

ADVOCACY 101

*When citizens advocate,
democracy wins.*



*Constituent-Based Communications
to Effect Change within
the Legislative Process*



LWW®

The logo features the letters 'LWW' in a bold, blue, sans-serif font. A red brushstroke underline is positioned below the letters, starting from the left and ending with a feathered tip on the right. A small copyright symbol (©) is located to the upper right of the 'W'.

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS *of* SOUTH CAROLINA

ADVOCACY 101

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BECOMING INFORMED

Website: <http://www.scstatehouse.gov/>

Legislative Printing, Information & Technology Systems

Phone: (803) 242.4420

The website www.scstatehouse.gov is an indispensable information source for our General Assembly. Most of the basic information about current legislative activity is there, including the current legal code, bills that have been filed, contact and office location information for legislators, and much more. For anyone without a computer, your local library will be happy to help you access all this information online.

Chamber video can be monitored through links at the upper left of the home page when the House or Senate is in session.

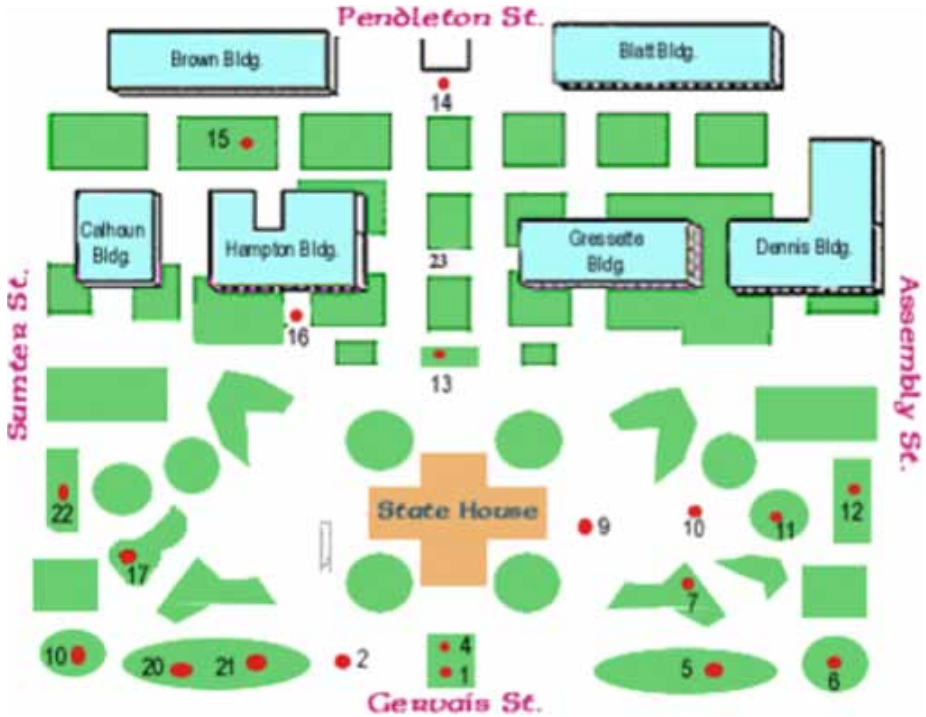
Both Senate and House have links on the homepage to calendars (bills scheduled for debate on the floor), Journals (record of earlier activities of the whole body), members and their biographies and contact information, committees and their members, and the text of bills and amendments.

The right-hand column of the homepage shows meetings (other than the body of the whole) scheduled and whether ETV plans to provide live video of the event. Meeting agendas are usually linked to these items.

The "Track Legislation" item on the left column of the homepage is essential, providing a tool to receive email notification of changes in bills or of committee schedules. You can also sign up to track meetings of specific committees through email. Twitter notices are also available now.

The Legislative Printing, Information & Technology Systems office, located on the third floor of the Blatt Building, provides printed information on bills, legislative calendars, and other materials pertaining to state government. You may purchase a Legislative Manual online, request a copy from your legislator, or view and print the complete information online.

