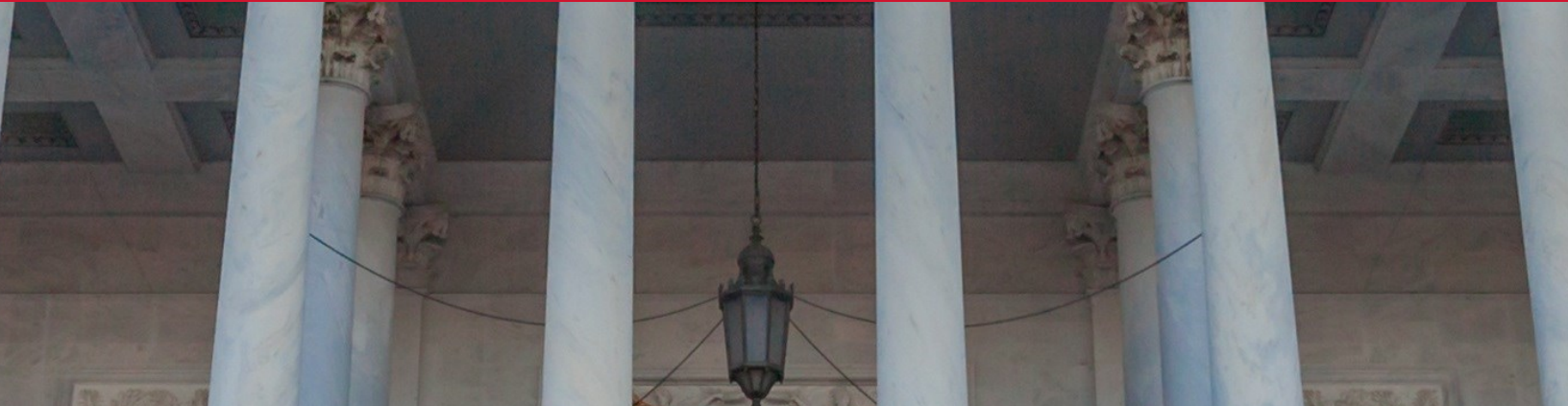




# GOVERNMENT 101





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# BRANCHES OF GOVERNMENT

## Executive Branch

At the state level, the executive branch is headed by the state governor and agency heads, who may be elected or appointed depending on the jurisdiction.

At the federal level, the power of the executive branch is vested in the president, who also serves as Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces. The president appoints the Cabinet and oversees the various agencies and departments of the federal government.

### Presidential Qualifications:

To serve as U.S. President, a candidate must be a natural-born citizen of the United States, though the individual can be born abroad to parents who are American citizens. Candidates must also be at least 35 years of age and a resident of the United States for at least 14 years, but not necessarily the 14 years preceding the election.

### The Powers of the President:

According to Article II of the Constitution, the president has the following powers:

- Serve as commander in chief of the armed forces
- Commission officers of the armed forces
- Grant reprieves and pardons for federal offenses (except impeachment)
- Convene Congress in special sessions
- Receive ambassadors
- Take care that the laws be faithfully executed
- Wield the “executive power”
- Appoint officials to lesser offices

The president also shares the following powers with the U.S. Senate:

- Make treaties
- Appoint ambassadors, judges and high officials

Finally, the president shares the ability to approve legislative with all of Congress.

## Judicial Branch

The judicial branch hears cases that challenge or require interpretation of the legislation passed by Congress or the state legislature and signed by the president or governor. It consists of the U.S. Supreme Court and the lower courts. Appointees to the federal bench serve for life or until they voluntarily resign or retire.

The U.S. Supreme Court is the most visible of all the federal courts. The number of justices is determined by Congress rather than the Constitution and since 1869, the court has been composed of one chief justice and eight associate justices. Justices are nominated by the president and confirmed by the U.S. Senate.



## Legislative Branch

The legislative branch drafts the laws that govern the state or federal government. At the state level, the legislative branch is the state legislature or general assembly. At the federal level, Congress fills this role.

Each legislative body has its own rules for operation, which can be found in the state constitution or legislative governing documents.

### The Powers of Congress

The powers of Congress are found in Article 1, section 8, of the Constitution:

- To levy and collect taxes, duties, imposts and excises.
- To borrow money.
- To regulate commerce with foreign nations, among the states, and with Indian tribes.
- To establish rules for naturalization (that is, becoming a citizen) and bankruptcy.
- To coin money, set its value, and punish counterfeiting.
- To fix the standard of weights and measures.
- To establish a post office and post roads.
- To issue patents and copyrights to inventors and authors.
- To create courts inferior to (that is, below) the Supreme Court.
- To define and punish piracies, felonies on the high seas, and crimes against the law of nations.
- To declare war.
- To raise and support an army and navy and make rules for their governance.
- To provide for a militia (reserving to the states the right to appoint militia officers and to train the militia under congressional rule).
- To exercise exclusive legislative powers over the seat of government (that is, the District of Columbia) and over places purchased to be federal facilities (forts, arsenals, dockyards, and "other needful buildings.")
- To "make all laws which shall be necessary and proper for the carrying into execution the foregoing powers, and all other powers vested by this Constitution.

## Qualifications for Entering Congress

### U.S. House of Representatives

To qualify as a member of the U.S. House of Representatives, each candidate must at least 25 years of age when seated, not when elected. They must also have been a citizen of the United States for seven years and an inhabitant of the state from which they were elected. In a special note, custom – but not the Constitution – requires a U.S. Representative to live in the district that he or she represents.

### U.S. Senate

To qualify as a member of the U.S. Senate, each candidate must be 30 years of age when seated, but not when elected. They must also have been a citizen of the United States for nine years and as with candidate for the U.S. House of Representatives, must be an inhabitant of the state from which elected.

### Major Differences between the Two Bodies of Congress

U.S. House of Representatives	U.S. Senate
435 members serving two-year terms	100 members serving six-year terms
Speaker's referral of bills to committee is hard to challenge	Referral decisions easy to challenge
Committees almost always consider legislation first	Committees consideration easily bypassed
Rules Committee is powerful; controls time of debate and admissibility of amendments	Rules Committee is weak with few limits on debate or amendments
Debate is usually limited to one hour	Unlimited debate unless shortened by unanimous consent or by invoking cloture
Non-germane amendments may not be introduced	Non-germane amendments (riders) may be introduced



# LEGISLATIVE BRANCH (cont.)

The leadership of the political parties found in the legislative branch have a specified hierarchy, which varies between jurisdictions, though most are based on those found in Congress.

