

HOW TO TAKE ACTION

A. Write a letter or email a legislator

Letters and emails are an effective and easy way to get your legislator's attention. You can find the email address or mailing address at the legislator's website. Some best practices to keep in mind:

- ◆ Start the message with a clear sentence on the issue or bill and your position on it
- ◆ Focus on one issue
- ◆ List your reasons for supporting or not supporting the issue
- ◆ Be polite and professional

B. Call a legislator

Like writing a letter calling a legislator's office is a great way to advocate for an issue you care about. The legislator's office phone number can be found on his or her website.

C. Visit a legislator

Meeting with a legislator is a great way to engage them but is more difficult to accomplish. Contact the legislator's office to schedule a meeting either at the State Capitol or in the legislator's district. Legislators are very busy so please understand if you have difficulty finding a time that works for both of you.

D. Testify on a bill

When a bill comes before a committee anyone from the public can testify. You have the option of testifying in person at the Capitol or submitting your testimony online. For a step-by-step help in testifying contact your Senator's office and find more online at www.cga.ct.gov/asp/content/yourvoice.asp

QUESTIONS? NEED HELP?

Contact Senate Democrats 860-240-8600 or senatedems.ct.gov/get-involved.

How to Engage Your Local Representatives



Connecticut State Senate Democrats 2018

QUICK INFO TO KNOW

State Senators

- ◆ 36 state Senators
- ◆ Senators serve 2 year terms
- ◆ Find yours at www.cga.ct.gov/asp/menu/cgafindleg.asp

State Representatives

- ◆ 151 state Representatives
- ◆ Reps serve 2 year terms
- ◆ Find yours at www.cga.ct.gov/asp/menu/cgafindleg.asp

Legislative Session

- ◆ Legislative session is the time in which Senators and Representatives work to write laws for our state. The Connecticut legislature is part-time so legislative session is not 12 months a year.
- ◆ In odd-numbered years, session starts in January and ends in June
- ◆ In even-numbered years, session starts in February and ends in May

Committees

- ◆ Before a bill is voted on by every lawmaker, it is reviewed and voted on by at least one of 25 legislative committees
- ◆ Committees review bills that apply to the topic that they oversee. For example, the Environment Committee would review a bill on pollution control
- ◆ For a full list of all the committees go to www.cga.ct.gov/asp/menu/cgacommittees.asp
- ◆ Committees have a chair from the Senate and a chair from the House. In 2017, there are 2 Senate chairs since the upper chamber is split equally between Democrats and Republicans.
- ◆ All committees begin at the start of legislative session
- ◆ Committees end their work at different dates between mid-March and early April. You can find the exact dates at www.cga.ct.gov/asp/menu/cgasessionfiles.asp

ACTIONS YOU CAN TAKE

A. Propose a new law to your legislator

Senators and Representatives can file proposed bills and resolutions to change state law before session begins and for a limited time afterwards. These proposals start as a broad concept until a committee has them written in full legal language.

During this time you can:

- ◆ Contact your legislators with your ideas for new laws

B. Support a bill when it is in front of a committee

Once a bill is proposed it goes to the committee that oversees that topic area. A committee can choose to draft a bill and turn it into full legal language. A committee can also hold a public hearing on the bill where members of the public can voice their opinion. Finally, a committee can vote to support a bill. If a bill passes in committee it will either go to another committee or can be voted on by all Senators and Representatives.

During this time you can:

- ◆ Contact the chairs and members of the committee on why you do or do not support a bill
- ◆ Testify on a bill in person or over email if the bills receives a public hearing
- ◆ Contact your legislators on why you do or do not support a bill

C. Support a bill after a committee voted to pass it

Once a bill has been approved by the necessary committee(s) it then must be voted on by all members of the House and all member of the Senate. After both have voted to approve the bill it must be signed by the Governor to become law.

During this time you can:

- ◆ Contact your legislators on why this bill should be voted on by everyone