



Advocacy Guide

You Can Make a Difference!

There are many different ways to get involved in the legislative process. Here are just a few:

Sign-Up to Receive Legislative Alerts from The Arc of Indiana and The Arc of the United States

Stay informed about state and federal issues impacting people with developmental disabilities, and learn how and when to contact your elected leaders, by signing up to receive legislative alerts via e-mail. Just go to: <http://capwiz.com/thearc/mlm/signup/>

Let Your Local Officials Hear Your Opinion

As a citizen, your opinions help elected officials decide how to vote on issues. Let your elected officials know your opinions through letters, e-mails, phone calls, etc. Remember, they are very busy and you want your message to have as much impact as possible. For the most impact, your communication should be brief, clear, and focused on just one issue.

Attend Public Meetings

City Councils, County Councils, and the Indiana Legislature are open to the public. Attending meetings helps keep you informed of the way public business is transacted and how the various elected officials interact. In addition, public meetings give citizens a good opportunity to give their opinions by speaking during the public feedback section of the meetings.

Also, nearly all elected officials have public meetings. They are at schools, libraries, churches, etc. This is your opportunity to hear from your elected official what they are working on and to give your input on issues.

Letters to the Editor

Writing a letter to the editor is an effective way to publicly discuss an issue and influence the decisions of local officials. Every newspaper has different requirements for letters to the editor. In general, as with letters to elected officials, it is important to be brief, clear, concise and focus on just one issue.

Join an Advocacy Group

Joining an advocacy group is one way to increase your awareness to elected officials. You can often be more successful and have more fun working with a group. There are many disability-focused groups to consider joining: a local chapter of The Arc, a family support group, a neighborhood association, etc.

Register and Vote

This is critical! Voting is your most effective tool for local government involvement. By voting and supporting your chosen candidate, you send a message about the kind of government you want. To vote, a citizen must be registered. Registration to vote ends 29 days before each election. To register you must be eighteen years old on the day of the election and you must be a citizen of the United States. You can register at your local city clerk's office, license branch and many other government offices.

Be an Informed Voter

Being an informed voter is as important as voting! Before you vote, it is essential to seek information on the candidates and their positions. Information is abundant during elections. Much information is available from political parties and candidates themselves. While this information is helpful, it is also important to get information from other sources such as newspapers, web sites, public debates, advocacy groups you are interested in, etc.

Work for the Political Party or Candidate of Your Choice

Getting involved with a political party, or political candidate, gives you an inside track on the process. Every political party and candidate has plenty of work that needs to be done. You may be asked to make phone calls, stuff envelopes, hand out literature, staff a booth, work on Election Day, etc. Once you establish yourself as a reliable volunteer, you will have the opportunity to have your point of view listened to, and perhaps, acted upon by your party and your party's government officials.

GET INVOLVED IN THE LEGISLATIVE PROCESS

Establish and Maintain Credibility

- Know the facts. Do your homework on the issues.
- Know the legislator's political views as well as you can. His/her past voting record and legislation he/she had introduced are important indicators.
- Know the opposition. Be familiar with what those with views different from your own are saying.
- Be prepared to respond to the opposing view.

Establish Regular, Ongoing Communications

- Establish a relationship. Try not to talk to the legislator or staff for the first time when you want something.
- Be familiar with the process. It is important you understand how a bill becomes a law and where your issue is in the process.
- Maintain communications with your Legislator. Let him/her know when you agree/disagree with his position on issues.
- Always be brief and get to the point of your communication.
- Compliment or thank your legislator when he/she votes the way you requested or did something for which you agree.
- Get to know the legislator's staff. They are very important in the political process and should not be undervalued.

Be Proactive, Not Reactive

- Take the initiative to contact your legislator. RARELY, do legislators contact you.
- Offer ideas and share alternatives to the problem. If you disagree with the option presented in a bill you oppose, offer an alternative.
- Don't be self-serving. Legislators are generally just trying to do the right thing for the community as a whole.
- Be timely. Your options are more restricted the further into the legislative process you get.