## Congressional Leadership

### U.S. House of Representatives

- **Speaker of the House** – Selected by the majority party.
- **Majority Leader** – Leads the party.
- **Majority Whip** – Assists the leader, rounds up votes and heads large group of deputy and assistant whips.
- **Chairman of the Caucus** – Presides over meetings of all members of the majority party.
- **Steering and Policy Committee** – Schedules legislation and assigns members of the majority party to committees.
- **National Republican Congressional Committee/ Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee** – Provides funds and advice to Republican/Democratic candidates for the House.
- **Minority Leader** – Leads the minority party.
- **Minority Whip** – Assists the minority leader, rounds up votes, heads large forum of deputy and assistant whips.
- **Chairman of the Conference** – Presides over meetings of all members of the minority party.
- **Committee on Committees** – Assigns members of the minority party to committees.
- **Policy Committee** – Advises on party policy.

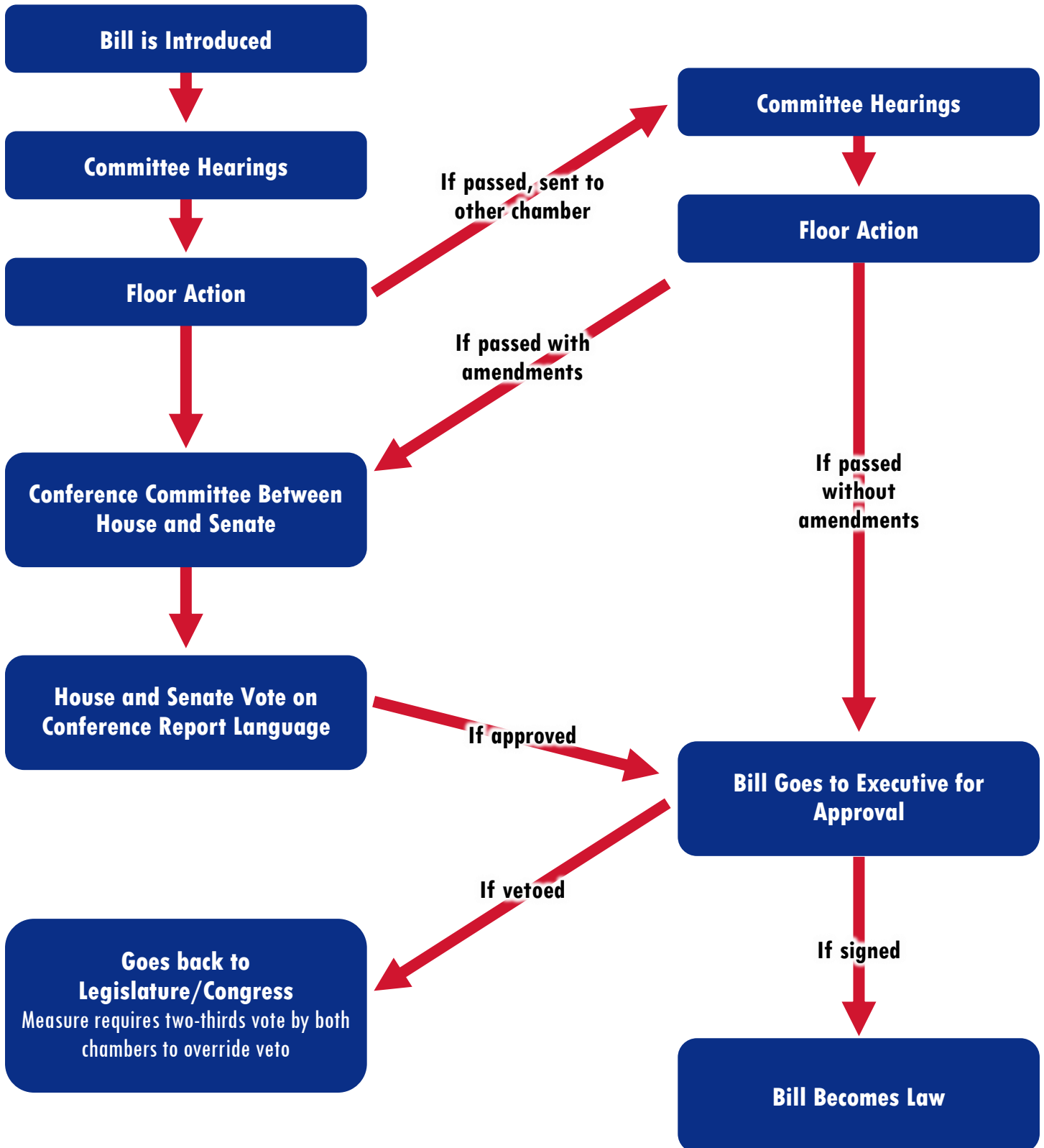
### U.S. Senate

- **President Pro Tempore** – Selected by majority party. Usually most senior member of the Senate majority party.
- **Majority Leader** – Leads the party.
- **Majority Whip** – Assists the leader, rounds up votes and heads group of deputy whips.
- **Chairman of the Conference** – Presides over meetings of all members of the Senate majority party.
- **Policy Committee** – Schedules legislation.
- **Legislative Review Committee** – Reviews legislative proposals and makes recommendations to senators of the majority party.
- **Steering Committee** – Assigns senators of the majority party to committees.
- **Republican/Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee** – Provides funds and assistance to Republican/Democratic candidates for the Senate.
- **Minority Leader** – Leads the minority party.
- **Assistant Minority Leader** – Assists the minority leader, rounds up votes.
- **Chairman of the Conference** – Presides over meetings of all senators of the minority party.
- **Committee on Committees** – Assigns Senators of the minority party to committees.



# HOW A BILL BECOMES A LAW

On paper, bills take a specified path through the legislature to become enacted, which is specified below. In actuality, the path to enactment can greatly diverge based on strategy and political maneuvering.



# HOW A BILL BECOMES A LAW (cont.)

Bills have a long path through the legislature or Congress to ultimately be enacted.

## Introduction

Any legislator may introduce a piece of legislation. Legislation is introduced according to the rules of the legislative body. For example, in the U.S. House of Representatives, legislation is handed to the Clerk of the House or placed in the hopper. In the U.S. Senate, members must gain recognition of the presiding officer to announce the introduction of a bill during the morning hour. If any Senator objects, the introduction of the bill is postponed until the next day.