THE STATE HOUSE COMPLEX IN COLUMBIA



- | | |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1. Confederate Monument | 13. Gen. Richardson Monument |
| 2. Spanish-American War Monument | 14. Confederate Women Monument |
| 3. B. Tillman Monument | 15. Liberty Bell |
| 4. Statue of George Washington | 16. Gen. W. Hampton Monument |
| 5. R.E. Lee Hwy. Marker | 17. Cork Oak Tree |
| 6. J.M. Sims Monument | 18. Revolutionary General's Monument |
| 7. Old State House Monument | 19. J.F. Byrnes Monument |
| 8. Washington Elm | 20. Jefferson Davis Hwy. Marker |
| 9. Bronze Stars | 21. Gun from the Battleship Maine |
| 10. Palmetto Regiment Monument | 22. City of Columbia Time Capsule |
| 11. Cannon Base | 23. Strom Thurmond Statue |
| 12. Grave-Capt. Lunsford | |

NAVIGATING THE STATE HOUSE COMPLEX

Columbia is the second planned city in America and the central city is laid out in perfect squares. Take a few minutes to familiarize yourself with the streets around the Capitol. Allow at least 30 minutes for parking and walking to your meeting.

There is limited metered parking along Pendleton, Main, Sumter, Gervais, and further up Assembly. Red meters may allow only a half-hour or one hour. Green meters allow a maximum of two hours and some of the blue meters along Senate Street allow up to five hours.

The parking facility under the Capitol complex is reserved for officials and their staffs. The nearest public parking garage is located across from the State House facing Gervais and may be entered from Assembly or from Lady. Another public garage is located on the corner of Assembly and Washington; the entrance is on Washington.

The public entrance to the State House, which includes a ramp for persons with disabilities, is on the Sumter Street side. As you enter, there is a security stop. To the left of the entry hall is the main hallway leading to the first floor lobby and the twin stairwells to the second floor. On the right side of this hall is the tour office and on the left is the gift shop. Beyond these, the Governor's Office is on the right and the Lieutenant Governor's Office is on the left. Elevators are on either side as you proceed past the first floor lobby. The lobby accessing the House and Senate chambers is on the second floor. The visitors' galleries from which you can directly observe floor proceedings are on the third.

Offices for members of the House of Representatives are located in the Blatt Building, at the intersection of Pendleton Street and Main Street. Offices for members of the Senate are located in the Gressette Building, directly behind the south face of the State House.

CONSTITUENT RELATIONSHIPS WITH LEGISLATORS

Get to know your representative. It is critical that you know who represents you and that your representative knows the issues that are important to you.

Find out where your representatives stand on the issues you care about, and remember that someone who is your opponent on one issue may be a strong supporter on another. Be prepared to work with them when you can reach agreement on strategy and goals.

BUILDING A SOLID FOUNDATION

- Read the legislator's on-line biography at www.scstatehouse.gov and get to about know his or her family and business.
- Keep up with how your legislators vote. Express your reaction to votes on issues in which you are interested.
- Invite your legislator to speak at a local meeting.
- Ask to receive your legislator's newsletter.
- Invite your legislator to visit your office.
- Invite your legislator to lunch and be prepared to discuss important issues.
- Attend political functions and fundraisers in the district.
- At town hall meetings, be prepared with clear brief questions for your legislator.
- When your legislator begins to seek your opinion on matters and considers you an informational resource, that is a sign that you have been successful in building a productive constituent relationship!

THE LEGISLATIVE PROCESS

The General Assembly convenes on the second Tuesday in January of each year. During this session they make new laws and amend existing law. The General Assembly also has oversight responsibilities that require review of state agencies. The Rules of the two houses differ, and there are numerous ways to modify the legislative process. However, there is a basic process that a successful bill goes through:

- When a bill is first presented, it is given first reading in the body in which it originated.
- Then the bill usually is referred to a committee to be studied and debated. Most bills go first to a subcommittee where public testimony is permitted and then proceed to the full committee. Notices of these meetings are published on the State House website. The committee can amend, accept or reject the bill.
- If the bill is accepted by the committee, with or without amendments, it is then sent to the full body which in turn votes whether to accept the bill as it is, change the bill or reject the bill. When a bill is accepted by the required number of members of one body it has passed in the body in which it originated.
- The bill must then be sent to the other body of the General Assembly for study, debate and vote.
- The bill then goes through the same process in the second body as it did in the first body.
- If there are differences between the versions accepted by the two bodies, a conference committee is appointed to resolve those differences in a single version to be resubmitted to both houses.
- In developing a recommendation for a compromise budget bill, the conference committee does not have the power to insert any new

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THE LEGISLATIVE PROCESS *(continued)*

matter or to alter elements agreed upon by both houses. If new wording is necessary to develop a compromise, a member of the conference committee may move that the conference committee be resolved into a committee of free conference. If free conference powers are granted by both the House and Senate the committee may rewrite the language of the bill.

