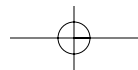
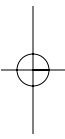
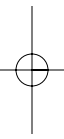
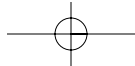
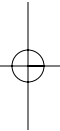
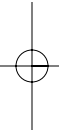
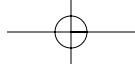


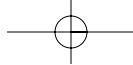
# LEGISLATIVE MANUAL



American Hospital  
Association







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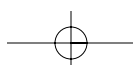
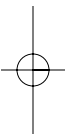
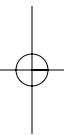
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## The Importance of Communicating with Congress

Have you ever wondered why your legislators voted the wrong way on an important bill? Bad legislative decisions are not necessarily evidence of malice against a particular group or industry. More likely, poor decisions stem from a lack of knowledge or a misunderstanding of the consequences of certain legislative acts. This is where you, the citizen lobbyist, can make a difference!

Legislators make decisions based upon their core beliefs, on their knowledge of an issue, on input from experts, on personal counsel and on feedback from their constituents. The vast majority try to make informed decisions that will benefit their constituents, their state and their nation.

While we can't do much about our legislators' core beliefs, we can have a direct impact on what they hear and what they know. If legislators have the facts and understand how their decisions will affect your hospital, patients, staff and community, then we are more likely to be successful. At a minimum, our legislators will cast their votes knowing full well the consequences of their decisions.

What can you do to help?  
More than you think!

Every large corporation in America, and every association of any size, pays professional lobbyists in Washington to represent their interests and make their positions on legislation known to lawmakers. Your state and national lobbyists do a good job, but with nearly 33,000 competing federal lobbyists (a number that has doubled in just seven years), they can only do so much.

You can have a big impact through your own lobbying efforts. Legislators don't have to listen to lobbyists, but they do have to listen to the folks they represent back home. By nurturing relationships with legislators, staying in close contact and educating them, hospital leaders

can ensure that our positions on issues are understood and that our legislators have the facts, figures and critical information that can lead to an informed vote.

*An important note: 501 (C)(3) organizations, such as hospitals, can engage in lobbying, but only to a limited degree. Individuals are not subject to federal regulations inhibiting political or grassroots lobbying activities. If you have any questions about what you can and cannot do, consult with your lawyers and/or AHAPAC legal counsels.*

How can you help?

### Communicate with your lawmakers

It's easy. Lawmakers and their staff members want to hear from you because you are a constituent and a voter. At the same time, you represent an organization that is vital to the well-being of thousands of people in their district. Your legislators want to know how the issues of the day affect you, your staff and your ability to deliver quality health care, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

### Educate your lawmakers

Lawmakers vote on legislation that is often highly complex, yet they rarely have time to review each clause in every bill. They rely on good staff work, trade association expertise and constituent contact to provide them with information on how legislation will affect their constituents – namely your patients, your community and your hospital.

### Counter mis-information

Professional liability, Medicare reimbursement, Medicaid funding, coverage and access ... the list of issues that hospitals must grapple with every day is long and growing longer. Those who stand on the other side of hospital issues have an equally strong – sometimes stronger – voice. These groups have the power to strain hospital resources and interfere with the delivery of health care.



You must assume Congress hears from them every day, and do your part to counter their messages. Consistently, clearly and frequently tell the hospital story – your story – to your legislators. The American Hospital Association and our state, regional and metropolitan association partners do this every day, but direct communication with a hospital leader in a member’s home district carries significantly more weight and is almost always more effective.

### Join the Partnership for Action

The Partnership for Action (PFA) is the legislative and political grassroots program for America’s hospitals and health systems. It allows interested and committed members of the health system family, called “key contacts,” to effectively communicate with their legislators on how the decisions they make in Washington will impact what happens back home.

Who can become a key contact? Anyone: hospital administrators, CEOs, hospital employees, trustees, volunteers... even patients. The only requirement is a commitment to deliver the hospital/health system viewpoint when called upon.

Besides the ability to favorably impact the legislative process, PFA members receive the following benefits:

AHA News Now – breaking news delivered to you

24-hour hotline to AHA legislative staff

A Congressional Directory

Additional benefits from your state association

Special briefings via the Internet and conference calls regarding crucial health care issues before Congress



## The Life of a Legislator

To have an impact on legislation, it's a good idea to know what motivates your legislators. Elected officials are people too ... they share the same concerns as average citizens, but they live in a different sphere that bears investigating.

Here are some concerns specific to elected officials.

### Time

Elected officials are busy people, and time is a commodity that is in short supply. Legislators have to speak for or against legislation, cast votes (and understand what they are voting on), write bills, attend committee hearings, deal with the press, meet with visiting constituents, answer their mail and supervise their office staffs. They are almost always campaigning for re-election, raising campaign funds, speaking to civic groups, participating in parades, attending Bar Mitzvahs and cutting ribbons to kick off local festivals and other local events. They are expected to help constituents find jobs, fight the IRS, straighten out their Social Security benefits and more.

Legislators, like the rest of us, also have family responsibilities – birthdays to celebrate, anniversaries to remember, school plays to attend, etc.

They have to travel back and forth to the districts they represent, which for some can be challenging and time consuming. Clearly, every minute of every day is scheduled, with no time to waste.

### Making good decisions

Most elected officials care about their communities and they want to cast votes that

will benefit their constituents, their state and nation. But because they are beset by conflicting opinions and tugged at by various interest groups, they often are unsure just what the right decisions are. They are expected to be experts at hundreds of issues, but are usually the master of only one or two. A member of Congress votes on thousands of pieces of legislation each year, and must rely on others for advice and information.

