

# HOW TO GET THE MOST OUT OF YOUR LEGISLATIVE VISITS

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# Session Overview

- The session will incorporate advocacy tips and strategies to help you have effective meetings with policy makers.



BE  
THE VOICE  
OF THOSE WHO  
DON'T HAVE  
ONE.

*advocacy*

to change “what is”  
into “what should be”

## Why Advocate?

"Unless someone like you cares  
a whole awful lot, Nothing is  
going to get better. It's not."  
- Dr. Seuss, The Lorax





# The Buck Stops with Us.....



# Effective advocacy requires.....

- ◉ Knowledge of the issue
- ◉ Skill in advocating your issue
- ◉ Keen sense of timing
- ◉ Perseverance
- ◉ Optimism



# Effective advocacy requires...

- ① Reasoned passion
- ② Knowledge of politics
- ③ Knowledge of the practice of advocacy





# Advocacy Levels

## Federal

- Legislators
- Regulatory Bodies

## State

- Legislators
- Regulatory Bodies (Department of Health)

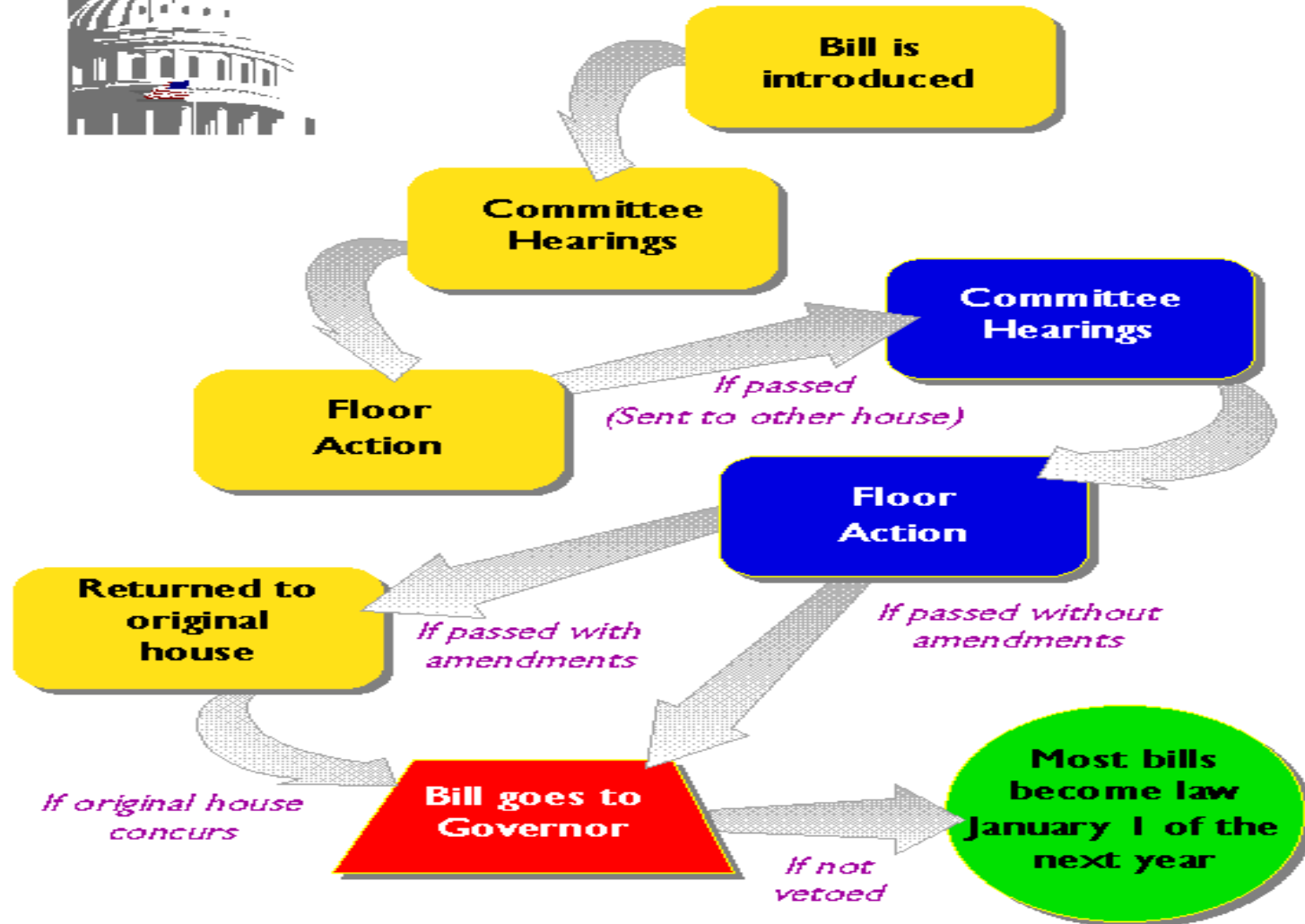
## Local

- City Council
- School Boards
- University Board of Trustees





# How a Bill Becomes a Law



# Preparing for your Hill Visit



# Do your Homework

- ① Find out if you do not already know who your legislators are and:

- where are they from
- what is their background
- their family and their values
- what are their priorities
- history on this this issue or similar issues
- is there any pending legislation on this
- are there legislators that support your issue you can refer them to



# Example....Tobacco 21

How might you advocate differently on this issue if your policy maker is a:

Local business owner

Former teacher

Former Fire Chief



# Tips For Meeting With Policy MAKERS

- ▶ Keep it simple.