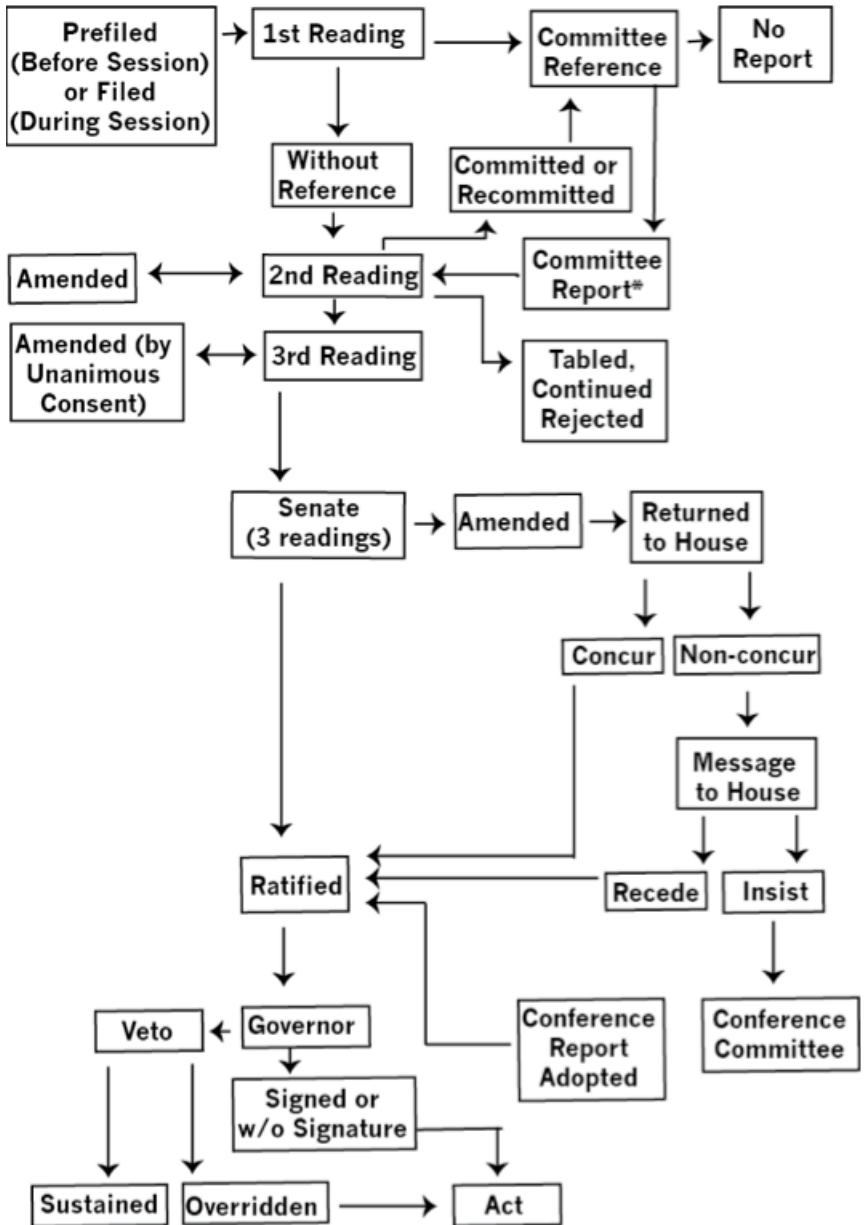
- When the conferences from both houses agree, their report is sent to both Houses for adoption.
- If there is no agreement in conference committee, the bill dies.
- When a bill is passed by both bodies it is sent to the Governor for signature. If the Governor signs the bill or does not either sign or veto it, it becomes a law.

