



Education

+

Effective

=

Communication

Legislative

Power

Why Should You Get Involved With Legislation?

Legislation will affect us as nursing students and affect our future as registered nurses.

Nurses and nursing students need to be aware of legislation and regulatory activities, be ready to support or oppose these activities in an informed manner and be ready to do work for the candidate of their choice so we can become a powerful and influential voice.

The First Step Toward Legislative Power



Education

Beginning Your Legislative Education...



Understanding
the
Legislative
Process

How a Bill Becomes a Law



House of
Representatives

+



Senate

+



President

=

Bill Becomes a Law



+



+



+



= Bill Becomes a Law

House of
Representatives

Senate

President

2/3 of the House
and Senate

How The System Works



House of Representatives



Bill is authored

Printed in Congressional
Record and Sent to Committee

Committee Hearings
(Reported Favorably, Favorably
With Amendments,
or Unfavorably)

Third reading with
vote. If passed,
engrossed Bill sent
to other house

Second reading on the floor.
Riders or amendments added.

Committee report printed
and Bill is put on Calendar

Senate

First reading. Referred to Committee.

Committee hearings
(as before)

Committee report
printed – Bill placed
on Calendar

Third reading with vote.
If passed, engrossed Bill returns
To House of Representatives

Second reading.
Opportunities for
amendments or riders.

House
concurs

House
refuses to
concur

Conference Committee;
House and Senate Reps
write a compromise Bill

To
enrollment

To both houses for vote;
returns to conference if not
passed in either house.

To President

President signs or
approves without
signature.

Vetoes Bill

Returns to House, then
Senate for override vote.
If passed with 2/3 vote...

Bill becomes a Law



Why do we have to understand the system?

We have to know how the system works so we can learn how to manipulate the system. We need to understand the legislative process so we can appropriately affect the system.



Broadening Your Legislative Knowledge...



Knowing
When to Act!

Key Times For Citizen Input

- During Committee Hearings
- Immediately Before Consideration of a Bill on the Floor
- During Consideration of a Bill on the Floor



How The System Works: When to Give Input



House of Representatives



White = Time for Input

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The Importance of Committees...

You need to understand which committees will be reviewing bills that deal with health issues – that way you only have to monitor the activity of those committees, you do not have to monitor every congressional committee.

Senate Legislative Committees for Health Concerns

- Senate Labor and Human Resources Committee

Subcommittees on...

- ☐ Labor
- ☐ Children, Family, Drugs and Alcoholism
- ☐ Handicapped
- ☐ Education, Arts and Humanities
- ☐ Employment and Productivity

- Senate Committee of Finance

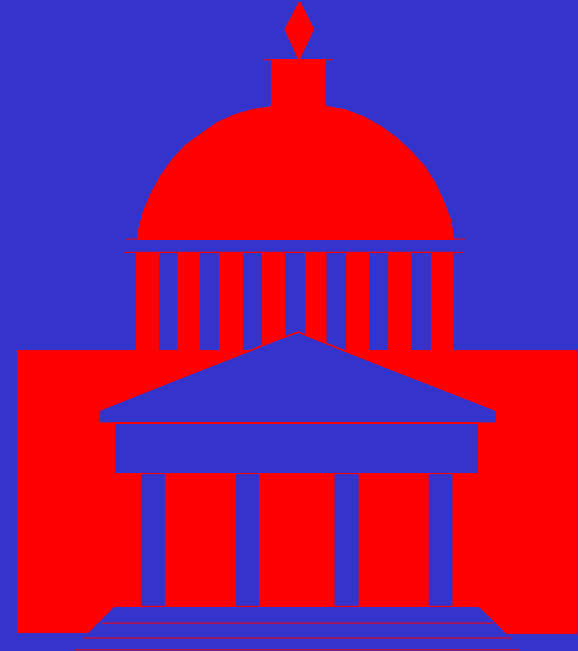
Subcommittees on...

- ☐ Health Care for Families and Uninsured
- ☐ Medicare and Long Term Care
- ☐ Social Security and Family Policy – Jurisdiction over all matters relating to the Social Security Act (Medicaid, Medicare, Long Term Care, Maternal and Child Health Block Grant, etc.)

- Senate Committee on Appropriations

Subcommittees on...

- ☐ Labor
- ☐ Health and Human Services
- ☐ Education



House of Representatives

Legislative Committees for Health Concerns

- House Committee on Education and Labor

Subcommittees On...