### Getting re-elected

Of course, they want to get re-elected. Serving in public office brings the privileges of power, status and the ability to make a difference. Who wouldn't like to bask in the glow of public admiration, hang out with governors or have a president call you by your first name?

But getting re-elected is a lot of hard work, and it takes time and money. A political campaign is an omnivorous monster that devours time, talent, volunteers and money. Every politician knows that to run for office means asking for money. And 95 percent of them hate it.

### Bottom Line

The bottom line is your elected officials need you as much as you need them. They need information that will help them make better decisions, and you want them to make decisions that will help you serve your community. By creating a symbiotic relationship, you both win.

The following are five proven means of doing just that.

- Make a personal visit
- Pick up the phone
- Send letters that get noticed
- Show them what you do at your hospital
- Take political action

## Make A Personal Visit

Personal contact with a legislator — whether through meetings, a hospital tour or some other means — can be the most effective way to make your case. Legislators, like everyone else, will be more likely to remember — and pay attention to — someone they've met face to face.

Here's how you do it.

- **Call for an appointment.**

Request a meeting. When you contact the office of a representative or senator, you'll probably speak to his or her scheduler. Explain who you are and what organization you represent. Ask to speak with your legislator directly, but assume you'll deal with the scheduler or some other staff person. If you know anyone serving on the legislator's staff, ask that person to set up a meeting.

- **Be flexible on the timing.**

Remember, legislators are busy people and are always juggling priorities. Be as flexible as possible with your time in order to make the most of theirs.

- **Explain the purpose of the meeting and how long it will take.**

If you need 20 minutes, ask for 20 minutes. If you need 10, ask for 10. Don't ask for more time than you need. Once you start the meeting, stick to your time commitment.

- **Confirm the meeting in writing.**

After you've scheduled a meeting, it's a nice idea to send a letter to the legislator or relevant staff member confirming the date and time. This reduces scheduling errors and helps make you more visible.

- **Show up early.**

If your legislator is running ahead of schedule, this may get you more time. If he is running late, the knowledge that you have been waiting may make him more attentive to your message.



- **Get to the point.**

Again, you are dealing with a very busy person. While exchanging pleasantries is important, get down to business as soon as possible. Make your points and then depart.

- **When appropriate, request feedback.**

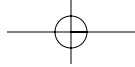
Requesting that your legislator give you some feedback, such as a letter or phone call, will help guarantee your concern receives more than a passing notice. While you don't want to demand a response, a simple, "Can you let us know once you have made your decision to sponsor this legislation?" should not be objectionable. Also, a meeting would be a great time to request they be your guest for a hospital or office tour: "Perhaps we can discuss this further when you visit us?"

- **Send a follow-up letter.**

A follow-up letter will remind your legislator of the substance of the meeting and of any actions either one of you promised. A letter also will serve to remind staff that follow-up actions may be required.

- **Be willing to meet with staff members.**

Remember, your legislator probably has assigned a member of his or her staff, as well as a member of the relevant committee's staff, to follow the issue and provide a briefing on relevant information. You should find out from the legislator which staff members monitor health-related issues and keep in touch with them as well.



## Pick up the Phone

Talking with a member of Congress on the telephone is nearly as effective as a personal meeting. You'll have the legislator's full attention, at least for a while.

Here are seven tips that will give your call more impact:

**1. If at all possible, talk directly with your representative.**

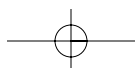
Always ask to speak to your legislator by name, explaining to the receptionist who you are and why you're calling. Tell the receptionist that you'll only take a few minutes of the legislator's time.

**2. Always leave a message.**

If your legislator can't come to the phone, see if the receptionist will take your number and ask him or her to return the call. Many offices pride themselves in making sure all calls are returned within 48 hours.

**3. Go straight to the point.**

When you reach your legislator, explain who you are and why you are calling. After a short exchange of pleasantries ("How are you? I enjoyed your speech at the Rotary Club last year, etc."), tell your legislator what he or she needs to hear from you. Don't waste your legislator's time or yours.





#### **4. Be willing to talk with staff members.**

If you can't break through the "palace guard," be willing to talk with a senior aide or legislative assistant. (Also, remember that an "administrative assistant" in some legislative offices is the chief of staff, not a clerical person.) More often than not, these staffers will pass your information along to your legislator. In some cases, they may be more knowledgeable about legislative details than your legislator will be.

#### **5. Follow up your conversation with a letter.**

The letter should begin "I enjoyed speaking with you on Monday," or something similar. This lets the person who opens the mail know that the contents are of a more personal nature, and should be handled with more care than usual.

#### **6. Consider your timing.**

Try to get the best possible sense of your legislator's schedule and don't call when he or she will be unavailable (hours they are in session, traveling, etc.). Congress is usually out of town in the weeks before and after Easter, Christmas, July 4th, Memorial Day, Labor Day and Thanksgiving, and takes long weekends during other federal holidays (President's Day, Veterans Day, etc.). Congress is usually out of session the entire month of August, but your legislator can often be reached through his or her district office during this time.

#### **7. Don't be a pest.**

As in most things, moderation is a virtue when communicating by telephone. Call when you need to, but don't abuse the privilege. If you call occasionally, you will be seen as an ally and source of information for your legislator. Call too often and you become a pest.



## Send Letters That Get Noticed

Communicating through the mail is less effective than speaking with your legislator in person, but it has the advantage of being potentially more comfortable for you, as well as carrying the power of the written word. All you have to do is sit down at your computer, type out a letter and mail it.