Within the framework of this overall process there are procedural rules that can speed up or delay a bill or even consign it to oblivion without an up-or-down vote. Especially in the Senate, members can file objections (“desires to be present”) against bills on the calendar that then require a special vote, called special order, in order for the bill to be debated.

Unless the request for special order begins in the Rules Committee, the vote to debate a bill under objection requires a 2/3 vote. This raises the bar for bills that might pass with a simple majority if that was the only standard applied.

Filibusters are another mechanism to delay bills, often while compromises are negotiated between legislators. Many senators are reluctant to vote for cloture, ending a filibuster. Also, sending a bill back to committee from the floor can be fatal, since the majority of bills that undergo that process are not seen again.

HOW A BILL ORIGINATING IN THE HOUSE BECOMES AN ACT



THE SOUTH CAROLINA BUDGET PROCESS

- The State Constitution requires the Governor to submit a balanced budget.
- The State Constitution requires the Legislature to pass a balanced budget.
- The State Constitution requires the Governor to sign a balanced budget.

CALENDAR

AUGUST	Budget Guidelines sent to Agency
OCTOBER	Agency Requests Submitted to Governor
JANUARY	Governor Submits Budget to Legislature
APRIL	Legislature Adopts Budget
JULY	New Fiscal Year Begins

THE PROCESS

It Begins With the Governor . . . The Governor is required to submit an Executive Budget to the General Assembly. The Executive Budget must contain a complete and itemized plan of all proposed expenditures for each state department or other agency, beginning with the first day of the next fiscal year (a fiscal year begins July 1 and ends June 30.) Opposite each item of the proposed expenditures, the detailed budget document must show the amount appropriated for the last preceding appropriation year, for the current appropriation year and the increase or decrease. This budget is not always prepared or submitted. When it is not, the General Assembly proceeds without it.

THE SOUTH CAROLINA BUDGET PROCESS *(continued)*

Then to the House... All money bills must originate in the House, and legislative debate on the General Appropriations Bill begins with the House Ways and Means Committee. Members of the Ways and Means Committee are divided into subcommittees, and each subcommittee is assigned a functional area of the budget such as corrections or public education. The subcommittees meet and develop budget recommendations for presentation to the full committee. The Ways and Means Committee then presents its version of the budget bill to the full House. The House of Representatives usually debates the bill and considers amendments for three days. However, the length of debate can and does vary. State law requires the House to give third reading of the General Appropriations Bill by the end of March or the legislative session is extended.

Then to the Senate... After passage by the House, the bill is sent to the Senate and referred to the Finance Committee. As in the House, Senate Finance committee members are organized into subcommittees by functional areas. The Finance Committee then recommends a budget bill to the full Senate. The budget is usually not passed by the Senate until late in the session.

And if the House and Senate Versions Do Not Agree... When the House and Senate have passed differing versions of an appropriation bill, a six member conference committee (three House members and three Senators) is appointed to develop a compromise bill. The conference committee is bound by rules similar to those of other bills,

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THE SOUTH CAROLINA BUDGET PROCESS *(continued)*

requiring adherence to existing language or a request for “free conference” powers. When the conferences from both houses agree on a budget, their report is sent to both Houses for adoption.

And Back to the Governor . . . After the General Assembly has passed the state budget, the Governor has the power to veto distinct items or sections which have been labeled as such by the General Assembly. In 1998, the State Supreme Court ruled that the Governor cannot strike individual sentences or parts of sentences in a bill appropriating money. If the Governor vetoes an item or items in an appropriation bill, the bill becomes law as to the remaining sections of the bill.

The procedure for consideration of the Governor’s vetoes by the two houses is the same as for other bills, except that only vetoed items are considered and not the entire bill. Each vetoed item is considered separately, with a two-thirds vote in both houses necessary to override the Governor’s veto on each item.

WORKING ON LEGISLATION

Allow time for legislation and requests.

Annual Session Begins: The Second Tuesday in January
Annual Session Ends: The Second Thursday in May

During the session, the House and Senate and their committees usually meet Tuesday through Thursday of most week.