YOUR LEGISLATOR'S VIEWPOINT

How does the world look to your local legislators? What are their issues and what are the things that may influence their attitudes and way of thinking?

Your Legislator...

Knows that “all politics is local”: This remark means that officeholders pay first allegiance to their districts and consequently their re-election. This is why grassroots contact from their home district is most effective.

Wants to do the right thing: Each of us wants to do a good job, but we sometimes forget that this basic human nature also applies to elected officials.

Wanted to get re-elected: Despite the fact that nearly all incumbents are re-elected, they all thrive on their job and are constantly concerned with what they have to do to keep it or get a better one.

Wants to be responsive: Your legislator is in the business of pleasing people, and wants to accommodate you, but not at any cost. Other considerations may prevent him/her from doing so.

May know nothing about your issue: It is important to keep in mind that most legislators know little of the services available and how they are accessed. Share your knowledge and educate your elected official.

Has conflicting pressures: Reduce taxes, but balance the budget. Balance the budget, but don't cut our program. Tax him, but not me. Support your party, but be independent. Realize that your elected official is trying to do the right thing and way all of the opinions.

Wants to know how legislation affects his/her own district: This is where you can really help. You can talk to your local legislator about the impact of families in his/her district.

Finds it hard to vote against a friend but easy to vote against someone they don't know: Votes in the legislature frequently involve moving money from one program and giving to another. Unless the legislators know the impact that Medicaid cuts have on community based services, it is easy to accept the argument that those programs can afford the cut.

TELEPHONE PROCEDURES

While the Indiana General Assembly is in session, you can telephone your legislator to advocate a position on high priority legislation. During the session, it is highly recommended you use the State House phone numbers for your local legislators.

The following are guidelines to assist you in making these telephone calls.

- ◆ Call the State House Switch Board or, if you know, the number for your local legislator.
- ◆ Ask to speak to the legislator. On many occasions, time does not permit legislators to receive telephone calls. Do not be offended by not being able to talk to your legislator on the first try.
- ◆ If your legislator is not available, ask to speak to his legislative assistant. You will normally find that the staff person is knowledgeable of the issues and pleased to speak to constituents.
- ◆ State the reason for the phone call. Use the bill number and subject matter when possible.
- ◆ State the position you want the legislator to take (support or oppose).
- ◆ Explain how the legislation affects you and your family. Briefly tell your story.
- ◆ Discuss only one issue per telephone call.
- ◆ Ask the legislator's position
 - ◆ If the legislator's position is the same as yours, express agreement and thanks.
 - ◆ If your position differs from the legislator's, offer some factual information and ask if there is any additional information you can provide that would change his/her mind.
- ◆ State the facts as you see them. Try not to get emotional.
- ◆ If appropriate, follow up the telephone call with a letter or e-mail to the legislator.

USING E-MAIL

As an alternative to sending a letter, you may wish to send an e-mail to your legislators on issues of importance to you. E-mails are not viewed any differently than letters by legislators or their staff, they see it as an important communication from a constituent.

Remember, your e-mail is just an electronic letter. Just because there are no page breaks on an e-mail, you should not ramble on about your issue. Here are some guidelines for using E-Mail:

- ◆ Address your e-mail. Start with “Dear Representative/Senator Smith”.
- ◆ Make your e-mail brief, friendly and respectful.
- ◆ State your issue and what you are asking clearly at the beginning.
- ◆ Refer to bill numbers when possible.
- ◆ Make it clear that you are a constituent.
- ◆ Briefly explain your interest in the legislation; its effect on you, your family or loved one, or other families in the district.
- ◆ Ask the legislator for a response specifying his/her position and the reasoning.
- ◆ Ensure that you “sign” the e-mail with your name, address and phone number.
- ◆ If you are willing, Share your e-mail with The Arc. We can use your e-mail to demonstrate to the legislators and others that there is a public interest on specific issues.