- ☐ Health and Safety
- ☐ Human Resources
- ☐ Post-secondary Education

- House Committee on Energy and Commerce

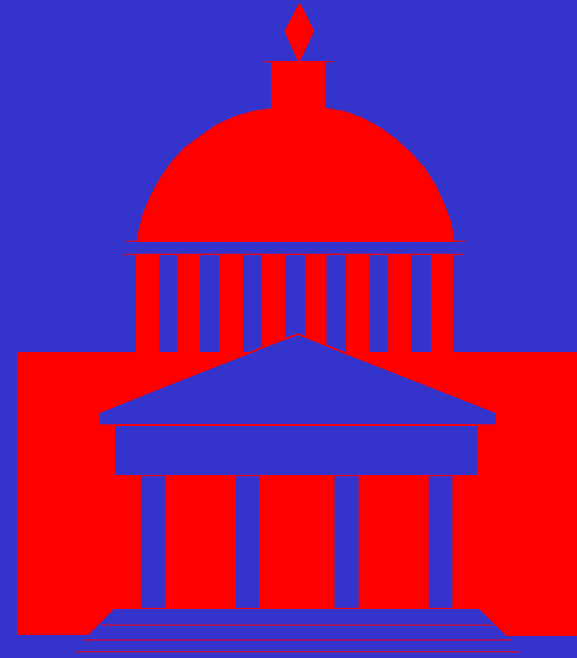
Subcommittees On...

- ☐ Health and Environment

- House Committee on Ways and Means

Subcommittees On...

- ☐ Health and Human Resources



State and Local Committees

- County and City Health Boards
- State Board of Nurse Licensure and Registration
- PRO's (Peer Review Organizations)
- The governing board of the Health System Agencies and the Statewide Coordinating Council

Why Do We Care?

- During Committee Hearings you may have the opportunity to provide testimony.
- Just prior to and during a vote legislators may or may not have decided their position and can sometimes be swayed, particularly if the legislation is controversial.



Putting Your Knowledge To Use...



Working With
Your
Legislator

Identify Your Legislators

You need to know...

- Local Office Addresses
- Telephone Numbers
- Email Addresses

How do you get this information?

- <http://thomas.loc.gov>
- League of Women Voters
- Republican or Democratic Headquarters

What can you do?

- Monitor your legislators' voting records through you local newspaper
- Contact their offices to determine their position on an issue
- Contact them when you support them and when you disagree
- Do not limit your opinion to just nursing issues, be informed on all issues

Get Involved on the Ground Level

Consider Getting Involved with your Legislator's Campaign

- This increases your visibility
- This increases the power of your voice
- You get an insider's view of your legislator's position on health care topics
- Allows you to help shape their opinions

Why Bother Working with Legislators?

- Your voice becomes important: Legislators value input from citizens, particularly those citizens who are informed about the issues!
- If you do not advocate for your patients, who will?



The Second Step Toward Legislative Power



*Effective
Communication*



Before Initiating Communication...



KNOW YOUR FACTS

- Know the correct name and title of the legislator
- Know the Bill number and working title of the legislation you are interested in
- Know the status of the legislation (in committee, hearings scheduled, on agenda for floor vote)

Other Things You Should Know...

The ANA, NLN, NSNA and various other associations make position statements in support of or against specific legislation. Be familiar with these and the rationale behind them!

NSNA relies on its Resolutions to state its position on various issues – by including a NSNA Resolution in support of your position, you harness the power of 30,000 student nurses!

How To Make A Memorable Phone Call

- Know the issue and your position.
- Prepare an outline so that you cover all major point in a short period of time.
- Expect that you may be asked to speak to a staff person and not the legislator.
- Follow up with a personal letter to the legislator, citing the name of the staff member you spoke with.

The Do's of Legislative Letters

- Address the letter correctly; spell the legislators name correctly!
- Letters to members of the House of Representatives should be addressed Honorable _____; to members of the Senate: Senator _____
- Clearly identify the bill, using the title, and number, if possible.
- Know about the issue or bill before you write.
- Identify yourself (occupation, hometown, member of NSNA)
- Use your own stationary
- Be courteous, brief and to the point.
- Provide pertinent reasons for your stand.
- Write a letter of appreciation whenever the legislator does something that meets with your approval.
- Write letters at appropriate times; for example, when a bill is in committee, and again before it goes to the floor for a vote.

The **Don'ts** of Legislative Letters

- Use threats or promises or berate your legislator.
- Demand a commitment before the legislator has had the time to consider the measure.
- Pretend to have a vast influence in the political area.
- Be vague.

Having an Effective Meeting

- Discuss only the essential issues. (Set your priorities before the meeting!)
- Have specific recommendations for the legislator on these issues.
- Leave a brief written statement of the point you wish to make with your legislator and offer you help to provide additional information.
- Don't overstay or try to solve all your problems in one visit.
- Don't be upset if the legislator cannot make the meeting. Try to meet with his key staff member in the subject area instead.
- Follow up on your visit with a personal letter expressing thanks and reiterating your major points.
- Offer resources on the subject.

Follow These Steps and You
Will Find Yourself on the Path
Toward Achieving...



Legislative Power