The best time to contact and work with your legislator about a new proposal or request or a change in an existing law is July through mid-December, when they are out of session. This allows sufficient time to prepare legislation to be pre-filed before the session is convened. Each bill has to be carefully researched and written by staff attorneys before it is submitted to General Assembly members. This takes time, especially for complex issues.

Effective communication is your best tool.

Most Effective: Personal visit; in most cases one to three persons are most effective in having a productive conversation. Larger meetings are sometimes appropriate when several areas of specific expertise are involved.

Attending legislators' town halls or delegation meetings provide important opportunities to communicate in a public setting and comments given there can be very effective.

Effective: You often can speak with legislators briefly during floor sessions if you send a written request to him or her through the staff at the House and Senate entrances on the second floor. If the legislator then out to speak with you, plan to remain behind the roped barrier and convey your message quickly. Ringing bells means the legislators

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WORKING ON LEGISLATION *(continued)*

are recalled for a vote and can come at any time. This is obviously not the ideal setting for confidential or detailed messages, but can be one of your best ways to communicate during the legislative process. Personal phone calls and/or well written one-page letters are helpful.

Least effective: Emails, unless the legislator says they prefer this form of communication.

Be prepared.

You need to know your subject before discussions with legislators or staff. What have our neighboring states done about this issue? When did they do it? How is it working? (A copy of the bill or proposal is the best aid.) How will this impact the budget? (Your legislator may suggest a visit with the governor or one of his/her staff member to discuss the impact on the budget. It can be helpful to have your proposal in the governor's budget.)

Legislative staff is usually very helpful and cordial, but there aren't many of them and their time matters. Usually each senator has one staff person and four representatives share one staff person. You may need to call several times before you get to speak with a legislator. You usually must take the initiative with additional communications. Due to a heavy schedule and lack of staff, responses to letters and phone calls may come slowly or not at all. It is up to you to follow up.

Concentrate on the legislators whose district you live in, because their first responsibility is to those in their district. Once convinced of an idea for legislation, they can work to spread enthusiasm among their colleagues.

Participating in legislative hearings: Plan to offer concise and informative testimony in subcommittees. Submitting written testimony is very helpful, allowing you to keep oral testimony to a minimum while

WORKING ON LEGISLATION *(continued)*

putting your ideas before the members of the subcommittee. The next step is full committee, in which legislators debate with one another and may hear from invited experts.

The final step is the full body of the General Assembly, with 46 senators and 146 representatives to convince about a piece of legislation. It is always best to have the members of the subcommittees and committees working on behalf of a bill. The subcommittee or the committee can effectively kill a piece of legislation and prevent it from moving forward.

In politics, compromise and perseverance are often the most essential ingredients for success so if it is worthwhile, find out who is most opposed and why, attempt to address their concerns, and keep bringing it back.

Public information and advocacy

Citizens involved in trying to pass legislation should make every effort to get other citizens engaged in supporting the effort.

Social media are increasingly important in getting information to the public. Facebook, websites, and Twitter are basic tools for a citizen advocate. Establish a presence in all of these media and make your information there clear, concise, and convincing. Tell people why you care, and why you believe that they too should care. Keep them informed about progress and events as you continue your efforts.

The local newspaper: One of the most effective and accessible ways to do this is through your local newspaper.

Writing a letter to the editor: Be brief, clear and to the point!

- 150-200 words; two to four paragraphs
- One issue in one letter
- Main point expressed in a single sentence

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WORKING ON LEGISLATION *(continued)*

- Supporting arguments limited to the two or three most powerful
- Open with a short, engaging sentence
- Place the most important and compelling information at the beginning
- Illustrate relevance and importance of the issue to the readers and their community with local statistics and events or personal stories
- Use commonly used terms--avoid jargon and personal attacks
- Advocate for a specific action to occur
- Adhere to the newspaper's letter-to-the-editor policy (usually printed on the page where the letters are published)

SAMPLE LETTER TO THE EDITOR

The Post and Courier

Wednesday, August 29, 2008

Increased Taxes Curb Smoking

When the General Assembly convenes in January 2009, South Carolina citizens will have the opportunity to help our legislators save thousands of lives. We can join together to support increasing the state tax on cigarettes. Raising the state tax on cigarettes increases the total cost, and high cost has proven to be the single most effective way to reduce smoking, particularly among the young. In addition to creating a disincentive, these tax dollars can be used to help fund programs and advertising campaigns that assist people of all ages to stop smoking.