Once introduced, the bill is assigned a number and labeled with the sponsor's name. In Congress, bills are then sent to the Government Printing Office (GPO) and copies are made. U.S. Senate bills can be jointly sponsored and members can cosponsor the piece of legislation.

## Committee Referral

After a bill is introduced, it needs to be referred to a committee for further study. In Congress, the bill is referred to the appropriate committee by the Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives or the presiding officer in the U.S. Senate. Most often, the actual referral decision is made by the parliamentarian. Bills may be referred to more than one committee and may be split so that parts are sent to different committees. The Speaker of the House may set time limits on committees. Bills are placed on the calendar of the committee to which they have been assigned. Failure to act on a bill is equivalent to killing the legislation. Bills in the U.S. House of Representatives can only be released from committee without a proper committee vote by a discharge petition signed by a majority of the House membership.

## Committee Process

Once in a committee, comments about the bill's merit are requested by government agencies. A bill can be assigned to subcommittees by the Chairman, who then report their findings to the full committee. Hearings may be held as a part of this process. A committee will hold a "mark-up" session during which it will make revisions and additions to the proposed legislation. If substantial amendments are made, the committee can order the introduction of a "clean bill," which will include the proposed amendments. This bill may have a new number and will be sent to the floor while the old bill is discarded. The chamber must approve, change or reject all committee amendments before conducting a final passage vote.

After the bill is reported, the committee staff prepares a written report explaining why they favor the bill and why they wish to see their amendments, if any, adopted. Committee members who oppose a bill sometimes write



a dissenting opinion in the report. The report is sent back to the whole chamber and is placed on the calendar.

In the U.S. House of Representatives, most bills go to the Rules Committee before reaching the floor. The committee adopts rules that will govern the procedures under which the bill will be considered by the House. A "closed rule" sets strict time limits on debate and forbids the introduction of amendments. These rules can have a major impact on whether the bill passes. The Rules Committee can be bypassed in three ways:

- Members can move rules to be suspended, which requires a two-thirds majority vote.
- A discharge petition can be filed.
- The U.S. House of Representatives can use a Calendar Wednesday procedure.

## Floor Action

Legislation is placed on the Calendar for consideration by the full chamber.

### U.S. House of Representatives

Bills are placed on one of four House Calendars. They are usually placed on the calendars in the order in which they are reported, yet they don't usually come to floor in this order. Some bills never reach the floor at all. The Speaker of the House and the Majority Leader decide what will reach the floor and when. Legislation can also be brought to the floor by a discharge petition.

### U.S. Senate


Legislation is placed on the Legislative Calendar. There is also an Executive Calendar to deal with treaties and nominations. Scheduling of legislation is the job of the Majority Leader. Bills can be brought to the floor whenever a majority of the Senate chooses.

## Debate

### U.S. House of Representatives

Debate is limited by the rules formulated in the Rules Committee. Congress debates and amends the bill but cannot technically pass it. Debate is guided by the Sponsoring Committee and time is divided equally between proponents





and opponents. The Committee decides how much time to allot to each person. Amendments must be germane to the subject of a bill - no riders are allowed. The bill is reported back to the House and is voted on. A quorum call is called to make sure that there are enough members present to have a final vote. If there is not a quorum, the House will adjourn or will send the Sergeant at Arms out to round up missing members.

### **U.S. Senate**

Debate is unlimited unless cloture is invoked. Members can speak as long as they want and amendments need not be germane – riders are often offered. Entire bills can therefore be offered as amendments to other bills. Unless cloture is invoked, Senators can use a filibuster to defeat a measure by "talking it to death."

### **Vote**

The bill is voted on. If passed, it is then sent to the other chamber unless that chamber already has a similar measure under consideration. If either chamber does not pass the bill then it dies. In Congress, if the U.S. House of Representatives and U.S. Senate pass the same bill, then it is sent to the president. If the House and Senate pass different bills they are sent to Conference Committee. Most major legislation goes to a Conference Committee.

### **Conference Committee**

Members from each house form a Conference Committee and meet to work out the differences. The committee is usually made up of senior members who are appointed by the presiding officers of the committee that originally dealt with the bill. The representatives from each house work to maintain their version of the bill. If the Conference Committee reaches a compromise, it prepares a written conference report, which is submitted to each chamber. The conference report must be approved by both the House and the Senate.

### **Executive Action**

The bill is sent to the president or governor for review. At the federal level, a bill becomes law if signed by the president. Alternatively, a bill can become law if not signed within ten days and Congress is in session. If Congress adjourns before the ten days and the president has not signed the bill then it does not become law – something known as a "pocket veto." If the president vetoes the bill, it is sent back to Congress with a note listing his/her reasons. The chamber that originated the legislation can attempt to override the veto by a vote of two-thirds of those present.

### **The Bill Becomes a Law**

Once a bill is signed by the executive, or a veto is overridden by both houses, it becomes a law and is assigned an official number.

# CAMPAIGN FINANCE

## Bipartisan Campaign Finance Reform Act of 2002

The Bipartisan Campaign Reform Act of 2002 banned “soft money” contributions to national political parties; but permits up to \$10,000 in soft money contributions to state and local parties. “Soft money” is the unlimited contributions to the national political parties for “party-building” activities. The law also stopped issue ads from targeting specific candidates. Restrictions are placed on outside groups running so called “issue ads” that tout or criticizes a candidate’s position on an issue, but refrain from explicitly telling viewers to vote for or against that candidate. Additionally, the act raised the individual contribution limit to \$2,700 per election for House and Senate candidates, both of which would be indexed for inflation. The “Millionaire’s Amendment” to this law, increased the contribution limits for candidates facing a wealthy opponent who intends to make large expenditures from personal funds.

## Major Rules

### Who can contribute?

- Any American citizen can contribute funds to a candidate or a political party except for individuals and sole owners of proprietorships that have contracts with the federal government.
- Foreigners with no permanent U.S. residency are prohibited from contributing to any political candidates at any level.
- Cash contributions over \$100 are prohibited, no matter what their origin.
- No candidate can accept an anonymous contribution that is more than \$50.
- Corporations, labor unions, national banks and federally chartered corporations are also prohibited from contributing to federal campaigns or parties.
- Political Action Committees operated by foreign-owned corporations may contribute to campaigns as long as American citizens are the only contributors to the PAC.
- Minors are prohibited from making contributions to federal candidates and contributions or donations to committees of political parties.

