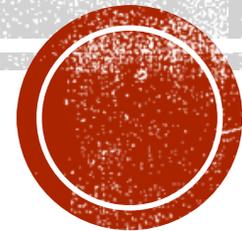
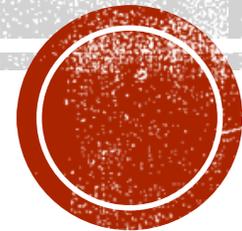


**BE AN EFFECTIVE
GRASSROOTS ADVOCATE**



CIVICS 101

A brief refresher course on how a bill becomes a law



WHAT'S SUPPOSED TO HAPPEN

- 1. Introduction: Bill is introduced in either house (First Reading) submitted to the Clerk or Secretary, and is given a title and number
- 2. Assigned: to a Committee(s).
- 3. Hearings: are held - Committee may ask interested citizens to testify for or against.
- 4. Amendments: a Committee may amend a Bill, to the point of writing a new version is substituted for the original (a "Clean Bill").
- 5. Committee Vote: on whether to "report" the Bill to the full House or Senate. A Bill is usually reported favorably. If a Committee is against the enactment of a particular Bill into Law, it will simply table the Bill (allows the Bill to die in Committee).
- 6. Scheduled: Leaders of the chambers schedule the Bill for debate and vote.
- 7. Congressional Debate: Bill is reported back to either the House or Senate where it is debated.
- 8. Second Reading: At the conclusion of the debates the Bill is read in sections, at which time amendments can be offered.
- 9. Third Reading: Bill is read by title and voted on by the entire Senate.
- 10. Senate Debate: Bill goes through the same steps in the opposite House.
- 11. If the Bill is passed in substantially the same form by both Houses, it is sent to the President for signing.
- 12. Conference Committee: If different versions of the Bill is passed in each chamber, a conference committee composed of members of both chambers work out the differences and the revised bill is returned to each chamber for vote.
- 13. Revision: Revised Bill from Conference Committee is voted on again in each house.
- 14. President: President signs or vetoes the Bill. If signed, the Bill becomes a Law; if vetoed, each chamber must approve the Bill by two-thirds majority for it to become law.
- 15. Override: If the President vetoes the Bill the Congress can over-ride the veto with a 2/3 vote



I'M JUST A BILL... SORT OF



A “TYPICAL” CONGRESSIONAL OFFICE

- Washington DC:
 - Chief of Staff (CoS): Runs the office, chief advisor, manages the staff
 - Press Secretary/Communications Director: Media relations and public communications
 - Scheduler/Executive Assistant: Manages the member’s schedule
 - Legislative Director (LD): Supervises the legislative staff, advises the member on legislative activity in all areas
 - Legislative Assistant (LA): Handles legislative/policy issues in a select number of issue areas, monitors and analyzes specific legislation and recommends action to the member, meets with constituents regarding issues in their issue areas
 - Legislative Correspondent (LC): Receives, logs, and drafts response to all constituent generated legislative mail
 - Staff Assistant/Receptionist: Answers phones, general requests such as flags and tours



A “TYPICAL” CONGRESSIONAL OFFICE

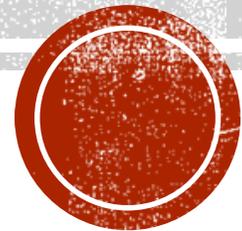
District Office:

- District Director: Responsible for all activities outside of Washington, DC
- Caseworker/Field Representative: Handles personal constituent issues with a federal agency, coordinate district events, office hours, and meetings in the district



YOU.

Why are you the most important voice in Farm Bureau



WHY YOU?

- You vote
- You have personal/professional connections with the other constituents
- You know the district
- You know the issue
- You have personal stories
- You compliment state Farm Bureau activities



YOU VOTE.

As a constituent, you have the ability to vote, or not vote for the elected official. If a Representative or Senator wants to keep their office, it is in their best interest to be responsive and representative of their constituents.



YOU KNOW OTHER CONSTITUENTS

People talk: coffee shops, Farm Bureau meetings, family.