- ▶ Have your facts straight.
- ▶ Be on time, polite, and patient.
- ▶ If you go in group introduce each person and note what each persons connection is to policy maker.
- ▶ Make the issue personal.
- ▶ **DON'T FORGET THE ASK**





# Tips For Meeting With Policy MAKERS

- ▶ Be a resource.
- ▶ Thank them for meeting you.
- ▶ Report back to organization you advocated on behalf of.
- ▶ Continue relationship with policy makers.
- ▶ Provide opportunities for positive publicity.
- ▶ Follow-up.



# Successful Hill Visits.....The Do's

- Prepare and do your research.
- Practice your talking points.
- Have a designated role if meeting with a group.
- Make the visit comfortable and conversational.
- Be polite and confident.
- Send a thank you and follow-up.



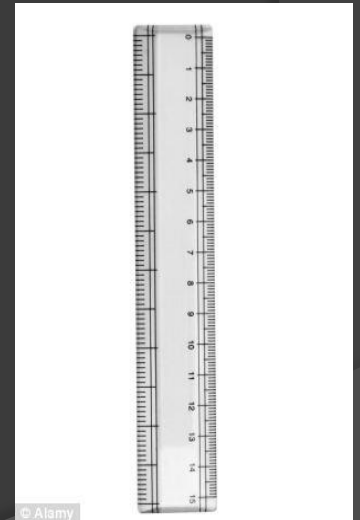
# Common Hill Visit Mistakes.....The Don'ts



- Arrive late-plan for travel.
- Discount the power of meeting with a staffer.
- Wear inappropriate clothing.
- Loose your cool if they disagree with you.
- Expect a commitment.
- Forget to leave an advocacy packet and your contact information.
- Chew gum.

# Measuring the Success of Advocacy

- ▶ Just because a topic disappears from the radar doesn't mean it's a failure.
- ▶ Success can be measured without achieving the goal.
- ▶ Capacity and awareness building.
- ▶ Stages of Change
- ▶ Training and empowering of future advocates.
- ▶ Changes in social norming.
- ▶ Logging contacts with policy makers (process).





**“A nation’s greatness is measured  
by how it treats its weakest members.”**

**—Mahatma Gandhi, humanitarian  
and civil rights leader (1869–1948)**

# Time to Role Play





# Questions