## PACS

### What is a PAC?

A Political Action Committee (PAC) is a common term for a political committee set up for the purpose of raising and spending money to elect and defeat candidates. Most PACs represent ideological, business or labor interest. A PAC must register with the Federal Election Commission within ten days of its formation, providing name and address for the PAC, its treasurer and any connected organizations. For the purpose of contribution limits, associated PACs are treated as one donor.



PACs have been around since 1944. The Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO) was the first PAC to be formed in order to raise money for the reelection of President Franklin D. Roosevelt. The CIO was formed in response to the Smith Connally Act of 1943, which banned direct contributions from labor unions to federal candidates. The PAC’s money came from voluntary contributions from union members rather than union treasuries. Although commonly called PACs, federal election law refers to these accounts as “separate segregated funds” because money contributed to a PAC is kept in a bank account separate from the general corporate or union treasury.

Many politicians also form Leadership PACs, which are not technically affiliated with the candidate, as a way of raising money to help fund other candidates’ campaigns.

## Super PACs

Super PACs are a new kind of political action committee created in July 2010 following the outcome of a federal court case known as *SpeechNow.org v. Federal Election Commission*. Technically known as independent expenditure-only committees, Super PACs may raise unlimited sums of money from corporations, unions, associations and individuals, then spend unlimited sums to overtly advocate for or against political candidates. Super PACs must, however, report their donors to the Federal Election Commission on a monthly or quarterly basis – the Super PAC’s choice – as a traditional PAC would. Unlike traditional PACs, Super PACs are prohibited from donating money directly to political candidates.

# FEDERAL CAMPAIGN SPENDING LIMITS

## Individual Contribution Limits

To	Amount	Period
Candidates	\$2,700	per election*
Independent Expenditure Committees (Super PACs)	Unlimited	
National Party Committee (e.g. RNC, DNC)	\$33,900	per year*
Senatorial National Party Committee (e.g. NRSC, DSCC)	\$33,900	per year*
Congressional National Party Committee (e.g. NRCC, DCCC)	\$33,900	per year*
National Party Committee for conventions	\$101,700	per year*
National Party Committee for buildings	\$101,700	per year*
National Party Committee for recounts and legal fees	\$101,700	per year*
Senatorial National Party Committee for buildings	\$101,700	per year*
Senatorial National Party Committee for recounts and legal fees	\$101,700	per year*
Congressional National Party Committee for buildings	\$101,700	per year*
Congressional National Party Committee for recounts and legal fees	\$101,700	per year*
State or local party committee federal account**	\$10,000	per year
PAC (e.g. a corporate or leadership PAC)	\$5,000	per year

## Multicandidate PAC Limits

To	Amount	Period
Candidates	\$5,000	per election
Independent Expenditure Committees (Super PACs)	Unlimited	
National Party Committee (e.g. RNC, DNC)	\$15,000	per year
Senatorial National Party Committee (e.g. NRSC, DSCC)	\$15,000	per year
Congressional National Party Committee (e.g. NRCC, DCCC)	\$15,000	per year
National Party Committee for conventions	\$45,000	per year
National Party Committee for buildings	\$45,000	per year
National Party Committee for recounts and legal fees	\$45,000	per year
Senatorial National Party Committee for buildings	\$45,000	per year
Senatorial National Party Committee for recounts and legal fees	\$45,000	per year
Congressional National Party Committee for buildings	\$45,000	per year
Congressional National Party Committee for recounts and legal fees	\$45,000	per year
State or local party committee federal account**	\$5,000	per year
PAC (e.g. a corporate or leadership PAC)	\$5,000	per year

**Corporate contributions are prohibited to all committees except Independent Expenditure Committees (Super PACs).**

\*Contribution limits are adjusted for inflation.

\*\*These are combined limits, shared with the federal accounts of all other state and local committees of the same party in the same state.

# ELECTIONS

## Kinds of Elections

**General Election** – An election to fill public offices.

**Primary Election** – An election prior to the general election in which voters select the candidates who will run on each party's ticket. Primaries are also used to choose convention delegates and party leaders, and may be open or closed.

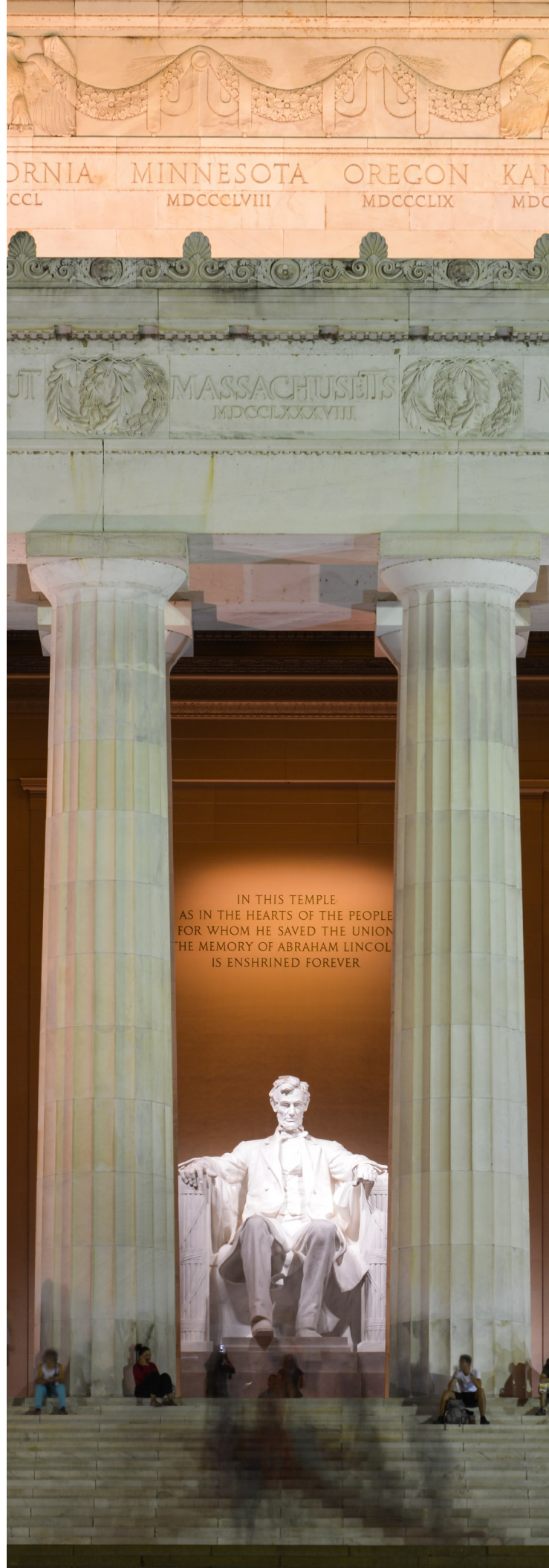
**Open Primary** – An election that permits voters to choose on Election Day the party primary in which they wish to vote. They may vote for candidates of only one party. A blanket or "free love" primary is a type of open primary. In the voting booth you mark a ballot that lists the candidates for nomination of all the parties, and thus you can help select the Democratic candidate for one office and the Republican candidate for another.