Already our tax dollars go to fund medical care for a great number of diseases proven to be related to smoking, particularly lung cancer, high blood pressure, and heart problems. We know second-hand smoke can be extremely dangerous for our children's lungs or anyone with a weakened immune system. Please contact your legislators and let them know we want our state to be last on the list of number of persons dying from diseases attributed to smoking. The facts are available. We need to act!

Joe Davis
Charleston, SC

SAMPLE LETTER TO THE EDITOR

The State

Thursday, August 9, 2017

Abstinence first, but not only

The best policy where human behavior is concerned is to always have at least one backup plan available. We can all agree abstinence is the best possible answer, but when it fails the outcomes are devastating for our teens and our tax dollars. This is why I was shocked to learn that \$800,000 of our tax dollars is included in our state's budget this year for abstinence-only programs. As a community health educator, I have witnessed firsthand how such programs fail our youth. The programs deny our teenagers medically accurate information about birth control and sexually transmitted infections, putting their lives and all our futures at risk. In addition, our precious tax dollars must then be used to try to help teen mothers and their babies to survive. Teen mothers usually drop out of school, have little or no chance of ever getting a living wage job, and are far more likely to abuse and neglect their babies. Thus society helps to perpetuate generational poverty and illiteracy. The federally sponsored study of Heritage Community Services confirmed that abstinence-only programs don't reduce the number of teen pregnancies or sexually transmitted infections. Our state need to help our teenagers learn the truth about their physical and emotional growth. After all, when teens are not given the best and most complete health education from trusted adults, they will receive information from some source and someone.

Sally Smith
Columbia, SC

BE AN ASSET TO THE LEGISLATIVE PROCESS

Be prepared.

Support your position with facts and be credible and respectful in your presentation of those facts. A legislator should be able to consider you a resource for accurate information. If you misinform, your credibility may be seriously jeopardized.

Give credit where credit is due.

When your position prevails, thank everyone involved in the success. When your position is defeated, it is still critical to thank everyone who made an effort to help you. The legislative process is a team effort. Public thanks are especially important for elected officials. Their constituents need to know when they have been helpful on our issues.

Be objective.

Introduction of legislation does not mean that it will become law. In fact, most bills that are filed do not become law. Before forming an opinion about any legislation, learn the “who,” “what” and “why” of it. Realize that there is almost always more than one side to a story and try to determine how each interested party views the legislation.

Be brief.

A well-prepared person can present her case to a legislator in a few minutes. A written summary is very useful. Highlighted bullet points and a one-page presentation offer an overview of facts in a concise, easy to understand format. If you have very detailed information you would like to share, provide it in writing and offer to respond to questions.

Express your appreciation.

Do not contact legislators only when you need something from him or her. Keep in touch with them and don't be remiss in thanking them with a letter or phone call when they provide assistance. Thank legislators for their time when calling or meeting. *(continued next page)*

BE AN ASSET TO THE LEGISLATIVE PROCESS *(continued)*

Be fair.

Your legislator represents all constituents regardless of political party. Don't chastise a legislator who does not share your particular view on an issue.

Be reasonable.

Put yourself in the legislator's place by trying to understand his or her position on an issue. He or she wants to be helpful and needs to be fully informed of all aspects of a situation.

Recognize that there are legitimate differences of opinions. Never indulge in threats or recriminations. You may erase positive steps you have already made.

If your legislator makes a reasonable request, try to comply with it. Remember that legislation is usually the result of compromise. Do not expect to get everything you ask for.

BASIC GUIDANCE

Meeting with Legislators

Personal meetings, either to discuss specific issues or simply to introduce yourself as an interested and involved constituent, are the most effective means of political communication.

The easiest way to get a short time to introduce yourself is to ask to speak to the legislator during a floor session by sending a note in to the member. Forms for these notes are available at desks by the entrance to both the House and Senate, and pages will take the returned form to the desk of the legislator.