It takes a while for mail to get from your office to Capitol Hill – longer even than the normally slow pace of first class mail. After the anthrax scare of 2001, all congressional mail is sent to a facility separate from Capitol Hill and irradiated to kill possible toxins. That slows down delivery to a glacial pace. Dispatching your letter via Fed Ex or UPS will not help since your package will be intercepted by the Congressional Post Office and sent out for irradiation as well.

If you need to communicate in a hurry, send a fax or an e-mail. FAX letters should only be one-page long because additional pages can get separated from the original.

Another option is to send the letter to the legislator's district office, although some district offices simply put the letters in a bag and send them to the DC office ... where they go through the same process as the others.

Once your letter actually gets into your legislator's office, it faces yet another challenge – getting read. Letters are seldom read by legislators. The volume of mail pouring into most legislative offices is overwhelming, and your legislator lacks the time to personally read and answer every letter.

Representatives and senators have several people on their staffs who do nothing but answer mail. Good legislative offices tally the opinions in incoming letters and present the legislator with the totals on given issues.

In many offices, procedures are in place to insure that “important” letters are funneled to the legislator. You want your letter to be one of those.

To get your letter the attention it deserves, make it stand out from the clutter.

Here are some helpful hints:

- **Use hospital letterhead.**  
This lets the staffer who sorts the mail know that you are not just representing your own views, but also represent the interests of an important facility and hundreds, if not thousands, of constituents.
- **Personalize the letter as much as possible.**  
If you've met your legislator recently, say so. If you have a long standing relationship with your legislator, or if you share something in common with him (grew up in the same town, went to the same college, etc.), reference that in the first part of your letter. You may want to add a handwritten postscript to the letter to make it more personal. Personalization may mean your letter is placed in the small pile of mail your legislator actually reads.
- **Get to the point.**  
Remember, each staffer is dealing with a large volume of mail. Succinctness is a virtue. Your legislator will not plow through a six-page letter.
- **Limit your key points.**  
Don't try to cram too much into the letter. Try to confine yourself, if possible, to no more than one issue. Explain your position as clearly as possible. If the issue is complicated, enclose additional material; if the legislator wants more information, he can read the enclosures. Also, include your telephone number in the letter so the legislator can call you if you have piqued his interest.
- **Alert your legislator to the consequences of a vote.**  
If, for example, a “yes” vote on a measure will mean more jobs in the legislator's district, the legislator will want to know that. Conversely, if legislation will erode the quality of health care in your area, he needs to know that too. Also, if inaction on an issue will have either a positive or negative effect on your patients, you must alert the legislator to that reality.

***A note about e-mail.***

The rules for writing good e-mails are the same as sending letters via “snail” mail, though you need to consider that e-mail is now often checked using a Blackberry or similar device. The extra time it takes to open a message with graphics or attachments may prevent the e-mail from being read at all. It is important then to keep the format of the e-mail as simple as possible. Again, staffers read and sort this mail, and only a handful of messages actually get through.



## Conducting Hospital Tours

Tours of your facility can be a very effective means of communication. A good tour will make your legislator (or his or her staff) familiar with what you do and the problems you face. Also, and of equal importance, spending quality time with your legislator will help build a much stronger relationship than you'll ever achieve through the mail or over the telephone.

The purpose of the tour should be informative, not political. Hospitals cannot employ resources to influence voter preferences or the outcome of an election. That said, most legislators are happy to meet the people they represent and learn more about their lives so they can serve them better in office.

Even if your legislator opposes your positions on key issues, he will be more receptive to your point of view — it's hard to stay mad at someone you've broken bread with!

In order to make the visit a success, you have two broad tasks. First, handle the mechanics of setting up the visit correctly. Second, make the most of the visit. Above all else be sure to set a goal for the visit and to place the right person in charge of the preparation.

Here's how to set one up:

### 1. Identify the representative's scheduler.

It's a fact of political life that no representative or senator makes his own appointments and keeps his own schedule. Once you find out who handles scheduling, you can direct your communications to that person's attention.

### 2. Send a written invitation.

Schedulers love paper trails, and your invitation will be less likely to be lost if it is in writing. If you issued your invitation over the telephone or in person, send a written follow-up. Failure to do so will almost always guarantee a "no-show." While maintaining flexibility on the date, include as much information as possible concerning the length of the tour, the

location, and the number of constituents the legislator might meet. In the letter, remind the scheduler that you are inviting the legislator to make an official visit to the hospital, not a campaign trip.

### 3. Be as flexible as possible.

Propose a range of dates for the visit. Legislators' schedules can change with very little notice. Find out from the scheduler when your legislator will be in your area, and try to dovetail your invitation with his or her existing schedule.

### 4. Make the office visit attractive to your legislator.

Making a visit attractive doesn't mean a new coat of paint or putting up star-spangled bunting. It means catering to the needs of your guest. Legislators want to learn and they want to meet and hear from their constituents. Make sure your legislator knows he or she will meet the people who work at your location in a congenial setting.


### 5. Offer to drive them to your location.

Your elected legislator may not know how to get to your location, or may lack the means of getting there. Surprisingly, legislators do not have drivers and must often ask staffers and volunteers to do the job. Don't offer to pay for transportation. Official travel is highly regulated, and you don't want to take the risk of running afoul of the law. If there are any questions, check with your legal counsel.

### 6. Be persistent.

Don't give up if you're unable to work out a visit on the first try. Time pressures often force changes in the schedule, and even with the best of intentions, cancellations occur. Be gracious and understanding, and don't be afraid to call and write again.