**Closed Primary** – The selection of a party's candidates in an election limited to registered party members. Prevents members of other parties from "crossing over" to influence the nomination of an opposing party's candidate.

**Runoff Primary** – If no candidate gets a majority of the votes, a runoff is held to decide who should win.

**Presidential Primary** – A primary used to pick delegates to the presidential nominating conventions of the major parties.

**Special Election** – An election held to fill a vacant seat. These elections are typically held outside the normal timeframes of other elections for the seat.



# GRASSROOTS

## Frequently Asked Questions

### What is meant by “grassroots”?

Historically, the term “grassroots” originated in a speech by Senator Albert Beveridge of Indiana to a delegation of the 1912 Bull Moose Convention. Beveridge remarked that theirs was the part of grass roots ... “grown from the soil of the people’s hard necessities.” Today the term “grassroots” has evolved to mean organized efforts by special interest groups to promote and generate broad support for or against specific issues. Now firmly fixed in the legislative and lobbying dictionaries, it is generally defined as any technique that provides the “folks back home” information designed to stimulate communications by letters, telegrams and personal visits with their constituent members of Congress.

### Can’t I just let AAOMS’s governmental affairs department handle the lobbying?

AAOMS does engage in formal lobbying daily through the use of our contracted D.C. lobbyists. For effective representation, however, AAOMS depends on an active member base. AAOMS will coordinate grassroots activities, but we rely on individual involvement for our successes. Information being provided to legislators by constituents has a much more powerful effect than coming from contracted lobbyists. Politicians need votes to get re-elected. A strong grassroots network of constituents represents a vote generating (or alienating) engine that a good candidate or elected official cannot afford to ignore.

In addition, because you practice oral and maxillofacial surgery on a daily basis, who is better to discuss the problems and changes Congress needs to address? Believe it or not, you are an expert in your field!

## How to Write a Letter to Your Lawmaker

Writing a letter only takes a few minutes, but letter writing is an effective way to convey your message to both state and federal lawmakers. When lawmakers receive enough letters on a particular issue, it does influence their vote!

Unless they hear from you, many legislators may not be aware of how strongly their constituents feel about a particular issue. Your words can sway them and help them to understand why an issue is important to those whom they represent.

A letter with the best intentions can become its own worst enemy if it becomes bogged down with irrelevant rhetoric. Your letter, even if it is about a very special problem, must compete for attention with dozens of other letters received daily by the officeholder. It is to your benefit to write your letter in as clear and concise a manner as possible. Make it easy for your reader to learn your views or understand the problem about which you are seeking help.

## Suggested Guidelines

AAOMS recommends a few important guidelines on the best way to write your letter.

- Use the correct name and address of the official. If you are unsure who your federal representatives are, contact the AAOMS Governmental Affairs Department at 800-822-6637.
- Use your own words and your own stationery/letterhead. A handwritten or neatly typed letter is best, as long as it is legible.
- Form letters, photocopies, and preprinted postcards – although important – are somewhat less valuable and usually do not receive individual responses.
- Clearly identify yourself. Be sure to include your home address so that the legislator realizes that the letter is from a constituent. Also, be sure a return address appears on the letter in case the envelope is discarded.
- Be concise. A one-page letter is more likely to be read than a longer one.
- Identify your subject clearly. If possible, refer to legislation either by its bill number or by its popular name in the first paragraph of your letter.
- Discuss only one issue in your letter. This ensures that your letter will be seen by the right staff member and will be more focused.
- Have an “ask”. Ask the lawmaker to do something specific; for example, ask him or her to vote for a particular amendment, request hearings or co-sponsor a bill.
- Cite arguments in support of your position. Explain how this issue affects you, your business, the community, the state, and particularly the economy. Facts and numbers are highly recommended – if possible and appropriate.
- Personalize your message. People tend to remember a good story, and one told from the heart is better than a ream of statistics. Let your lawmaker know why the issue matters to you, your family and your practice.
- Mention your involvement in the AAOMS and other local organizations and groups, if it is pertinent to the issue.
- Always send thank you letters to those who voted on your behalf.
- It is best to write your legislator when the bill is in subcommittee or full committee. Providing information during this fact-gathering stage will give your input the greatest impact and may strongly influence a legislator's opinion of the bill.
- Petitions are another way of illustrating the impact a particular issue has on your group. However, individual, handwritten letters carry more weight with legislators.

### Please do not:

- Complain. If you disagree with a bill, offer constructive solutions or suggestions to address your specific concerns.
- Ask for the impossible or threaten in any way.

# GRASSROOTS (cont.)

## Visiting with Your Member of Congress

Below are some suggestions to consider when planning a visit to a congressional office. While this guidance is geared towards meetings with members of Congress, many of the steps are applicable for meeting with state legislators as well.

### Make an appointment

First, submit your request in writing to the attention of the member's scheduler in their Washington, D.C. office. Contact information is available at [House.gov](http://House.gov) or [Senate.gov](http://Senate.gov) or call the U.S. Capitol switchboard at 202-224-3121 and ask for your U.S. Senator or U.S. Representative's office.

Most, if not all, offices require that constituents send a written request before they will schedule an appointment. Be sure to include in your letter the purpose of your visit (a personal meeting with the legislator), what issues you plan to discuss (be specific – who will be attending the meeting), and the date and preferred time for the meeting. Finally, make sure to include contact information for at least one person who will be available for the scheduler to contact to set the appointment. Typically, schedulers are very busy and do not have time to respond to all requests. It is recommended, therefore, that you follow up with a phone call to the scheduler within a few days after you have sent the letter.