Formal meetings are sometimes difficult to arrange, given a legislator's busy schedule, and should be reserved for important discussions. These might include an initial introduction or review of an issue in depth. The initial contact can be made with the legislator directly or through key staff members. You can write or phone to request an appointment. Expect to get no more than 15-30 minutes of the legislator's time.

Do not overlook the opportunity to meet with a staff member, particularly if he or she is working closely with the legislator on an issue of concern to you. The staff member is often charged with addressing the important details of a bill and sometimes can respond to your concerns more effectively than the legislator can.

Try to schedule meetings with your legislator when he or she is in his/her district visiting constituents.

It is important to be familiar with key aspects of your issue before the meeting. This does not mean that you must be a legal expert. You should, however, be prepared to discuss how an issue affects you, your family, and your community.

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BASIC GUIDANCE *(continued)*

POINTERS FOR A SUCCESSFUL MEETING

- Be concise and well organized, and try to state your views in 10 minutes or less.
- Be firm in your remarks while being attentive to the legislator's views as well.
- Never forget that this meeting is an open exchange of ideas, not an opportunity for you to lecture the legislator.
- Never threaten or speak in a disrespectful manner to the legislator or any member of his or her staff. They, like most others, will not respond well to these tactics.
- Prepare a one-page summary of key points about your position on the issue at hand. Leave a copy with the legislator at the conclusion of your meeting. Be sure to include your name and a way to contact you should the legislator need additional information from you.
- Follow up your meeting with a thank you note and reemphasize key points that were discussed.
- You may also wish to write a note of thanks to those staff people who helped arrange or participated in the meetings.
- Include in your thank you notes to your legislator and their staff any additional information you promised to send.

OFFICE VISITS

Visiting your Senators and Representatives in his or her office affords you several invaluable opportunities. If you have never met him or her in person, putting faces with names will benefit you both in the future. The following should help to make your personal visit a productive and meaningful one:

- Inform your legislator in writing that you plan to be in the area and would like to drop by his/her office for a visit. Don't be discouraged if he or she has a booked schedule. It may take several tries before you are able to arrange this meeting, but your patience and persistence will pay off.

BASIC GUIDANCE *(continued)*

- Read your legislator's biography at www.scstatehouse.gov before your meeting so that you are aware of what you may have in common.
- Be sure to introduce yourself to his or her staff. They can be very helpful in your future dealings with the lawmaker.
- Write a note of thanks after you have visited your legislator's office. Make specific references to your visit. Be certain to include any additional information your legislator requested or you promised.

TELEPHONE TIPS

Many of the techniques outlined in the letter writing also apply to telephone calls.

Call during normal business hours. Sometimes you will speak with legislators directly, but often you will speak with staff.

Always identify yourself as a constituent.

Be aware that you need to be concise.

Provide the number of the bill that you wish to discuss.

Be clear about whether you support or oppose it and how you want them to vote.

Briefly state why you believe that this bill or amendment is good or bad. However, if you are simply responding to an action alert from an organization, it is often sufficient to identify yourself to staff, give the bill number, and indicate whether you want your legislator to vote yes or no.

CORRESPONDING: BASIC 'DOS & DON'TS' OF LETTER WRITING

Use personal or business stationery when writing legislators.

- On the envelope and on the inside address, refer to the elected official as "The Honorable _____."
- Do address your Senator or Representative properly: "Dear Senator/ Representative last name:."

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BASIC GUIDANCE *(continued)*

- Do write legibly (handwritten letters are fine if they are readable.)
- Do keep your comments brief and to the point. Clearly state your reason for writing. Cover only one issue per letter.
- Do include the bill number and subject matter about which you are writing. Explain how you feel the issue would affect you.
- Do be courteous and reasonable.
- Do write when you approve of something your legislator does. Words of appreciation will be remembered.
- Do include your return address.
- Do write early in the session before a bill has been introduced if you have ideas about an issue you would like to see incorporated in legislation.
- Do write the chairman or members of a committee holding hearings on legislation in which you are interested. Remember, however, that you have more influence with your Senators and Representatives than other members of congress.
- Don't begin on the righteous note of "as a citizen and taxpayer." Your elected Representative assumes you are not an alien and he/she knows we all pay taxes.
- Don't apologize for writing and taking his/her time. If your letter is short and expresses your opinion, he/she is glad to give you a hearing.
- Don't say, "I hope this gets by your secretary." This only irritates the office staff.
- Don't be rude or threatening. It will get you nowhere.
- Don't be vague. You do not want to leave your Senator or your Representative wondering what action you are requesting.
- Don't send a photocopy to your second Senator or Representative. Write each letter individually.