SAMPLE LETTER

(Date)

The Honorable (member's name)
State House
200 West Washington Street
Indianapolis, IN 46204

Dear Senator/Representative (member's name):

I am writing in support (or opposition) of bill number SB/HB ### which will be heard on the Senate/House floor in the upcoming day/week.

The bill will have the following effect in the community. (Expand on the issue. Tell your personal story. How will you benefit/get hurt by the legislation?)

Thank you for taking time to review my concerns on this piece of legislation. After this bill comes up for a vote, I would appreciate being informed as to how you voted and why.

I am available to answer questions or provide testimony on this important issue.

Sincerely,

Your name
Address
Phone Number

HOW TO ADDRESS YOUR LETTER

The Honorable "*Insert Name*"
Governor of Indiana
State House – 206
200 West Washington Street
Indianapolis, IN 46204

Dear Governor "*Insert Last Name*"

The Honorable "*Insert Name*"
President Pro Tempore
Indiana State Senate
State House
200 West Washington Street
Indianapolis, IN 46204

Dear Senator "*Insert Last Name*"

Honorable "*Insert Name*"
Speaker of the House
Indiana House of Representatives
State House
200 West Washington Street
Indianapolis, IN 46204

Dear Representative "*Insert Last Name*"

Honorable "*Insert Name*"
State House
200 West Washington Street
Indianapolis, IN 46204

Dear *Representative/Senator* "*Insert Last Name*"

VISITING A LEGISLATOR

It is very important to develop a relationship with your legislators. The following guidelines can assist you in making a visit with you local legislator:

- ◆ When possible, make an appointment. You can speak with the legislator's secretary, legislative assistant or scheduler to get an appointment.
- ◆ You don't want to overwhelm the legislator with several different issues. Try to focus on one or two issues so you can have a good and thorough discussion.
- ◆ If you are meeting with a legislator to discuss specific legislation, review any background information and position statements you have available to you. Try to be aware of the opposing position and be prepared to comment.
- ◆ When talking with legislators, try to use bill numbers. As appropriate, ask or inform the legislators when a vote is expected before their committee or respective chambers. Make sure they know why you feel this legislation is important.
- ◆ Discuss with the legislator their positions on the issue and ask them how they plan to vote. It is important to know legislator's feelings even if they are inclined to vote contrary to your position.
- ◆ Get a commitment from the legislator. Don't take a legislator's politeness or consideration as a sign of agreement with your opinion. Ask the direct question – "Will you vote to support XXXX?"
- ◆ Continue working with your legislator even if you disagree. Most Legislators really do want to help and a positive relationship will pay off in the long run.
- ◆ When appropriate, request specific action from your legislator. If he/she does not serve on a key committee acting on your issue, request that they contact the Chair of the appropriate committee.
- ◆ Always follow up your meeting with a legislator with a short note. Thank the legislator for their time and remind them of the issue again. If they made a commitment to you to vote a certain way, remind them of that as well. Don't go through your whole arguments again, be brief.
- ◆ If you made an appointment to speak with a legislator and at the last minute, they send their legislative assistant to meet with you that is okay. Legislative assistants play a key role in the process as well and you should not treat them any differently. Ask the same questions, give your same statements and ask them to get back with you once they discuss your meeting with the legislator.

10 TIPS FOR TESTIFYING

Effective testimony before a legislative committee should not be a frightening or intimidating experience. Legislators are generally happy to see public interest in the process and welcome you.

Here are a few rules that should be followed:

Know the purpose and approach for your testimony. Understanding why you are testifying is important. Are you there to persuade, provide “expert” information, delay action, or defeat legislation? Remember, committees are rarely persuaded on testimony alone but it can have great impact.

Carefully prepare your testimony. Know your subject. Have accurate facts to support your arguments. Never try to “wing it”. You want to be seen as organized and efficient.

