

How a Bill Becomes a Law

RULES COMMITTEE

The Rules Committee assigns all bills to the appropriate Standing Committees.

STANDING COMMITTEE

Standing Committees debate and vote on whether the full House or Senate should hear each bill. This is also an opportunity for the public to testify.

FLOOR DEBATE & VOTE

The bill sponsor presents the bill to the entire House or Senate and answers questions. It is important to talk to your legislator before the vote on the bill.

If the bill passes, it is sent to the other house to begin the process again.

GOVERNOR'S SIGNATURE

If the bill passes both the House & the Senate, it is then sent to the Governor for him to sign or veto.

Follow a bill at
www.le.utah.gov

★ UTAAP LEGISLATIVE ALERT – TAKE ACTION!

The Utah Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics rely on members to speak up for children. We call and meet with legislators, provide testimony before legislative committees and are involved in other grassroots advocacy. **YOUR** involvement in advocacy activities is critical to the passage of state laws that benefit Utah's children and their families.

- 1. Get Involved!** Find your elected officials at www.leg.utah.gov. At the bottom of the page, locate **Who Represents Me?** and follow the prompts.
- 2. UTAAP Legislative Alerts.** Legislative alerts are email messages requesting quick action by our supporters on proposed legislation. "Talking points" and key information will be provided to assist you in communicating with your legislators. Responding to an alert requires very little time, but your efforts can yield big results!
- 3. Why your legislator will listen to YOU!** Legislators were elected to serve and advance the well-being of the residents living in their District. As a constituent, they want to know your views on issues. Some legislators are willing to put aside politics to support issues serving most of the people in their District. And, they need technical information to make good decisions about the issues they face.
- 4. Your voice will make a difference!**



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ADVOCATING BY PHONE, EMAIL OR IN-PERSON

Start communicating now! Make sure you don't wait until the session begins before expressing your ideas. It is not uncommon to begin talking about an issue in advance of the General Session. Legislator's contact information is available at www.le.utah.gov; click on Legislators then Senator Roster/House Roster. **If lawmakers are to represent your wishes in the legislative process, they must hear from you.**

1. Phone. *Calling is an effective way to communicate when you must get your message across quickly. It's a good idea to have notes in front of you to be brief and concise. When calling your legislator:*

- Identify yourself and that you live in their District.
- Indicate the bill number/name or budget item you wish to talk about.
- Briefly state your position and how you would like your legislator to vote.
- Give one or more reasons for your position—it's always a good idea to speak from personal experience.
- Don't argue if your legislator has an opposing view or is undecided.
- If your legislator needs more information, provide it quickly.
- If your legislator is unavailable, leave a message.
- Follow up your phone call with a brief note of thanks for the conversation and a concise summary of your position.

2. Emails, Letters & Faxes. *Written communication is an important way to influence legislation. When writing to your legislator:*

- Use the correct salutation. For example, Dear Senator (name) or Dear Representative (name).
- Identify yourself and that you're constituent.
- State why you are writing. For example, "I'm writing to ask your support for..." or "I'm urging you to vote yes on HB000."
- Keep your message focused and brief. Choose a few bullet points to support your position. If possible, give an example of how the issue affects their District.
- Use your own words. Personal letters carry greater weight rather than form letters.
- Re-state how you would like your legislator to vote. Never use a negative, threatening or condescending tone.
- Offer to provide additional information or answer questions regarding your position.
- Include your name, return address and phone number. This is especially important when sending an email message.

3. In-Person. *Personal visits are a highly effective way to help legislators understand your position. Legislators welcome visits from constituents. They want you involved. However, they are busy people. If you make an appointment during General Session, there is no guarantee the legislator will be able to keep it. Legislative schedules change at moments notice. Don't take this personally; it is just "how it is." When meeting with your legislator:*

- Make an appointment in advance; plan on 15 minutes. Be on time, be prepared, be brief and be polite.
- Try to learn in advance where your legislator stands on the issue (find your legislator at www.votesmart.org; click on voting record, issue positions or interest group ratings).
- Explain how the bill will affect children and their families, especially in the legislator's District.
- Have your facts straight. If your legislator needs more information than you have, offer to obtain it.
- At the end of the meeting, ask for your legislator's vote for your position. If your legislator opposes you position, find out why.
- Leave a one-page fact sheet with your legislator covering your key message. Write your name, address and phone number at the bottom.
- Before you leave, say, "Thank you" again.
- Follow up your visit with a thank you note.



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★ 5 THINGS TO DO AT THE CAPITOL

1. Utah State Legislature

General Session: January 23 through March 9, 2017

Website: www.le.utah.gov – Find your legislators, track a bill, or click on calendar for current legislative activity.