Good or bad.



YOU KNOW THE DISTRICT.

You aren't the only farmer in the District.



YOU KNOW THE ISSUE.

There are “3 policy staffers to help a Member. Think of all the government does; it's everything. Right now I'm handling budget, tax, trade, agriculture, transportation, financial services, census, environment, interior, social security”

“There are national priorities (GOP, bills on the floor, oversight letters, etc.) and district priorities. Both categories have short and long term goals and projects. I also am supervisor for the LC. Day-to-day workload all depends on the time of year, and what is needed back home, which can change on a dime (think the curveballs that were the alfalfa shortage a few years back, or avian influenza; then expand that beyond Ag.).”



YOU HAVE PERSONAL STORIES

“Facts aren’t people.”



YOU ARE THE FACE OF FARM BUREAU

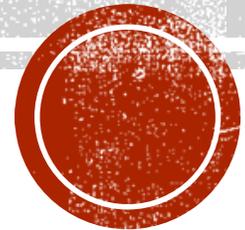
Policy staff at Minnesota Farm Bureau and American Farm Bureau are working every day on your behalf. You are the face of the issues, you live and breath the issues that we talk about with staff.

- Almost all staff said constituent visits to the Washington office (97%) and to the district/state office (94%) have some or a lot of influence on an undecided member.
- Constituents who make the effort to personally communicate with the Representatives and Senators (except for form letters, postcards, and faxes) are more influential than lobbyists.



BEING EFFECTIVE

You are the best person for the job, how can you do it well?



TO HAVE AN IMPACT, PROVIDE:

- **Statistics:** “Can’t argue with numbers.”
- **Examples:** “Anecdotes + research = persuasion”
- **Demonstration:** “Seeing is believing.”
- **Analogy:** “Connects with your world.”
- **Testimonial:** “Experts sell.”
- **Experience:** “You’ve been there...I haven’t.”



EFFECTIVE MESSAGES

- **Relevancy:** Highlight the impact on the district and connect the issue to the policymaker's established interest or voting record
- **Specific:** What can the policymaker do to help solve a problem?
- **Truthful:** It's ok to say "I don't know," just make sure to add "but I'll get back to you!"
- **Positive:** Focus on positive steps that can be taken to solve a problem. In addition, positive messages stay away from referring to government as "evil" or "wasteful."
- **Brief:** Use your time wisely.



BEFORE THE VISIT

- **Know the issue - and status**
- **Talking points - brief and to the point**
- **Examples - personal (farm, county, district)**
- **Know the oppositions view and prepare to diffuse it**



DURING THE VISIT

- **Introduce yourself, farm, home in district**
- **Be cordial, friendly, positive, bipartisan**
- **Relate the issue to your farm**
- **Stand firm, but don't overreact**
- **Ask for something- support/oppose, views**
- **Thank them for meeting with you**
- **Work with them on this issue in the future - - one-pager on issue**



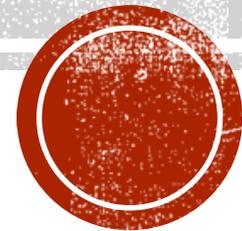
THE ART OF A FOLLOW UP

- **Personal thank you.**
- **Invite them out to the farm.**
- **Ask to be placed on their email list.**
- **Look forward to seeing them in the district.**
- **Follow-up thank you for votes, co-sponsorship, letter to editor, etc.**



NOW THAT YOU KNOW WHY

What can you do next?



THE PUBLIC POLICY WEBSITE

<http://fbmn.org/pages/public-policy>



EMAILS: TIPS FROM A FORMER STAFFER

- DO: Keep the subject line germane so they know what it's about and can search for it later
- DON'T: Use a subject line that could be mistaken for a mass email
- DO: Keep it short and to the point. Be truthful, accurate, and straightforward
- DO: Offer to provide additional information or materials
- DON'T: Misspell the staffer or their boss' name
- DO: Be polite. Remind the staffer of how you know each other, if applicable

Most importantly- make it your own.