Establish a rapport with the committee. Before the hearing, try to introduce yourself to committee members who will be present. When you begin, briefly introduce yourself. If you are a constituent of any of the committee members, identify where you live. Only single out your legislator if you have a relationship.

Present your testimony effectively. Use a friendly, relaxed tone of voice. Avoid a monologue or formal speech; simply be conversational. Practice your testimony several times before the hearing so you are familiar with the flow of your talk.

Keep it simple.

Invite questions. When you finish giving your brief, clear testimony, offer to answer any questions. If there are none, don’t be concerned. Before you sit down, thank the committee for their attention.

Be prepared to answer questions. The most dangerous part of your testimony is during questions and answers. Legislators may ask you questions. Anticipate points a committee member may challenge and have answers prepared that back up points made in your testimony.

Don’t guess. If you don’t know the answer to a question, don’t be afraid to say, “I don’t know.” Always offer to get the information to them.

Never lose your cool or temper. Your testimony must be quietly confident, but respectful of the committee. Remember, they have the last word. If a legislator attacks you, take it and quietly refer to the points made in your testimony. Do not respond in kind or threaten a legislator. If a committee member disagrees with you, try to minimize or deflect the conflict respectfully but firmly. You cannot win an argument with a committee member during a hearing.

LEGISLATIVE INFORMATION QUICK REFERENCE

By Phone:

State House Telephone Center	(317) 232.9600
State House Switchboard	(800) 382.9842
State Senate Telephone Center	(317) 232.9400
State Senate Switchboard	(800) 382.9467

By Mail:

Name of Elected Official
State House
200 West Washington Street
Indianapolis, IN 46204

By E-Mail:

State House Member

h(insert district number)@in.gov

State Senate Member

s(insert district number)@in.gov

Political Parties

Democrat State Headquarters	(317) 231.7100
Republican State Headquarters	(317) 635.7561

Legislative Information

The Legislative Services Agency Public Information Office provides the public with copies and information about bills, amendments, roll calls, committee schedules, legislative calendars, and other important information during the legislative session.

Phone Number: (317) 232.9856

WORKING WITH PUBLIC OFFICIALS

GOLDEN RULES:

Your Word Is Your Bond: Don't ever promise anything you cannot deliver. Credibility is what you bring to a relationship with a legislator. Once lost, it will never be recovered.

Talk in Terms They Understand: Most legislators don't deal with disability issues. Guard against talking over their heads, particularly with acronyms and abbreviations.

Organize Your Presentation: Prepare an outline of your presentation in advance. Make sure to focus directly on the issues you want to cover. You should be brief and to the point. Public officials face strict time constraints and will appreciate concise, well-organized discussions.

Be Informed: Never advocate a position without first studying the facts and the argument's pros and cons. The fact that you want a legislator to adopt your position won't be enough to convince him/her. Do your homework.

Don't Underestimate Public Officials: With very rare exception they will be honest, intelligent and want to do the right thing. Your job is to inform them of what you think is right and why.

Don't Look Down on Government and Politics: While it may be tempting, a disdainful attitude is an unaffordable luxury. Your legislators are helping the future of families.

Treat Them As You Would Like To Be Treated: Put yourself in the public official's place. Try to understand his/her issues, outlook, and goals.

Be Helpful: Don't just contact public officials when you want their help. Keep in touch throughout the year....every year and keep them informed.

Get to Know Your Legislator: Start building a relationship on a personal level. Learn something about your legislator's interests and hobbies. Share information, briefly, on your common interests and views. Personal relationships will prove invaluable when you want an audience with your legislator.

Be Reasonable: Recognize there are legitimate differences of opinion. Never indulge in threats. They only succeed in creating or reinforcing a negative opinion.

Be A Good Opponent: Fight issues, not people. Don't take a negative vote personally.

Don't Break a Promise: This is the cardinal rule. Don't commit to a legislator that you will do something unless you are positive you can follow through.