Utah State Capitol
410 N. State Street
Salt Lake City, UT 84114

General Information: 538-3000

Travel/ Parking Directions & Food Services: Travel north on State Street and head up the hill to the State Capitol building. The visitor's parking lot located on the east end of the Capitol. To get to the parking lot, turn right on 300 North and follow the street which becomes East Capitol Blvd. Take a left into the parking lot. Parking is also allowed around the perimeter of the Capitol along the streets. The cafeteria is located in the Capitol Complex East Building, 1st floor and is open to the public 7:00am to 2:00pm.

2. Senate Information Office, 3rd floor. Hours: 8-5pm Phone: (801) 538-1035 Fax: (801) 326-1475 House Information Office, 3rd floor. Hours: 8-5pm Phone: (801) 538-1029 Fax: (801) 326-1544

Go to the office of your Senator and Representative (some may be located in the Capitol Complex East Building). Ask to talk with your legislator. If they are not available, write a brief message (leave a fact sheet, position statement or brochure). Whether you talk to your legislator or leave a written note, **your message** should include:

- Your name and that you are a voter in their District.
- Indicate the group you belong to or came with (include number of members).
- Briefly state the issue you came to talk about.
- State why YOU care about this issue and what you would like the legislator to do. Share possible solutions to help resolve the issue.
- If you know, mention why this issue is important in their District.
- If available, leave behind a fact sheet, position statement or brochure about your issue/program. Write your name and address at the bottom.
- Always thank your legislator for their time.

3. Governor's Office, 2nd floor. Hours: 8-5pm Phone: (801) 538-1000 Fax: (801) 538-1528

Leave the same message and/or fact sheet at the Governor's office.

4. Attend a committee hearing.

Meeting times, locations and agendas are posted 24 hours in advance at www.le.utah.gov and at the Senate/House Chambers on the 3rd floor of the Capitol. Become familiar with the committee process, room layout and how to testify before a legislative committee.

5. Be visible!

Wear your name tag. Talk about your issue everywhere.

- If someone asks you a question and you don't know the answer—just say, "I don't know the answer, but I'll find out and get back to you." Then be sure you do.
- Create opportunities to talk about your issue—you never know who might be standing next to you or behind you—listening (it could be a Senator, a legislative aide or someone from the media).
- Remember—the whole idea is to be seen and heard!



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★ TESTIFYING AT A COMMITTEE HEARING

Committee meetings are open to the public and provide a forum for you to express your views about proposed legislation, budgets and other issues. Providing testimony may influence the committee's action. It also becomes part of the permanent record and may be used in future research. Make your testimony clear, brief and compelling. Use real-life stories to make complex issues meaningful and personal. Here are some tips for testifying:

- 1. Know the meeting time and location.** *Legislative committee agendas are posted 24 hours in advance at www.le.utah.gov; click on Committees. Meeting date, time and location are found on the meeting agenda. Check to make sure the issue you are following has not been removed from the agenda. Plan to arrive early--agenda items may not be heard in the order in which they appear.*
- 2. Follow committee procedures.** *Contact the staff fiscal analyst in advance of the meeting to request permission to testify and to be placed on the committee chair's list of those wishing to speak. Find out what procedures are used and rules you will need to follow. For assistance, call the Office of Legislative Fiscal Analyst at 538-1034.*
- 3. Know your audience.** *Learn everything possible about committee members. In addition to their public service, they have full-time jobs. Legislators are always pleased to be addressed by their name.*
- 4. Respect committee protocol.** *Address the committee correctly; for example, Madam or Mister Chair and Members of the Committee. Respect time limitations and be courteous.*
- 5. Prepare a formal statement of your position.** *Keep your message focused and brief. Speak from your own knowledge or personal experience. Support your opinion with clear, understandable facts. Be prepared to summarize your message in one minute—that may be all the time you're allowed.*
- 6. Anticipate questions and opposition.** *Be knowledgeable of the "other side of the story." You may be asked to discuss the differences. Research who opposes your position, why and what they are saying about the issue. Consider potential questions beforehand and how you will address them.*
- 7. Don't accuse committee members of causing your particular problem.** *Never scold, berate or insult lawmakers or other witnesses. This tactic will likely alienate them from your cause.*
- 8. Relax.** *Remember you are prepared to make a case for something that matters. Take a deep breath, and do your best.*

How to testify at a committee hearing:

Give a copy of your testimony to staff before you begin your presentation. Begin by addressing the chairperson first, then members of the committee.

"Madam/Mister Chair [Senator/Representative name] and members of the [committee name] thank for this opportunity to testify in support of [bill number/name]. My name is [state your full name, address, and the organization or group you represent]." Do not read your testimony word for word—prepare an outline. Keep your message focused. Speak from your own knowledge or personal experience. "In conclusion, [restate your position]. I ask you to vote in support of [proposed legislation]. May I answer any questions?" When a member asks a question, respond "Senator/Representative [name] the answer to your question is...." I thank the [committee name] for their concern and time."



