

**+ Act Locally:
Legislative
Process and
Successful
Legislative
Meetings**



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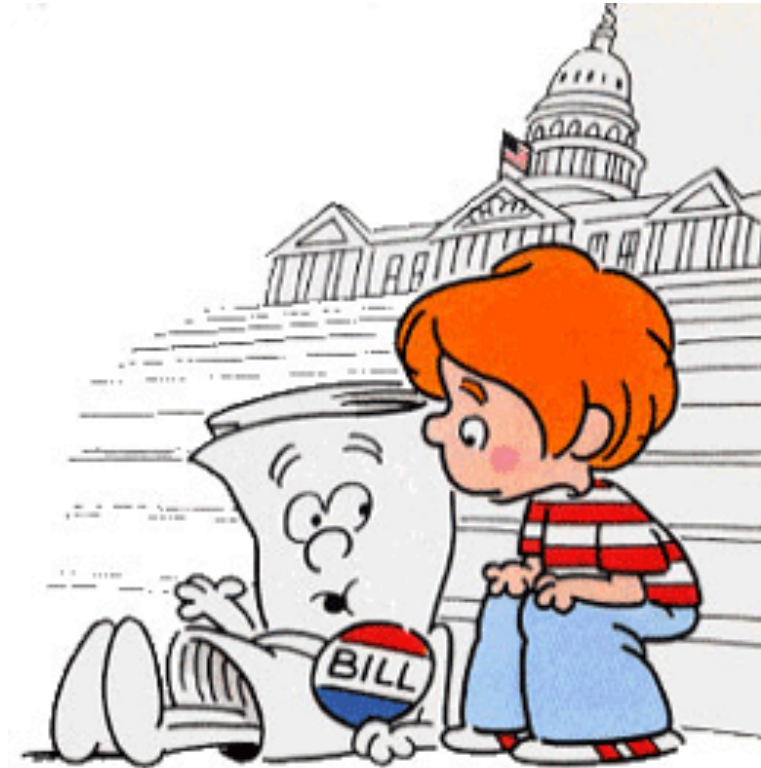
Housing and Health Care are Human Rights



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How a bill becomes a law: What more do we need to know?

- Leadership structure
- Committee structure
- Party politics
- Budget process



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HEALTH CARE
for the
HOMELESS
COUNCIL



Leadership Structure



- **House:** Speaker of the House and Majority have control of agenda
- **Senate:** Majority has control of agenda but minority has some power
 - 60 votes to move a bill
 - One Senator can prevent bills from moving forward

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Committees in Congress

- Chairman of committees wield much power
- Set agenda, allow bills to be heard
- Important to have a 'champion' on the committee



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Committees in Congress

House

- **Energy and Commerce:** Medicaid, Health Centers
- **Ways and Means:** Taxes, Medicare, Social Security
- **Financial Services:** Housing
- **Appropriations:**
 - Labor, Health and Human Services, Education
 - Transportation, Housing and Urban Development

Senate

- **Finance:** Medicaid, Medicare, Taxes, Social Security
- **Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions:** Health Centers
- **Banking, Housing & Urban Affairs:** Housing
- **Appropriations:**
 - Labor, Health and Human Services, Education
 - Transportation, Housing and Urban Development



Political Parties



- Party affiliation very important, especially at Federal Level
- Often need support from members of each party
- Party affiliation is not only thing that is important



Budget Process

- President's Budget submitted in February
- House and Senate develop own Budget Resolutions, try to pass them by April
- Budgets set spending targets and priorities, do not have force of law
- Appropriations Committees develop bills that allocate spending
- Federal Fiscal Year: Oct. 1-Sept. 30



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Why Do We Care?

- Congress shapes national priorities
- Congress appropriates all federal spending
- Sets parameters for programs even when they are administered at the state level
- Congress is directly accountable to the people, they work for YOU
- Engaged constituents can have a huge impact





...So What Can We Do?



- Many ways to communicate with legislators:
 - Letter or email
 - Phone call
 - Site visit
 - Face-to-face meeting





Scheduling a Meeting

- Need to schedule in advance
- Talk to member's scheduler
- Capitol Switchboard: 1 (877) 210-5351
- District or DC Office?
- Think about timing:
 - When will your legislator be back in the district?
 - When is your bill being voted on in committee or by the full Chamber?
 - When is there a hearing on your bill?

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Plan Ahead

- Meeting is generally fifteen minutes
- Think about who should attend, who should say what, and in what order
- Have a clear ‘ask’
- Bring printed materials to leave behind (including your ‘ask’)
- Consider likely counter-arguments to your position and prepare responses





The Meeting Itself



- Three parts:
 - Introduction of who you are and what you do
 - Presentation of issues
 - Make your ‘ask’
- Remember:
 - Be yourself and speak from your experience
 - Personal stories are very compelling
 - Consider your legislator’s background
 - Stay on track
 - Be polite but assertive



Family Health Center Visit with Jim McGovern



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Why Was It Successful?



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Small Group Exercise!



- Break into six groups
- Each group will be assigned a scenario on the handout
- Everyone will also get a legislative visit cheat sheet handout
- Follow instructions and have fun speaking truth to power!