Once you're on a legislator's schedule for a certain date, you're ready to plan a successful and productive visit. Here's a list of things you may want to keep in mind:

- **Prepare a fact sheet about your hospital.**

Include important information such as number of personnel, size of payroll, amount of taxes paid, other locations, community services, awards, information about key people and interesting facts about the care you provide. This will give your legislator a quick and easy look at your organization and why he is there.

- **Arrange for a photographer.**

You'll want photos of the visit for your internal communications and your guest may want them as well.

- **Determine if press will be allowed into your facility.**

Check with the legislator's office to see if they plan to notify the press of the visit. If you don't want the press involved, then tell your legislator that press is not allowed. If you agree to allow the press in, assign a staffer to work with the press when and if they show up. Determine in advance what parts of the visit are off-limits.

- **Notify your staff of the tour's date and time.**

Everyone wants to put his best foot forward when meeting important people, and you should allow your staff some time to tidy up and prepare for the visit. More importantly, they can help you avoid a problem such as scheduling the visit on a day already set aside for other time-consuming work, such as taking inventory or engaging in facility repairs.

- **Prepare a holding room for your visitor(s).**

Set aside a place for your guests to make a phone call, rest and relax for 10 minutes. In all probability, your legislator has just come from one meeting, and will go to another after your tour. Providing a little hospitality will make his day easier. An uncluttered office with a bathroom will suffice. Refreshments are a nice touch.

- **Set aside time for discussion.**

Either at the end or at the beginning of the tour, set aside some time for you and possibly other key people to sit down for some frank face-to-face dialogue. The only way you'll get your points across during a tour is if you have your legislator's full attention; it's hard to concentrate over the hustle and bustle of a busy hospital or clinic.

- **Pick your tour guides carefully.**

If you conduct the tour yourself, make sure you know the people you'll be seeing because your legislator will expect to be introduced. If you rely on others to lead the tour, make sure they understand the purpose of the visit.

- **Send follow-up letters.**

Send a letter thanking the legislator for making the visit, and use the opportunity to reinforce whatever points you made during the tour. Because of the vast array of information competing for your legislator's attention, you can't emphasize your positions too much. If a key staff person who has oversight of your issues participated in the tour, a follow-up note to that person is also a good idea. It doesn't hurt to thank the scheduler either.

## The Legislative Process

Grassroots advocacy efforts can impact the outcome of a bill at several phases in the legislative process. The following pages outline the process by which a bill becomes law and suggest where key points of influence are.

The AHA's *Advocacy Action Alerts*, *Advocacy Updates* and *Special Bulletins* are designed to help you track and participate in advocacy efforts.



### Opportunities for Grassroots Impact:

**Bill Introduction/Sponsorship** — Legislators can be encouraged to introduce a bill to address a specific issue, or to co-sponsor a bill introduced by another senator or representative. Obtaining a large number of co-sponsors on a bill is one strategy for gaining attention and credibility on an issue.

**Subcommittee** — An important time for constituent involvement is the subcommittee stage. Legislators are not yet committed to specific bills or legislative language, and grassroots advocates can communicate their positions on the issue and suggest specific provisions or language. Action by constituents of subcommittee members can be very effective at this point.

**Committee** — Grassroots advocacy at the committee stage is also very important. Communications may focus on supporting or opposing specific language developed by the subcommittee; providing testimony on an issue, encouraging legislators to sponsor amendments; and asking the committee member to vote for or against the bill. Again, action by constituents of committee members can be most effective.