### Be persistent, but courteous

If you do not hear back from an office within a few days, try calling again. But always remain courteous, accommodating and understanding of the busy schedule the legislators keep. It may take several calls to establish a firm date for the meeting. Don't give up!

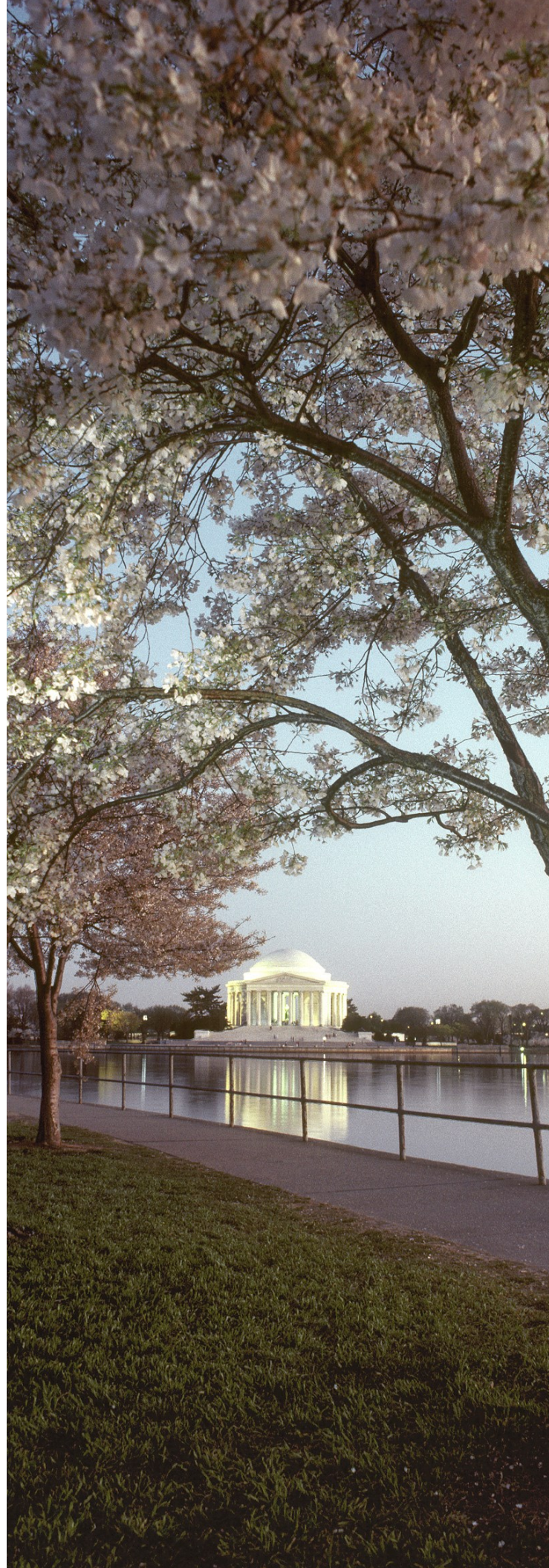
## Getting Ready for Your Meeting

### Be prepared

You do not need to be an expert on each issue you are discussing, but you should be comfortable discussing the basics of each issue. If you cannot answer a question asked of you, it is perfectly appropriate to say, "I do not know, but will find out the answer and follow up with you (or more likely their staff member who is sitting in on the meeting)." This actually is a good way to develop a relationship with the legislator's staff after the meeting.

### Bring supporting materials

Whenever possible, bring information and materials supporting your position. Legislators and their staff find statistics valuable, and statistics that are relevant to their home district and/or state are particularly valuable. It also is helpful to share with the member information and personal examples that demonstrate clearly the impact or benefits associated with a particular issue or piece of legislation, such as stories about patients whose access to care is threatened by restrictive insurance coverage.



### **Establish a spokesperson**

To avoid talking against each other if meeting as a group, identify a spokesperson. If you are discussing several issues, it might be helpful to assign a different spokesperson for each issue so everyone gets a chance to participate. One person should also take notes for future reference.

### **Be prompt and patient**

When it is time to meet with a member, be punctual and be patient. Plan to arrive five to ten minutes beforehand; however, it is not uncommon for a senator or representative to be late, or to have a meeting interrupted, due to floor votes and the member's crowded schedule. If interruptions do occur, be flexible. When the opportunity presents itself, continue your meeting with a member's staff. Do not be surprised if you only get to meet with the member's staff. Legislators often are very busy with their other duties (attending hearings and voting). They do not have time to personally attend every constituent meeting. They rely heavily on their staff to meet with constituents and understand each issue. Staff members are likely to have a very in-depth understanding of your issue, and building a relationship with a member's staff can be very important.

### **Be personable**

When the legislator or aide enters the room, each participant in your group should introduce himself or herself. Talk about your involvement in the community and any group you may represent. Establish a personal connection with the representative, senator, or aide in the meeting. If possible, describe for the member how you or your group can be of assistance to him or her. Members of Congress want to represent the best interests of their district or state. Wherever possible, demonstrate the connection between what you are requesting and the interests of the member's constituency. Remember, you and your patients are constituents. Where it is appropriate, ask for a commitment.

### **State the purpose of your visit clearly**

Legislators and their staff are very busy and time is a valuable commodity. Do not waste the available time! Stick to the topic and talking points. Know what to say and make your requests clear. If you feel they are trying to steer you off track by talking about too many other issues, politely return to your main idea, "While this too is an important issue, I would really like to spend more time talking about ..."

### **Follow up**

Be sure to get the name of any staff members you meet to follow-up. Ask for their business card so that you can spell their names correctly and have their e-mail addresses. Write the member/aide a thank you note to express your appreciation and briefly restate the issues discussed and the way you would like to see them respond to the issue (i.e., cosponsoring a bill). Also, offer yourself as a resource in the future; always keep them up to date on the issue. Provide, or identify when you will follow-up with any information that was requested during your meeting or that will help emphasize your key points.

### **What's Next?**

#### **Determine whether your meeting was a success**

Sometimes it is difficult to answer that question. If your member co-sponsors important legislation that you discuss, then your impact is more apparent. Other times, it takes several encounters to establish a mutually beneficial relationship where the legislator eventually reaches out to you to asking the specialty to weigh-in on a particular piece of legislation. For example, the AAOMS Day on the Hill is designed with the following three goals: educating members on what OMSs do; lobbying for support on particular issues; and building long-term relationships with legislators.