EXAMPLE OF AN EFFECTIVE LETTER

Joan Q. Public
1234 Your Street
Any Town, SC Zip

Date

The Honorable William Thatcher
South Carolina Senate
Street Address Columbia, S.C. Zip

Dear Senator Thatcher:

My name is Joan Public and I am writing you today as a concerned constituent. It came to my attention in my Women's Studies class at the University of South Carolina this week that our state legislature is going to be considering S. 126, the Pharmacist Refusal Bill. I would like to ask you to help represent your constituents by defeating this bill. While everyone can respect a pharmacist's personal and moral convictions, it is not his or her place to pass judgment on customers and refuse them the right to their medication. Our state already has a high enough rate of unintended pregnancies and denying women access to birth control methods is only going to make that number skyrocket. Also, women take birth control for other reasons than to protect against pregnancy and pharmacists should have no right to stop or impede these women from receiving their medication.

If this bill is passed, birth control will not be the only medication affected. With the way S. 126 is worded, a pharmacist can refuse to fill any prescription as long as he or she is basing their decision on "moral" reasons. This will negatively affect countless amounts of people if this bill is passed.

I sincerely hope that you will take my request to heart and join the fight in defeating S. 126. As a voting constituent from your area, I felt that it was my duty to voice my opinion so that you could receive a better idea of how your voters feel about what is going on in the state legislature.

I appreciate your time and if you need any more information, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,
Joan Q. Public

PUBLIC TESTIMONY: COMMITTEE/SUBCOMMITTEE HEARINGS

- Notices of public hearings are placed on the website or you may call (803)242.4420.
- Legislative standing committees usually take public testimony only in subcommittee hearings, although special committees may take public testimony at other times.
- Open your remarks with “Mr. or Madame Chairman and members of the committee, thank you for allowing me to speak.”
- If you are a constituent of one of the committee members, be sure to mention it.
- Tell the lawmakers specifically what you want.
- Keep your statement as simple and brief as possible, and base your remarks on documented facts instead of opinion.
- Do not read to the committee. Maintain eye contact with the committee members as you present your testimony. Address one issue at a time, and don’t get sidetracked.
- Use a real life story, if at all possible.
- If committee members speak during your testimony, remember to listen as much or more than you speak.
- Provide a written summary of your testimony in an easy-to-read format.
- Attend prior meetings to see how the hearing process goes for that particular committee or subcommittee.
- Cite support from other interested parties.
- Try to foresee questions you may be asked and be prepared to answer them. Remember when to say, “I don’t know, but I will get back with you.”

THE ELECTION PROCESS & VOTING

1. Educate Yourself & Vote!

2. Pick a candidate you like and support their campaign.

3. Other things you can do:

- Make telephone calls promoting the candidate.
- Discuss your candidate's positions during informal conversations with friends, family, and neighbors.
- Hold a "meet-and-greet" social at your home for the candidate.
- Go door-to-door handing out campaign literature with a fellow volunteer.
- Display a candidate's yard sign on your property or bumper sticker on your car.
- Add a personal note to post cards promoting your candidate and mail them to your friends and acquaintances.
- Donate money—every little bit helps.
- Volunteer at the candidate's campaign office.

Register to Vote: www.scvotes.org

THIS MANUAL BELONGS TO:

MY GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS

NAME STAFF CONTACT



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS of SOUTH CAROLINA

PO Box 8453 / Columbia, SC 29202

803 251-2726 / www.LWVSC.org

The League of Women Voters, a nonpartisan political organization, encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy. Membership in the League is open to men and women of all ages.

UPDATED: JANUARY 2017