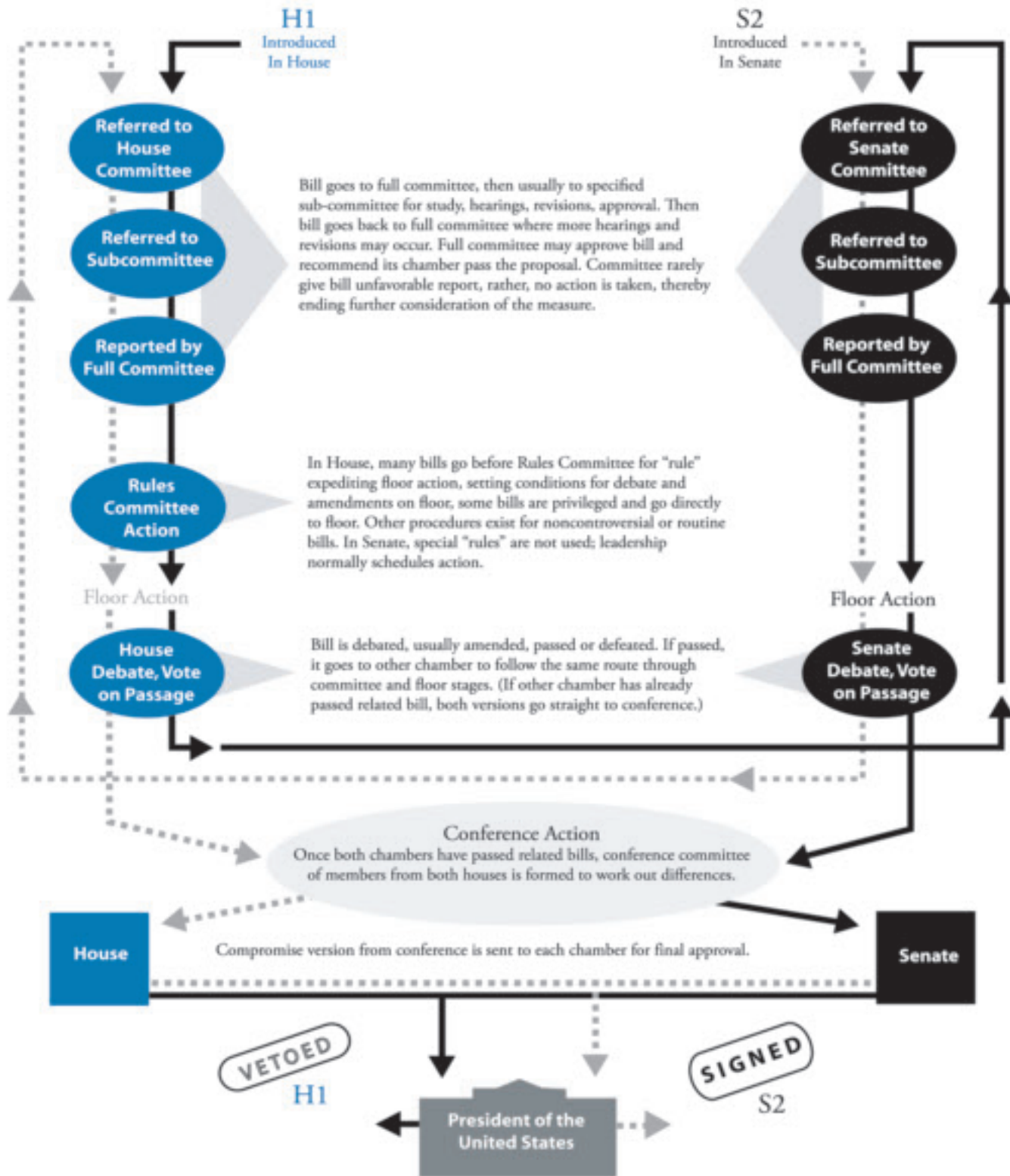
**Floor** — Constituent communication with all senators and representatives is important when legislation comes to the Senate or House floor for a vote. Grassroots efforts at this stage focus on encouraging a legislator to either vote for or against the bill; to sponsor a floor amendment; or to vote for or against a floor amendment offered by another legislator.

**Conference** — Opportunities for grassroots impact are more limited at the conference stage, when appointed members of the House and Senate work out the differences between similar bills passed by their respective chambers. However, grassroots communications — particularly from constituents of conferees — may influence whether the House or Senate provision is accepted in the final compromise bill.

**Floor** — Once a conference committee has worked out the differences between the House and Senate version of a bill, floor passage is normally routine and not impacted by further constituent communication.

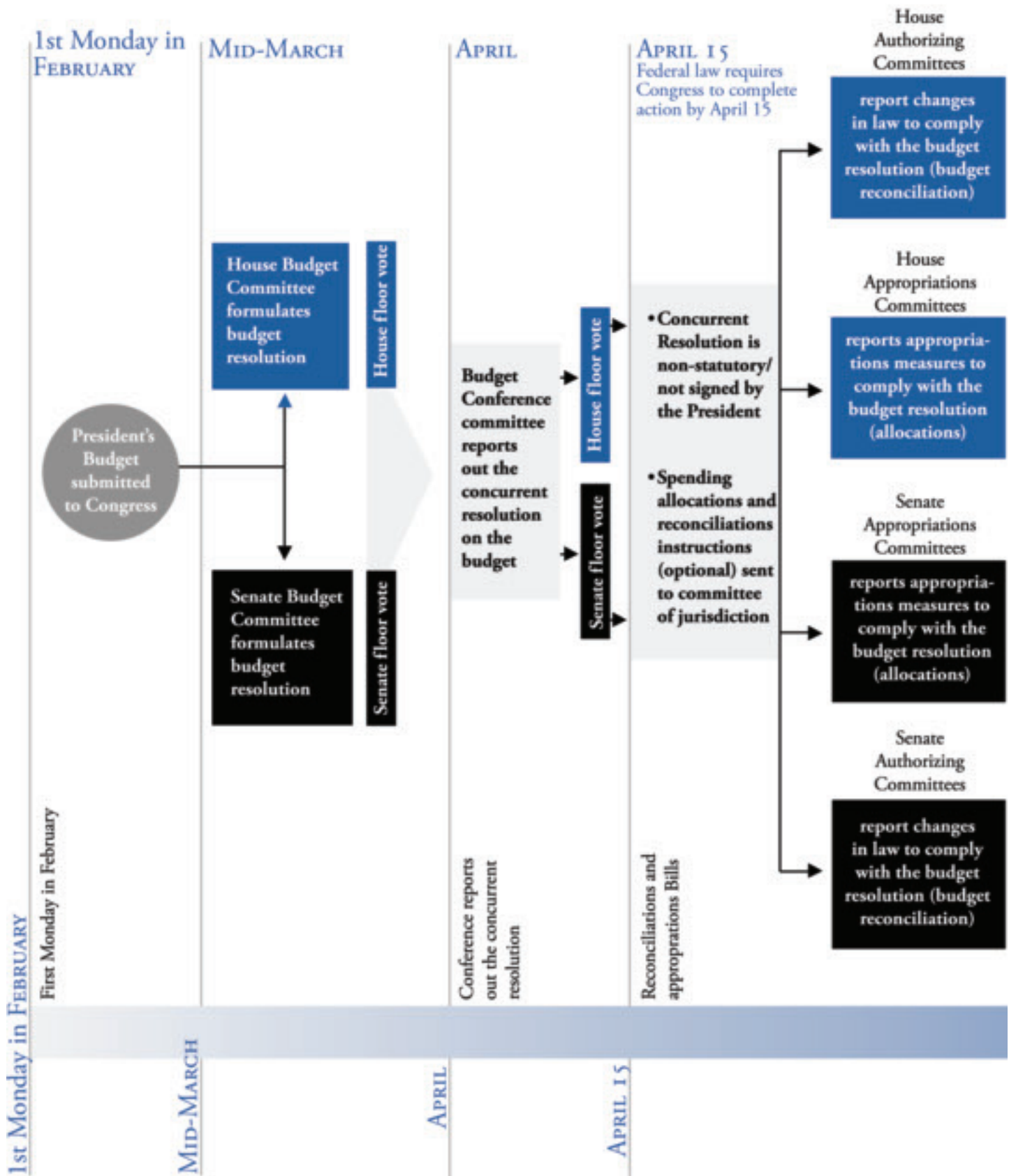
# HOW A BILL BECOMES LAW – FEDERAL LEGISLATION