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★ GUIDE TO OP-ED PLACEMENT & LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Your point of view can help readers in forming an opinion about timely and significant health care issues affecting children.

Opinion Editorials

Op-Eds are longer than letters to the editor, and there is more competition for space. You may want to call the paper for length requirements. Newspapers generally do not accept op-eds that are also being offered to other papers. Send your article to only one paper; let that paper know you are offering them an exclusive. Here are some tips to keep in mind:

1. **Keep it brief.** Newspapers have limited space, and editors don't have the time to cut your piece down to size (generally 600-800 words).
2. **Make a single point.** Make one point clearly and persuasively.
3. **Avoid jargon.** Simple language ensures that all readers, even non-experts, can understand your point. For example, don't use acronyms or technical language. If you rely on facts not commonly found in mainstream media, cite your sources.
4. **Use examples.** Illustrations, anecdotes and personal stories are persuasive tools. They help explain and bring complicated issues to life.
5. **Make a specific recommendation.** This is an opinion piece. State your opinion on how to improve matters.
6. **Draw the reader in.** Your first paragraph should draw the reader in by using a dramatic vignette or a well-stated argument.
7. **End with a bang.** Your final paragraph is as important as your opening paragraph. Be sure to summarize your argument in one strong final paragraph.
8. **Provide a catchy title.** If you don't, the paper will be more likely to run its own headline—which may not emphasize your central message.
9. **Follow up.** Most op-ed editors will respond to you within a week. If you haven't heard in that time frame or if your piece is particularly time sensitive, you can make one follow-up phone call to be sure it was received and ask about its status. Be prepared to shorten and re-submit your article as a letter to the editor if it does not get accepted as an op-ed.

Make sure your article is double-spaced with wide margins. List your name, address, phone, fax and e-mail contact information at the top of the piece. Find out from your local paper the best way to send an op-ed. Instructions for submitting an op-ed are usually at the bottom of the page where they appear or on the paper's web site.



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Letters to the Editor

The letter to the editor section of a newspaper is one of the most widely read sections and offers you a good way to express your thoughts about health issues affecting children. It's also the page policy-makers look to as a barometer of public opinion. Send copies of your letter to two or three newspapers. If newspapers get letters from several people raising the same issue, they will most likely publish one or two of them. So even if your letter doesn't get into print, it may help another one with a similar point of view get published. These tips will help:

1. **Check the letter specifications of the newspaper you are writing.** Instructions for submitting a letter to editor are usually at the bottom of the page where they appear or the paper's web site. You must include your name, address, phone, fax and e-mail contact with your letter. Listed below are a few of Utah's newspaper outlets for submitting letters to the editor:
 - Deseret News *Reader's Forum*: letters@desnews.com
 - Salt Lake Tribune *Public Forum Letters*: letters@sltrib.com.
 - Daily Herald *Letters to the Editor*: dhletters@heraldextra.com.
 - Standard-Examiner *Letters to the Editor*: letters@standard.net.
 - Park Record *Letters to the Editor*: editor@parkrecord.com.
 - The Herald Journal *Letters to the Editor*: hjletter@hjnews.com
 - The Spectrum *Letters to the Editor*: <http://static.thespectrum.com/lettertoeditor/>
2. **Make one clear argument.** If you are writing to support or refute an editorial, op-ed or article that has already run in the newspaper, be sure to mention the title and date printed. Your letter should be either in favor of or critical of the position described in the article. Address relevant facts that are ignored, but avoid blanket attacks.
3. **Make your letter timely.** If you are not addressing a specific article, editorial or letter that recently appeared in the paper you are writing to, then try to tie the issue you want to write about to a recent event.
4. **Be brief.** Generally, 200-250 words or less. If you can't contain the piece to that length, consider asking someone to help you edit.
5. **Make one point** (or most two). State the point clearly, ideally in the first sentence.
6. **Monitor the paper for your letter.** If your letter has not appeared within a week or two, follow up with a call to the editorial department and ask about its status. Find others to write letters when possible. This will show that other individuals in the community are concerned about the issue. If your letter doesn't get published, perhaps someone else's on the same topic will.

An increasing number of broadcast news programs (e.g., KSL Editorial Board) also solicit and broadcast "letters to the editor." Don't forget to include these outlets.



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★ ATTEND NEIGHBORHOOD CAUCUSES

Among the most important, but underplayed parts of the political process are the neighborhood caucus meetings. Get involved in this potent grassroots process! This is an opportunity to have a direct say in who will be the local leaders of each political party. This is where delegates to party conventions are elected who, in turn, will help select each party's slate of candidates for election.

