their support
- The bill travels through each chamber independently.



# How a Bill Becomes a Law

## *Continued*

- Bill must be heard by committees in the House and Senate by a certain date.
- The committee will hold a public hearing and vote whether to move the bill forward. Bill will crossover to other chamber.
- Bill must pass both floors.
- Governor signs or vetoes the bill.

# Challenges and Obstacles

- Things do not always go as planned. Good policy is necessary but sometimes insufficient.
- With change, comes some resistance. Opposition is normal.
  - Government/ agency
  - Special interests
  - Sometimes legislators oppose the bill
- Some compromise may be needed





# Ways to Get Involved

- It's never been easier to get involved in the legislative process.
- Find out who represents you:
  - <https://www.gis.leg.mn/iMaps/districts/>
- Call and email your state senator or representative.
  - Be sure to say you are a constituent.
  - In e-mails, include your address in your signature.
  - Talk with their legislative assistants.
- Request a Zoom meeting or meet your legislator in your district.

# Other Ways to Support Legislation

- Committee meetings (at least 2, sometimes 4 or more)
  - Testify in support of the bill
  - Call/ email members of the committee before the meeting
- When bill moves to floor, call and email all members
- When bill moves to the Governor, call and email the Governor's policy staff
- Respond to calls to action

# What to Expect in a Meeting

- Know the bill numbers
  - HF XXXX/ SF XXXX
- If you are a constituent, be sure to let them know.
- Be prepared to explain what the bill does and how it will help you.
- Share your experience; speak from the heart.
- Ask the legislator to support the bill.
- Be brief.

# Be Persistent

- What's normal
  - Calling/ emailing legislator when action is needed or before important votes
  - Responding to calls to action from MFMA
- What's not
  - Calling/ emailing legislator every day or week

# More Ways to Get Involved

- Help find others to support the bill
  - Customers
  - Family, friends, neighbors
- Write op-eds and letters to the editor and submit them to your local paper
- Share information about the bill on social media

# Questions

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