This graphic shows the most typical way in which proposed legislation is enacted into law. There are more complicated, as well as simpler, routes, and most bills never become law. The process is illustrated with two hypothetical bills. House bill No. 1 (H1) and Senate bill No. 2 (S2). Bills must be passed by both houses in identical form before they can be sent to the president. The path of H1 is traced by a solid line, that of S2 by a broken line, in practice most bills begin as similar proposals in both houses.



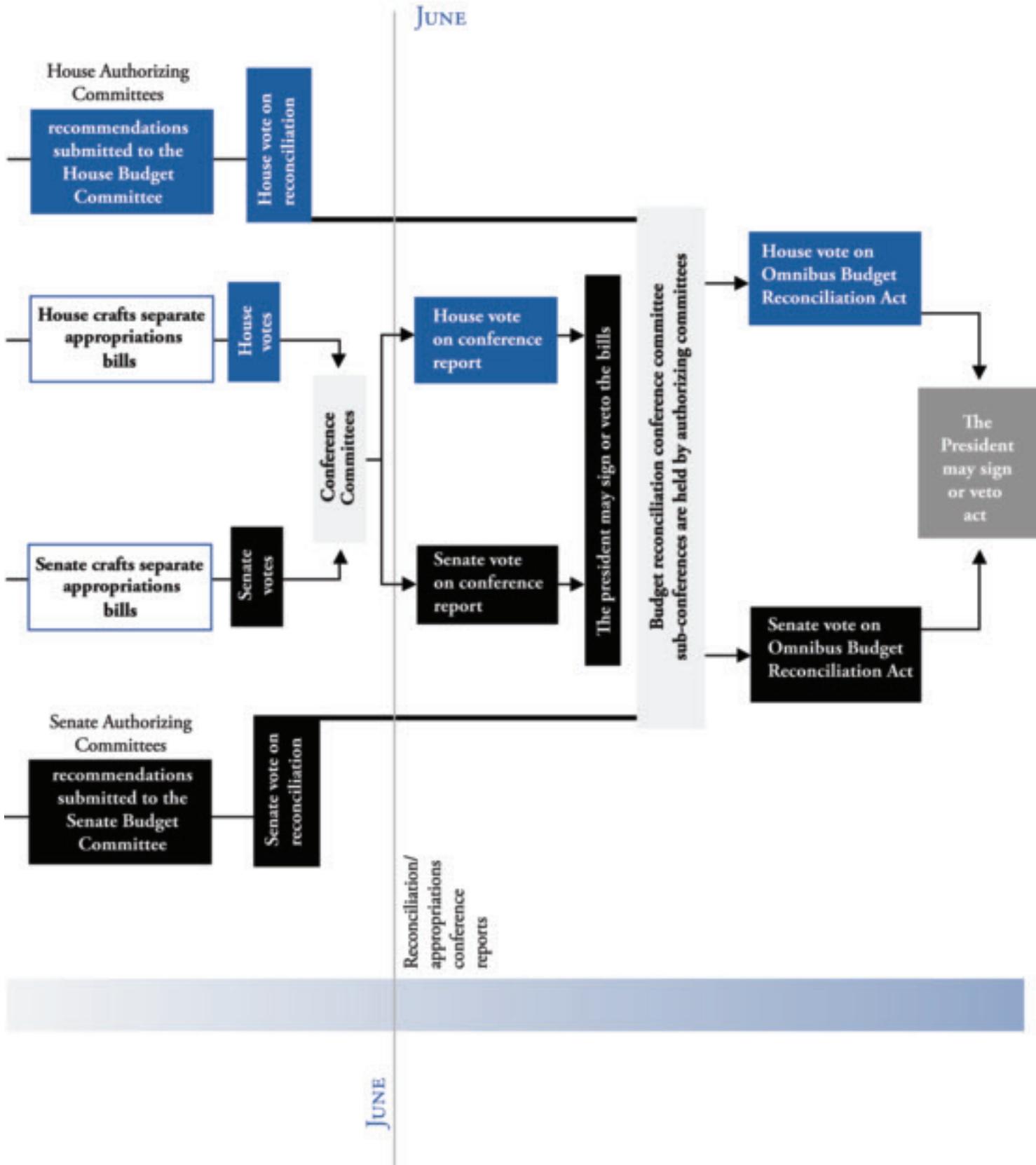
Compromise bill approved by both houses is sent to the president, who can sign it into law or veto it and return it to congress. Congress may override veto by a two-thirds majority vote in both houses; bill then becomes law without president's signature.

