


Demystifying the Legislative Bill Process

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July 2018

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Demystifying the Legislative Bill Process

- Each year thousands of bills are introduced that add, delete, or amend state law
- This begins the annual legislative session that generally begins in January and concludes in September each year
- The annual and daily legislative calendars can be found here:
 - <https://www.senate.ca.gov/legdeadlines>
 - http://www.legislature.ca.gov/calendar_schedules.html

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Demystifying the Legislative Process



- All legislation begins as an idea
 - Ideas can come from anyone, and the process begins when either an individual or a group persuades a Senator or Assembly Member to author a bill
- Requires a legislator to introduce
 - If the author is a Senator, the bill is introduced at the Senate Desk; if an Assembly Member, at the Assembly Desk
 - Bills are numbered and identified by the house of origin

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Demystifying the Legislative Process



- Must be heard by legislative committees
 - Newly introduced bills are assigned by the Rules Committee to the appropriate policy committee(s) for analysis and a hearing
 - ◆ Bills are at least heard by a policy committee in both houses
 - If the bill has a cost, it must also be heard in a fiscal committee
 - The public is allowed to speak for or against a bill during these hearings
 - Public letters of support or opposition are reflected in the committee analysis that is written on every bill
- Then is heard on the floor of each house
 - Once a bill passes the policy and fiscal committees, it is heard by the full house on the floor and is voted on by all present members
 - ◆ If approved, it is sent to the other house to go through the same process

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Demystifying the Legislative Process



- Governor has the final say!
 - After a bill has passed both houses, it is sent to the Governor who has three options:
 - ◆ Sign the bill
 - ◆ Veto the bill
 - ◆ Allow it to become law by not taking any action
 - If the bill is signed, it is sent to the Secretary of State for chaptering and inclusion in the state statutes
 - ◆ Unless otherwise specified, bills take effect on January 1 of the following year

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Taking Positions on Legislation



- Each year, SELF's Executive Director and Legislative Consultant review hundreds of bills introduced to determine if there is an impact on local educational agency (LEA) risk management, liability, and insurance
 - Recommended positions on those bills determined to have an impact are provided to SELF's Executive Committee for approval
 - A monthly bill report is prepared by SELF's legislative consultant, which is provided by the SELF office to member LEAs
- SELF's legislative consultant drafts letters of support or opposition based on SELF's approved positions
- SELF's legislative consultant coordinates legislative efforts with other statewide education organizations (ACCCA, ACSA, CAJPA, CASBO, CSBA, and others) on high-profile bills

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Tracking Legislation



- You can track a bill on the Legislature's website:
 - <http://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/>
- You can monitor bill hearings at:
 - <http://www.calchannel.com/live-webcast/>
- You can find your Legislator at:
 - http://www.legislature.ca.gov/your_legislator.html

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Taking Positions on Legislation



- On high-profile bills, SELF not only works with other statewide organizations but will reach out to member LEAs to ask them to submit letters to committees or the Governor
 - SELF's legislative consultant provides draft templates to assist in the preparation of LEA letters

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Sample Letter



Place on School District/Community College Letterhead

Date _____

The Honorable _____
Member or Chair, _____ Committee
State Capitol, Room _____
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: Bill # and Author Position: Support or Oppose

Dear _____:

On behalf of _____, we are writing to respectfully ask for your support or opposition of Bill # and Author.

This bill would _____ and impact our school district/community college district by _____.


Therefore, we strongly support or oppose Bill # and respectfully ask that it be adopted/rejected when it is heard by the Committee.

Sincerely,

Your Signature and Title

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Sample Letter



- Letters should be addressed to the chair of the committee
 - Copies should be sent to the author and to the members of the committee where it is being heard
 - Committee information can be found here:
 - ◆ <https://www.assembly.ca.gov/committees>
 - After choosing the committee, click on the Members & Staff link
 - ◆ <https://www.senate.ca.gov/committees>

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