GENERAL TIPS ON COMMUNICATING WITH YOUR LEGISLATORS

- DO Identify clearly the subject in which you are interested, not just the House or Senate Bill numbers. Bill numbers are often confused and the legislator will likely be more familiar with the subject matter than the bill number.
- DO State why you are concerned about the issue. Your own personal experience is excellent supporting evidence. Explain how you think an issue will affect your family, business, etc.
- DO Restrict yourself to one topic. Concentrate your arguments and avoid rambling.
- DO Put your thoughts in your own words. This is especially important if you are responding to something you read. If a legislator received many letters with exactly the same or nearly identical language, he/she may discount them as a part of an organized campaign. In some instances this works but it needs to be so voluminous that it must be weighed rather than read.
- DO Try to establish a relationship with your own elected official. In general, you will have more influence as a constituent.
- DO Communicate while legislation is being considered by committees and then again when it is on the House/Senate floor.
- DO Research what committees your elected officials serve on. Members of the Indiana General Assembly have much more influence over legislation within their committee's jurisdiction.
- DON'T Ever threaten a legislator with the prospect of "not voting for you again." Present the best arguments in favor of your position and ask for their consideration. You needn't remind a legislator of future election consequences. Mail and phone calls will be counted without your prompting.
- DON'T Pretend to exert vast political influence. Make your contact with your legislator as an individual. If you do represent a specific group, be sure to mention it.

QUICK REFERENCE

ACCESSIndiana

<http://www.in.gov/democracy.htm>

- The State of Indiana's website offers a wealth of information and resources in navigating State Government.

State Agency Information

<http://www.in.gov/agencylist.htm>

- Links to all of Indiana's state agencies.

State Telephone and E-Mail Directory

http://www.in.gov/apps/sic/phonebook/sic_phonebook

- Provides phone numbers and e-mails for state agency staff.

Local Government

<http://www.in.gov/mylocal/>

- Provides information on city and county government, including contact information and government services.

Have an Idea About What Should be a Law in Indiana?

<http://www.in.gov/apps/lisa/totbal/>

- "There Out to be a Law" provides a forum for Hoosiers to submit legislative ideas to both the General Assembly and the public at large. On a periodic basis, frequently recurring submissions will be forwarded to the appropriate legislative committees for review. Although this site offers an avenue for Hoosiers to voice their concerns, it should not act as a substitute for contacting your local elected officials.

THE LEGISLATIVE PROCESS

The process a bill goes through to become law can be long and cumbersome. Following is an outline of the steps a bill goes through to become law in Indiana.

- ◆ You and your supporters present an idea for a new bill verbally or in writing to your legislator.
- ◆ The legislator decides to author the bill and meets with legal specialists from the Legislative Services Agency to draft the bill's language.
- ◆ Once drafted, the bill is introduced by the legislator into his/her respective chamber.
- ◆ Once introduced, the bill is assigned to the appropriate standing committee by the leader of the respected Chamber.
- ◆ Standing Committees hold public hearings where they hear comments on the bill and may approve, reject or make amendments (changes) to the bill. (The chair of the committee is responsible for scheduling the meetings and what bills will be heard)
- ◆ During the hearing, the chair of the committee may ask for public comments on the bill. This is your opportunity to stand up and voice an opinion about the bill.
- ◆ The Chair will decide if any amendments will be made to the bill and will propose those amendments to be approved by the majority of the members of the committee.
- ◆ The Chair may take a vote on the bill if a quorum of committee members is present. A simple majority of members are needed for the bill to pass/fail.
- ◆ A report of the committee's action is submitted to the originating Chamber.
- ◆ The bill is eligible for second reading in the originating chamber on the second calendar day following the distribution of the committee report to the members.
- ◆ The bill is eligible for amendments on second reading by any member of the originating chamber. If any of the proposed amendments are accepted by the full chamber, the bill may be reprinted with the new language if deemed necessary.
- ◆ Once a bill passes second reading; it is eligible for third reading. At this stage of the process, the author presents the bill to the full chamber and the bill is debated by all members.
- ◆ During third reading, a roll call vote is taken. A constitutional majority is needed for a bill to pass on third reading. A vote less than the constitutional majority results in the bill failing to pass.
- ◆ A bill which successfully passes the originating chamber then moves to the second chamber to go through the same process.
- ◆ Once a bill passes the second chamber, any amendments must be approved by the originating chamber, before going to the Governor for his signature.
- ◆ A bill that moves through the second chamber without any amendments goes straight to the Governor's office for his signature.