# THE FEDERAL BUDGET PROCESS AND TIMELINE





# THE FEDERAL BUDGET PROCESS AND TIMELINE



## The Importance of Political Action

In our system of government, legislators are constantly running for re-election. Because elections are always around the corner, they must constantly think about winning votes, forming coalitions and raising funds necessary for running a campaign. Most legislators enjoy serving in Congress. There are things that you, personally, can do to help them return to Washington. Your assistance will be appreciated, and remembered.

*Under federal election law, a corporation cannot make either in-kind or direct contributions to a candidate for federal office. The political action under discussion here is not intended to include any activities by your hospital.*

This section is equally applicable to your work with a challenger or incumbent.

Here are five ways you can help a candidate for Congress:

### 1. Contribute to the AHA PAC.

Support the AHA Political Action Committee (AHAPAC), either through your state hospital association or the AHAPAC. Better yet, raise money among your colleagues on behalf of AHAPAC. This allows AHAPAC to support those candidates that support hospital issues.

### 2. Demonstrate personal public support.

There isn't a legislator in America who doesn't appreciate a good word, especially in public. Write letters to the editor of the local papers praising your legislator. Submit guest editorials to the local newspapers. Stand up at public meetings and testify to the good job he or she is doing for the community. If appropriate, offer to serve as a surrogate speaker for your candidate at a public forum.

### 3. Raise campaign funds.

Offer to serve on the campaign finance steering committee. Commit to a personal fundraising goal. Serve on the host committee of an event. Host a



fundraising event in your home. Contact your state hospital association or AHA for support from the PAC.

### 4. Locate votes.

Encourage your family and friends to vote for your candidate. Help your candidate meet potential voters (friends, colleagues, people on your street, etc.). Also, you or a family member can become actively involved in the process — serving as a precinct or county chairman or in other comparable volunteer posts.

### 5. Locate volunteers.

Every campaign, no matter how sophisticated, must rely on people power. All campaigns need volunteers to stuff envelopes, draft news releases, deliver literature door-to-door and conduct any number of small, but important, campaign tasks. There are never enough people to do this work so volunteers are appreciated and remembered. If you can, recruit volunteers for the campaign — even your kids or siblings might enjoy the experience!

## AHA Grassroots Advocacy Resource Tools

The AHA is a great place to obtain valuable resources and materials for grassroots advocacy activities and effective strategies to influence public policy at the grassroots level.

The following are some of the features available from the AHA Web site and hotline.

### Web site:

[www.aha.org/aha/advocacy/index.html](http://www.aha.org/aha/advocacy/index.html)

E-mail: [AHAAadvocacy@aha.org](mailto:AHAAadvocacy@aha.org)

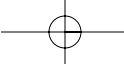
24-Hour Advocacy Hotline: 1-877-242-2240

## AHA Website — Working with Congress

- Read and download congressional Dear Colleague letters.
- Review the House and Senate scorecards to see if your senators and representative have supported issues of importance to hospitals.
- For AHA Members - Updated information, talking points and advocacy resources on current Advocacy Updates and Action Alerts
- For AHA Members with email addresses – E-mail a message to your senators and representative
- Grassroots advocacy resources (grassroots strategies, resources, and ideas)
- E-mail a member of the AHA's grassroots advocacy staff at [AHAAadvocacy@aha.org](mailto:AHAAadvocacy@aha.org).



- Sign up on-line to become a member of the Partnership for Action (PFA).
- The PFA is the legislative and grassroots program for America's hospitals and health systems.
- The PFA is made up of "Key Contacts" - interested and committed members of the hospital and health system family – who effectively communicate with their legislators to show them how the decisions they make in Washington will affect what happens back home.
- Key Contacts agree to represent their hospital and health system by contacting their legislators on crucial issues through out the year.
- Anyone – hospital CEOs, senior staff, employees, trustees, volunteers or patients – can become a Key Contact.
- PFA members receive many special benefits, including AHA News Now emails, a congressional directory, special briefings regarding crucial health care issues and additional benefits from the state association.
- PFA members are encouraged to leave a message giving AHA staff feedback about an issue on our AHA Advocacy hotline: 1-877-242-2240.



## Commonly Used Titles and Job Functions of Congressional Staff

### Administrative Assistant or Chief of Staff

The administrative assistant or chief of staff usually handles the overall office operations, including the assignment of work and the supervision of key staff. The administrative assistant reports directly to the senator or representative, and usually is responsible for evaluating the political outcomes of various legislative proposals and constituent requests.

### Caseworker

A caseworker is a staff member assigned to help with constituent requests by preparing replies for the member's signature. The caseworker's responsibilities also may include helping resolve problems constituents present in relation to federal agencies, e.g., Social Security and Medicare issues, veteran's benefits, passports, etc. There often are several caseworkers in a congressional office.

### Counsel

Attorneys who provide strategic guidance and legal expertise to the leadership of Congress.

### Legislative Assistant

In most legislative offices, there are several legislative assistants with responsibilities and expertise in specific legislative areas. For example, depending on the responsibilities and interests of the member, an office may include a different legislative assistant for health issues, environmental matters and taxes.

### Legislative Correspondent

The legislative correspondent reads, logs and tallies letters and other written correspondence

from constituents and usually drafts the reply on the legislator's behalf.

The legislative director is usually the staff person who monitors the legislative schedule and makes final recommendations to the member regarding the pros and cons of particular issues. In some offices the legislative director supervises the other legislative staff.