#### **Get others involved**

Part of following-up is also reporting back to your community and getting in touch with others who have organized similar meetings with members of Congress. Report back to your colleagues at your state OMS society meeting about how your meetings went, which issues were well received, and determine if further mobilization is needed for any particular issue.

#### **Follow up in the district**

If your initial meeting was in Washington, D.C., then follow-up with a meeting or action in the congressional district. This provides an opportunity to further develop your relationship with the legislator and offers more people the opportunity to get involved than just those who were able to travel to D.C.



# GRASSROOTS (cont.)

## Tips for a Successful Meeting with Your Legislators

### Know your lawmaker

The first step to successful communication is to know your lawmaker. You should know:

- Your lawmaker's political party.
- Years in office.
- Legislative committees he or she serves on.
- Leadership positions he or she holds.
- Voting record on issues of importance to you.
- Personal facts (such as hometown, previous profession).

### Address by title and last name

- Senator or Representative is always correct.
- "Congressman" is acceptable for a male.
- "Congresswoman" is acceptable for a female.
- "Mr. Chairman" or "Madam Chair" are appropriate and show respect for a leadership position.

### Staff are important

They are the "gateway" or "steel door" to the member.

- Often better versed on issues than members.
- Young, but highly educated.
- Typically stay to meet with constituents when members leave.
- Gain seniority quickly and often move from one member office to another.
- Sensitive about their place in the hierarchy.
- A negative impression will get back to members – Don't make a bad impression with them!

### YOUR staff is important too

- Refer to them as "office manager," "office staff," "assistant," or "nurse."
- NEVER call them "my girl" or "the girls."

### Time is crucial!

- Be on time. Call ahead if you are running late.
- Members may be called for a vote at any time.
- Emergency meetings or negotiations may intrude.

### Stay on message

- Congressional offices are VERY busy and meet with many people each day-don't waste their time!
- Keep the message simple. Briefly and succinctly talk about how an issue affects your practice. Be sure to give specific examples.
- Be credible. Members and staff often look to interest groups as a source of education. Don't misrepresent facts and don't misstate an opponent's position.
- Use talking points for guidance.
- Give the issue briefs to your lawmaker or to the staff person you are meeting with.



### Other tips for a successful meeting:

- Encourage questions. Afterwards, follow up with any information that your lawmaker requested during the meeting.
- Find out your lawmaker's position on an issue. Make your meeting an open exchange of ideas; be straightforward, but courteous in expressing your views.
- Ask for something specific. For example, "I hope you will vote in favor of HR 1234," or "Please consider the facts and reconsider your position on S 222." Many lawmakers complain that many constituents never make it clear what they want.
- Thank the member for his or her time, even if he or she did not agree with you on the issues.
- Wrap up the meeting in about 15 minutes.

Finally, **NEVER** discuss individual or OMSPAC contributions. It is against federal election laws to discuss campaign contributions of any form in a federal office (this includes local district offices).





## Other Ways to Advocate for the Specialty

### Serve as a local resource

Volunteer to be a resource on healthcare issues. Legislators are always looking for experts in their respective fields to solicit their perspective. You are an expert in healthcare. One opportunity is to volunteer to serve on your legislator's healthcare task force.

### Volunteer on their campaign

In order for legislators to support our issues, they must be reelected. It takes both money and volunteers to run a successful campaign. Volunteering for a legislator's campaign provides interaction with the legislator, and it is appreciated.

### Deliver an OMSPAC contribution

The OMSPAC Board always prefers to have an OMS personally deliver OMSPAC contributions in the district. This allows our members to have a personal connection with the candidate and for those we support to connect our contributions with a constituent OMS.

### Host a candidate fundraiser

There is no more effective way to cement a good relationship with a legislator than to participate in his or her campaign. Most candidates take a very personal view of their election efforts, because it is their careers that are at stake. If you make a financial investment in their campaigns – or better yet volunteer your services – you will have an excellent chance of becoming one of their valued constituents and friends.

### Participate in an AAOMS Call to Action

From time to time, AAOMS will send out Calls to Action via email. These Calls to Action request AAOMS members to exercise their voice as constituents to contact their elected officials and to urge them to either support or oppose a particular piece of legislation or action.

### Host an office visit

Members of Congress are always eager to touch base with people in their districts. They welcome the opportunity to spend time with the constituents whose interests they represent in Washington. What better way to give members a firsthand look at what OMSs practice than inviting them to your office for a visit?

### Vote

Voting is the number one action you can take to influence the legislative and political environment. Make certain that your registration is up-to-date with your current address and vote in every election. If you can not make it to the polls on Election Day, make sure you request an absentee ballot.

**Looking for more information?  
Be sure to check out the numerous  
resources available on AAOMS.org**

# GLOSSARY OF TERMS

**Act** – A bill passed by the legislature and approved by the executive.

**Adjournment** – Termination of a session or meeting for that day with the hour and day of the next meeting being set prior to adjournment.

**Adoption** – Approval of a motion, amendment or resolution.

**Amendment** – Formal wording changing the language of a bill.

**Bicameral** – A legislative body composed of two chambers. Congress and most state legislatures are bicameral.

**Bills** – A legislative proposal that if passed by both chambers of the legislature or Congress – and approved by the president or governor – becomes law. Each bill is assigned a bill number. In Congress, HR denotes bills that originate in the U.S. House of Representatives and S denotes bills that originate in the U.S. Senate.

**Calendar Wednesday** – A procedure in the U.S. House of Representatives during which each standing committee may bring up for consideration any bill that has been reported on the floor on or before the previous day. The procedure also limits debate for each subject matter to two hours.

**Carry over** – A phrase meaning a bill failed to be enacted during the first year of a two year legislative session but retains its status when the legislature convenes in the second year of the session.

**Caucus** – A group of legislators with similar interests (i.e. issue or political party).

**Cloture** – A motion generally used in the U.S. Senate to end a filibuster. Invoking cloture requires a vote by three-fifths of the full Senate. If cloture is invoked, further debate is limited to 30 hours, provided it is not a vote on the passage of the piece of legislation.