Government Affairs Terms and Definitions

Amendment – Any alteration to an original introduced bill proposed by either a committee or a legislator.

BDDS – Bureau of Developmental Disability Services

Chamber – Another word for House of Representatives or Senate. Also refers to the actual room where legislative action takes place.

Citizen Legislature – Indiana’s General Assembly is classified as a citizen legislature. Lawmaking is not a full-time profession for the state’s legislators. The most common occupations of Indiana legislators are attorneys, teachers, business owners and farmers.

Concurrence – Essentially, an agreement. The Senate and House must approve identical versions of a bill before it can become law. When a version of the bill has passed on house, it is sent to the other house for approval. The second house either concurs with the bill or makes its own amendments. If the Senate and House do not agree on an identical version, the bill is sent to a conference committee.

Conference Committee – For a bill to become law, it must be passed by both the House and Senate in the same form. If amendments are added to a bill in the second house and passed, a conference committee consisting of members of both houses is appointed to resolve the differences. If the conferees reach a compromise, the chambers vote on whether to accept the conference committee’s decision. Generally, conference committees are comprised of two legislators from each chamber appointed by the president pro tempore of the Senate and the speaker of the House. If the committee is unable to reach a compromise, the bill dies.

DDRS – Division of Disability and Rehabilitation Services

Enacted – A Bill is enacted when it is signed into law by the governor.

Engrossed Bill – After a bill has passed second reading it is “ordered to engrossment,” or authenticated as the correct genuine bill to be considered on third reading.

Enrolled Act – After a bill has passed both houses in the same form, it is considered an enrolled act and ready for consideration by the governor.

First Reading – When a bill is introduced, it is ready for the first time and then referred to a standing committee to be considered.

First Regular Session or Long Session – The first session of every new General Assembly can last up to 61 working (session) days. Beginning in early January, this session cannot extend beyond April 30. Occurring in odd-numbered years, the first regular session is often called the “long session” because of the legislative approval process of Indiana’s biennial budget.

FSSA – Family and Social Services Administration

General Assembly – This refers to the joint meeting of the Senate and the House of Representatives during two consecutive years. General Assembly is also used as a synonym for the combined house of the Indiana legislature.

Germane – committee action and amendments to a bill must be germane (relevant) to the subject matter of the original bill in which they are inserted. Amendments or committee actions ruled not germane are disregarded and do not receive consideration by the House or Senate.

Gerrymander – To draw district boundary lines in a way that favors a particular candidate or political party or reduces the voting power of a minority group.

House Bill (HB) – A bill that is introduced by a State Representative and originates in the House.

House Enrolled Act (HEA) – A house bill that has passed both the House and Senate.

Interim Study Committees – Meeting during the months between sessions (interim), these committees study relevant issues and recommend legislation, if the committee members deem it necessary. The subjects often are suggested by legislators in the form of resolutions, but the committees are created by the Legislative Council.

Legislative Services Agency (LSA) – A non-partisan state agency whose duties include bill drafting, research, code revision, and fiscal, budgetary and management analysis. Employees of the LSA assist interim and standing committees, as well.

OMPP – Office of Medicaid Policy and Planning

Originating Chamber – The chamber, either the Senate or House of Representatives, in when a bill is first introduced.