### Press Secretary or Communications Director

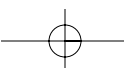
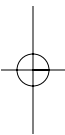
The press secretary's responsibility is to garner good press coverage for the member, as well as to protect the member as much as possible from bad coverage. The press secretary is expected to know the benefits, demands and special requirements of both print and electronic media, and how to most effectively promote the member's views or positions on specific issues. Many press secretaries double as speechwriters.

### Scheduler, Appointments Secretary

The scheduler is usually responsible for allocating a legislator's time among the many demands that arise from congressional responsibilities, staff requirements, politics and constituent requests. The appointment secretary also may be responsible for making necessary travel arrangements, arranging speaking dates, visits to the district, etc.

### Executive Secretary/Assistant

Executive secretaries or executive assistants often handle scheduling responsibilities as well as the day-to-day management of a legislator's office.



## Glossary of Legislative Terms

### Act

A bill after it has passed either the House or Senate or been enacted into law.

### Amendment

A proposed change in a bill or motion, either in committee or the floor of the legislative chamber. The Constitution can also be changed through passage of an amendment.

### Authorization

A bill that creates a program and sets the amount of funding that program should receive. The authorization to actually draw funds from the federal treasury and the amounts to be drawn are established by an appropriation.

### Bill

A proposed law.

### Budget Authority

Allows the federal government to incur a financial liability, typically a contract for direct payment, a loan or a loan guarantee.

### Calendar of Bills

A calendar of bills, or legislative calendar, is a daily work sheet of those measures reported from committees and ready for consideration by the Senate and the House.

### Caucus

A caucus is a meeting of the members of a political party in the U.S. Congress or a state legislature in which party policy on proposed legislation is discussed and refined. Caucus also can be used to define the collective members of one political party in the legislature, as in “the Democratic Caucus.”

### Conferees

Senators and representatives appointed to serve on the conference committee (see below).

### Conference Committee

The House and Senate appoint conferees to a conference committee to resolve differences between House and Senate-passed versions of the same or similar bills.

### Congress

The United States legislative branch of government, consisting of the United States Senate and the United States House of Representatives. There are 100 U.S. Senators and 435 U.S. Representatives.

### Co-sponsor

One of a group of senators or representatives who introduces a bill for consideration. The initial sponsor of the bill may send a “Dear Colleague” letter asking other senators or representatives to join in sponsoring the proposal. A large number of co-sponsorships increase a bill’s chances for consideration.

### Federal Appropriation

A formal approval to draw funds from the federal treasury for specific purposes.

### Federal Budget

The president’s annual proposal to Congress, usually submitted in January, for federal expenditures and revenues for the coming fiscal year (which starts October 1).

### Federal Budget Resolution

House- and Senate-passed guidelines, and later caps, on federal budget authority and outlays. The budget resolution is not submitted to the president for signature or veto; it is considered a matter of internal congressional rules and procedure. Bills that would exceed budget caps are subject to a point of order — although waivers have been granted regularly in both House and Senate.

### Federal Fiscal Year

The federal government’s fiscal year runs from October 1 through September 30.

### Hearing

Meetings of committees or subcommittees to gather information on the ramifications of proposed legislation, investigate problems or explore issues. Witnesses present testimony and answer questions.

### Majority Leader

The leader of the majority party in the Senate is called the majority leader. The majority leader in the House is second in command of the majority party, after the speaker.

### **Mark-up**

Following hearings, members of a committee or subcommittee examine a proposed piece of legislation line-by-line to determine what additions, deletions or amendments should be made. This activity is referred to as “markup.” Often the chairman of a subcommittee will draft a starting proposal, referred to as the “chairman’s mark.”

### **Minority Leader**

Leader of the minority party in the House or Senate.

### **Point of Order**

An objection by a legislator that the pending matter or proceeding is in violation of the rules. The presiding officer accepts or rejects the objection, subject to appeal by the full House or Senate.

### **President Pro-Tem**

Although no one outside the Senate refers to the Vice President in this manner, he or she is the President of the Senate. The Constitution provides for a “president pro tempore” to perform the duties of senate president in the event of the president’s absence. This office is filled by the majority party in the Senate.

### **Report**

A printed record of a committee’s actions and views on a particular bill or matter. Reports are important because they are used as guidelines in promulgating federal regulations that implement or enforce the bill if it becomes law.

### **Resolution**

A resolution is a piece of legislation used to make declarations, state policies or announce decisions. Resolutions express the sentiment of the Congress but usually require no direct action by the federal government. For example, a “resolution” could be passed to commend the actions of some brave firefighters, but it would take a “bill” to award those firefighters a medal or monetary reward for their efforts.

### **Select Committee**

A select committee is established by the Senate or the House for a special purpose and for a limited time. When the select committee’s function has been carried out and a report made, it is automatically dissolved.

### **Speaker of The House**

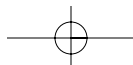
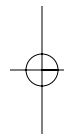
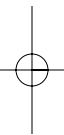
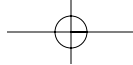
The presiding officer of the House of Representatives is the Speaker of the House. The Senate does not have a speaker; that role is filled by the Majority Leader.

### **Standing Committees**

Standing committees, as permanent units of the House and Senate, serve as the workshops of the legislature. It is their duty to carefully study all bills referred to them, reject some bills and to prepare others to be reported with a favorable recommendation from the committee.

### **Whip**

Senator or representative who serves as an internal lobbyist for the Republican or Democratic party, persuading legislators to support the party position and counting votes for the leadership in advance of floor action.





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