**Committee of the Whole** – A committee including all members of the U.S. House of Representatives. It allows bills and resolutions to be considered without adhering to all the formal rules of a House session, such as needing a quorum. All measures on the Union Calendar must be considered first by the Committee of the Whole.

**Concurrence** – Approval by the house of origin to changes made in the second chamber.

**Concurrent resolutions** – A type of legislation – designated in Congress by H Con Res or S Con Res – that is often used to express the sense of both chambers, to set annual budget or to fix adjournment dates. Concurrent resolutions are not signed by the president or governor and therefore do not hold the weight of law.

**Co-sponsor** – A member or members that add his or her name formally in support of another member's bill. In the U.S. House of Representatives, a member can become a co-sponsor of a bill at any point up to the time of consideration by the last authorized committee. In the U.S. Senate, a member can become a co-sponsor of a bill anytime before the vote takes place on the bill. However, a co-sponsor is not required.

**Discharge petition** – A petition that if signed by a majority of the U.S. House of Representatives requires a bill to come out of a committee and be moved to the floor of the House.

**Electoral College** – A group of persons called "electors," selected by the voters in each state that officially elects the president and vice president. The number of electors in each state is equal to its number of representatives in both chambers of Congress.

**Engross** – The incorporation of adopted amendments into the text of a bill.

**Filibuster** – An informal term for extended debate or other procedures used to prevent a vote on a bill in the U.S. Senate.

**Germane** – Relevant to the bill or business either chamber is addressing. The U.S. House of Representatives requires an amendment to meet a standard of relevance, being germane unless a special rule has been passed.

**Hijack** – More commonly found at the state level, an action to delete the contents of a bill and insert entirely new provisions.

**Hopper** – Box on the desk of the Clerk of the U.S. House of Representatives where members deposit bills and resolutions for introduction.

**Initiative** – An electoral procedure whereby citizens can propose legislation or constitutional amendments and refer the decision to a popular vote by obtaining the required number of signatures on a petition.

**Interim** – The time interval between legislative session.

**Joint resolutions** – A type of legislation – in Congress, designated by HJ Res or S J Res – that is treated the same as a bill unless it proposes an amendment to the Constitution. In this case, two-thirds majority of those present and voting in both the U.S. House of Representatives and the Senate, and ratification of the states, are required for the Constitutional amendment to be adopted.

**Machine** – A hierarchically organized, centrally led state or local party organization that rewards members with material benefits.

**Morning hour** – A 90-minute period on Mondays and Tuesdays in the U.S. House of Representatives set aside for five-minute speeches by members who have reserved a spot in advance on any topic.

**Motion to recommit** – A motion that requests a bill be sent back to committee for further consideration. Normally, the motion is accompanied by instructions concerning what the committee should change in the legislation or general instructions such as that the committee should hold further hearings.

**Motion to table** – A motion that is not debatable and that can be made by any legislator on any pending question. Agreement to the motion is equivalent to defeating the question tabled.

**Office-block ballot** – A ballot listing all candidates for a given office under the name of that office; also called a “Massachusetts” ballot.

**Party-column ballot** – A ballot listing all candidates of a given party together under the name of that party; also called an “Indiana” ballot.

**Private bill** – A bill that is introduced on behalf of a specific individual that if it is enacted into law only affects the specific person or organization the bill concerns. Often, private bills address immigration or naturalization issues.

**Public bill** – A bill that affects the general public if enacted into law.

**Quorum** – The number of officials that must be present before business can begin. In the U.S. House of Representatives, 218 members must be present for a quorum. In the U.S. Senate, 51 members must be present, however the Senate can conduct daily business without a quorum unless it is challenged by a point of order.

**Recess** – A temporary pause or delay in the legislature’s affairs. Recesses are usually called around holidays or elections.

**Regulations** – Rules of law made by agencies of the executive branch to carry out a legislative or administrative mandate. Regulations are typically enacted to provide greater specificity to statutes.

**Rider** – An informal term for an amendment or provision that is not relevant to the legislation where it is attached.

**Roll Call** – A vote where each legislator’s name is read in alphabetical order and votes are given

**Sine Die** – The final adjournment of the legislature for the legislative session. Any legislation still pending after Sine Die is considered dead and must be reintroduced during the next legislative session for any further consideration.

**Simple resolution** – A type of legislation – designated by H Res or S Res – that is used primarily to express the sense of the chamber where it is introduced or passed. It only has the force of the chamber passing the resolution. A simple resolution is not signed by the president and cannot become public law.

**Split-ticket voting** – Voting for candidates of different parties for various offices in the same election. For example, voting for a Republican for senator and a Democrat for president.

**Sponsor** – The original member who introduces a bill.

**Statutes** – Provisions of law enacted via legislation.

**Straight-ticket voting** – Voting candidates who are all of the same party. For example, voting for Republican candidates for senator, representative and president.

**Substitute amendment** – An amendment that would replace existing language of a bill or another amendment with its own.

**Suspense file** – Typically found in state legislatures, any bill costing the state more than a specified sum of money may be placed in this file. After adoption of the state budget, suspense file bills are enacted as state resources permit.

**Suspension of the rules** – A procedure in the U.S. House of Representatives that limits debate on a bill to 40 minutes, bars amendments to the legislation and requires a two-thirds majority of those present and voting for the measure to be passed.

**The Corrections Calendar** – A list of bills selected by the Speaker of the House, in consultation with the Minority Leader, that will be considered in the U.S. House of Representatives and debated for one hour. Generally bills are selected because they focus on changing laws, rules and regulations that are judged to be outdated or unnecessary. A three-fifths majority of those present and voting is required to pass bills on the Corrections Calendar.

**The House Calendar** – A list of all the public bills that do not address money and maybe considered by the U.S. House of Representatives.

**The Private Calendar** – A list of all the private bills that are to be considered by the U.S. House of Representatives. It is called on the first and third Tuesday of every month.

**The Union Calendar** – A list of all bills that address money and may be considered by the House of Representatives. Generally bills contained in the Union Calendar can be categorized as appropriations bills or bills raising revenue.

**Unicameral** – A legislative body composed of one chamber. The Nebraska legislature is a unicameral body.

**Veto** – A power that allows the president, a governor or a mayor to refuse approval of a piece of legislation. Federally, the president returns a vetoed bill to the Congress, generally with a message. Congress can accept the veto or attempt to override the veto by a two-thirds majority of those present and voting in both the U.S. House of Representatives and the U.S. Senate.



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