- 1. Purpose of caucus meeting:** To elect new precinct party officers and delegates. Since all the candidates for delegate live in your neighborhood, you may already know or will know very quickly whether a particular candidate is the best person to represent you.
- 2. Definitions.**

Precinct: The smallest geographic political division in national, state, county and city politics. Everyone in your precinct votes at the same location and is represented by the same people in the Utah Legislature, the city council, the US Congress, etc.

Local political parties: We are all familiar with the major national political parties including Republican, Democrat, Constitutional, Green, Libertarian, etc. For every state and count in the US, these national parties have a local party. However, these local parties are independent from their national counterparts having their own platform, budget, bylaws and officers.

Platform: A formal statement of the party's beliefs and positions. It's usually 2-3 pages long, and although you don't have to agree with everything it says to belong to a party, it is meant to give the party's elected officials an idea of what issues are important to the people who put them in office.

Convention: Each national and local political party holds a convention every year. The state and county conventions are typically held on a Saturday morning in June or July at a local school or convention center. The purpose of the convention is to (1) create a party platform, (2) agree on rules that will govern the party in the coming year, and (3) decide which candidates will receive the party's nomination in November's general election. Conventions are also an opportunity for candidates to do last-second campaigning and for attendees to meet with or hear from currently elected officials.

State and County Delegates: Someone who goes to a party convention and is allowed to vote on the business of the convention. Elected delegates represent some geographic area (like a precinct). Each precinct selects 2-3 delegates to the state convention and 5-6 delegates to the county convention at their neighborhood caucus meeting. Super delegates are people who may vote on the business of the party convention by virtue of holding some elected position within the party (state legislators, county commissioners, mayors, etc.). Candidates for the party nomination work hard to contact and meet with delegates because each delegate vote is very important when you're trying to secure a party nomination. Delegates serve their neighbors by researching each candidate and issue before casting informed votes at the convention.

National Delegates: Delegates to the national party convention are quite different than delegates to the state or county convention. They are selected at the party's state convention and represent the entire state. Unlike county and state delegates, national delegates are typically required to vote a certain way. Delegates to the national conventions are the ones who are very important in the US presidential race and are the people.

Precinct Party Officers: Each precinct has officers which direct party affairs within their neighborhood. Precinct party officers usually include a Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary and Treasurer. The precinct President is also a delegate to both the State and County conventions, and the Vice President is also a delegate to the county convention. The precinct chair and vice chair sit on the county party's governing committee and occasionally may be called upon to assist the party by cleaning up voter records, advertising party events, fund raising, campaigning for party candidates, etc.

Get involved and let your voice be heard!



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WEBSITE RESOURCES

American Academy of Pediatrics: <http://aappolicy.aappublications.org/>

Valuable resource for policy statements on child health care and policy statements to improve the health of all children.

Utah State Legislature: www.le.utah.gov

Interested in a specific bill, tracking the status of a bill, or searching for bills in your area of interest (eg, child or health)? Want to find a Senate or House member and an instant link to their email? Or, find out who's who on the Health & Human Services Committee. What's happening on the Legislative calendar? Are you interested in obtaining a citizen's guide and tools to make your voice heard throughout the legislative process?

Project Vote Smart: www.votesmart.org

Information on elected officials including biographical and contact information, voting records, campaign contributions, public statements, issue positions, and evaluations/interest group ratings.

Utah Children: www.utahchildren.org

Click on "Legislation" to obtain facts sheets and talking points on proposed legislation impacting children.

Utah Health Department: <http://health.utah.gov>

"A to Z Index" provides information on services, including children's programs.

In addition to evaluating performance measures, Legislators ask the following questions to prioritize competing funding requests and demands: Can this program be reduced or eliminated (impact)? Are there federal requirements that must be met (penalties or rewards associated with mandate)? Are there state laws/statutory requirements that must be satisfied? What is the enrollment growth related to the number being served?

Utah Health Policy Project: www.healthpolicyproject.org

This project is committed to healthcare reform and is working to secure health care coverage for all Utahns.

Utah Community Action Partnership Association: www.utahcap.org

In addition to spearheading The Family Investment Coalition, this organization provides a weekly *Legislative Update*, fact sheets and reports. Click on "Public Policy" for more information.

League of Women Voters of Utah: www.lwvutah.org

"Legislative News" includes action alerts and position statements on current issues—including children's issues. Listen to KCPW at 7:40 am (FM 88.3) each morning of the General Session to learn what is happening at the Capitol.

Center for Persons with Disabilities: www.cpd.usu.edu

This site provides information on the Legislative Coalition for People with Disabilities.

Utah Medical Association: www.utahmed.org

Provides action alerts on issues impacting the practice of medicine in Utah.



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