

# How a bill becomes a law

The General Assembly normally meets from January through June of each year. During this time, they participate in making new laws, amending old laws and studying what outcome laws will have on the people in their districts and our state.

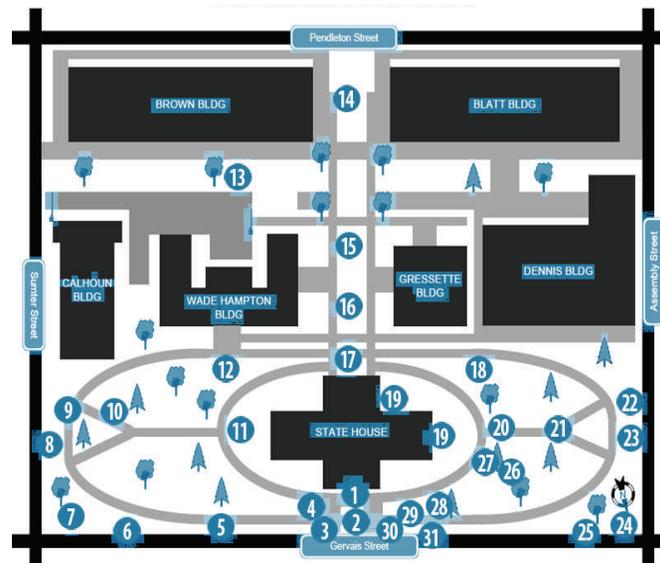
When a bill is first presented, it is read so that every member in that body can hear it. Then the bill is sent to a subcommittee for debate. The subcommittee can change the bill, pass the bill or reject the bill. If the bill is passed, it is then sent to the full committee.

If the bill is passed by the full committee it is then sent to the Floor and the members vote whether to pass the bill as it is, amend the bill or reject the bill.

The passed bill must then be sent to the other body of the General Assembly for their review. For example, if a bill is passed in the House, it must be sent to the Senate for their consideration.

The bill then goes through the same process in the second body as it did in the first body.

Finally, the bill then goes to the Governor for her signature or veto.



## A Map of the State House Complex

The Gressette Building - Senator's Offices  
The Blatt Building - House Member's Offices

[How to find YOUR legislator](http://www.scstatehouse.gov/cgi-bin/zipcodesearch.exe)  
[http://www.scstatehouse.gov/  
cgi-bin/zipcodesearch.exe](http://www.scstatehouse.gov/cgi-bin/zipcodesearch.exe)

## **GO MODERN!**



Some legislators now have Facebook or Myspace pages in addition to their campaign websites.

Many of them also have Twitter accounts. Don't forget that these too can be useful tools in maintaining a relationship with your legislator and finding out how they are staying active in your community!



## Government Relations

### *A Guide for Effective Advocacy*

Capitol Consultants  
PO Box 1763  
Columbia, SC 29202  
[www.capconsc.com](http://www.capconsc.com)

# Quick Tips

**KEEP IT SIMPLE...** Legislators are "tugged at" from hundreds of groups weekly. A well-prepared and informative person can present his case to a legislator in a short period of time. The legislator will appreciate your respect for his or her busy schedule. If you have very detailed information you would like to share with him or her, offer it in writing. Highlighted bullet points always offer an overview of facts in a concise, easily understandable format. Always make yourself available to provide additional information.

**MAKE IT PERSONAL...** Be sure to include the local impact: specifically how this issue will affect you, your family, your business, or your community. Remember, it is the people back home that elect a legislator and the people back home that keep them in office!

**BE A RESOURCE...** You are the expert on your issues. Offer to provide any assistance you are able to give your legislator on your issues that come before the General Assembly.

**CONSIDER YOUR SETTING...** It is not always necessary to come to Columbia to visit your legislators. Visits in the legislator's local office when the legislature is not in session are also effective. When the legislature is not in session, the legislator may have more time to meet with you.

**MAKE FRIENDS...** Be sure to introduce yourself to his or her staff. They can be very helpful in your future dealings with the legislator.

**GET ACTIVE...** Ask to receive your legislator's newsletter, or sign up to receive email updates if they have them available on their website. Attend political functions and fundraisers in the district or invite your legislator to speak at your civic club or church group.



## Where do I begin?!?

Sometimes, it is difficult to determine what the best method of communication is for your legislator. Should you call? Write? Meet in person? It really depends on how much time is available. Personal meetings and face-to-face contact is always best. Calling is the next best method. Letters are effective when they are short and have original and specific details about how the issue affects you.

- When you have the opportunity to meet with your legislator, make sure you have your facts together so you can use your time wisely and get across your main points.
- When you are making a phone call to your legislator; many times you will have to leave a message. When this is the case, be sure to leave your name, phone number so they can get back to you, identify yourself as a constituent, which bill you are calling about (cite the bill number), what action you would like them to take on the bill and why.
- When writing your legislator, be sure to individually address it to only YOUR legislator. Again, refer to the specific bill number and its impact on you and your community. If your letter arrives too early, it could be forgotten. If it arrives too late, there is nothing the legislator can do to help you. Use personal stationery or business letterhead when writing legislators. Address the letter correctly. Be sure to include your return address on the letter.

You may write any member of the Senate at:

The Honorable \_\_\_\_\_  
Post Office Box 142  
Columbia, SC 29202-0142

You may write any member of the House at:

The Honorable \_\_\_\_\_  
Post Office Box 1186  
Columbia, SC 29211-1867

To call a House member when they are on the floor of the House, call *803-734-2402*. To call a Senator when they are on the floor of the Senate, call *803-212-6700*.

Visit the state house website at [www.scstatehouse.gov](http://www.scstatehouse.gov)