Resolution – Generally used for congratulatory or honorary purposes, resolutions are introduced and voted upon by the Senate or House of Representative. Although they do not have the force of law when passed, resolutions also can suggest possible subjects for study in interim study committees or recommend future legislation. Most resolutions are considered symbolic and, when passed, denote the approval of the subject matter by the legislative body. Joint resolutions also can be introduced and considered by both the Senate and House of Representatives.

Roll Call – This refers to the voting procedure. Before electronic voting machines were installed in the House and Senate chambers, a clerk would read the roll call and the legislators would register their decisions by voice votes. Today, an electronic board lists the names of the legislators. Individual votes are registered when legislators select “aye” or “nay” votes via buttons on their desk.

Second Reading – After the bill has been printed, adding any amendments proposed by the standing committee, it is eligible for second reading. All legislators are allowed to offer amendments to the bill at this time.

Second Regular Session or Short Session – Occurring in even-numbered years, the second regular session (“short session”) can extend for up to 30 working (session) days, but not beyond March 15.

Senate Bill (SB) – A bill that is introduced by a State Senator and originates in the Senate.

Senate Enrolled Act (SEA) – A senate bill that has passed both the Senate and House.

Session Day – A session day constitutes a working day for the Indiana Senate and House of Representatives. Not necessarily consecutive calendar days, legislators may recess for varying periods of time between working days. It should also be noted that, under certain circumstances, a session day may span more than one calendar day.

Special Session – A special session may be called by the governor if he or she feels “the public welfare shall require” such a meeting of the legislature. A special session is limited to 30 session days during a period of 40 calendar days.

Standing Committees – These committees consider bills after they have been introduced. The Committees, which exists in both houses of the legislature, cover specific fields of interest such as agriculture, education, labor, public health and the judiciary. Committee meetings are open to the public so interested citizens and affected organizations can offer arguments for or against proposed legislation.

Stripping a Bill – Occasionally, the original contents of a bill are taken out and replaced with new language. This can be done in committee or by amendments. This procedure is only allowed, however if the new contents are relevant to the original subject matter of the bill.

Third House Meeting – A public meeting that takes place in a Legislator's District. General on Saturday or Monday mornings during the months the Indiana General Assembly is in session.

Third Reading – This refers to the point at which a bill undergoes final passage or rejection by a roll call vote of the members of the House or Senate. A floor debate to discuss the merits of the legislation generally precedes the final vote.

Veto – After a bill has been passed by both houses in the same form, it is eligible to the governor to be signed into law. If the Governor rejects the bill, he issues a veto. A veto bill can be overridden by a constitutional majority (two-thirds) in both houses.

AFTER A BILL BECOMES A LAW

Responsibility

Once a bill becomes law, the state or local agency with primary responsibility for the law must implement it. Generally, the law includes a provision naming the agency charged with this task. This responsibility is important to the law because crucial elements of a program can be changed in its implementation.

Your Role

Concerned citizens must monitor this process. Sometimes, as the guidelines of the law are being written and implemented, they may vary from the original scope of the law.

Concerned citizens can call the state agency responsible for implementation to request information about what is being done and opportunities there may be for public input.

Implementation

Implementation of a law, especially one that has an impact on services, usually involves changing rules and regulations and/or changing policy. Often, the public is able to have input on the drafts of these rules and regulations by attending and voicing opinions during the state agency's public hearing process. The preparation of the rules and regulations for actual enforcement is called promulgation. The promulgated rules and regulations must receive public notice by being published in the Indiana register. A copy of the Indiana Register is available at any public library and on the state's web site.

Final Steps

It is imperative that there is a budget available to enforce the law and support the program. A program will not work effectively if there is no budget available for support. It is also critical to notify any individual or group affected by the law. For example, if the law creates a new service program, any individual affected by the law needs to know who is eligible for the program's services and how to access the services. The public must also be aware of any law that requires and changes in everyday procedures.