

# WERK THE LEGE

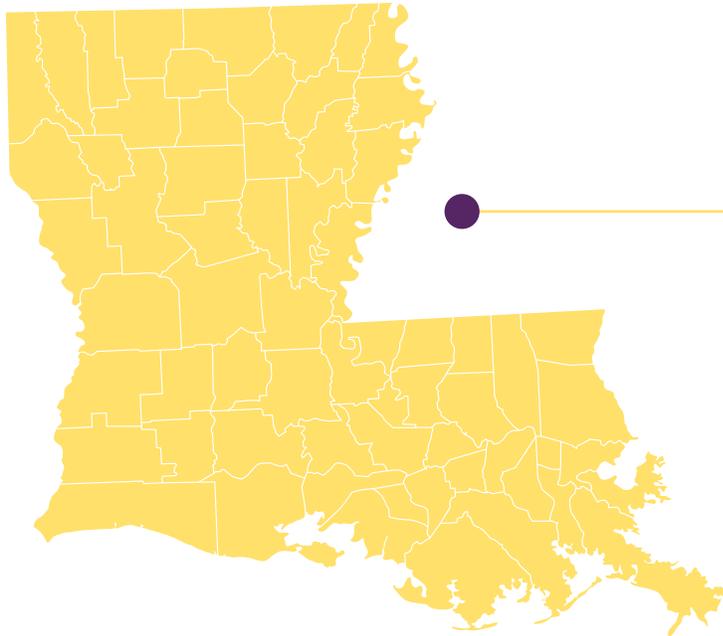
LEGISLATIVE ADVOCACY AT A GLANCE



[LAACLU.ORG](https://laaclu.org)

**ACLU**  
LA

# HOW THE LEGISLATURE WORKS



Louisiana elects

**105**

STATE REPRESENTATIVES

**39**

STATE SENATORS

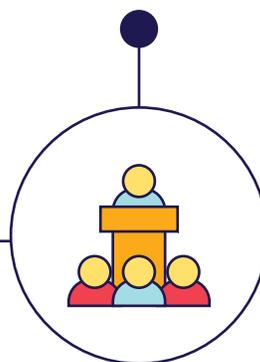
State representatives and senators serve four year terms.

## LEGISLATORS ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR

DEBATING THE  
MERITS OF BILLS

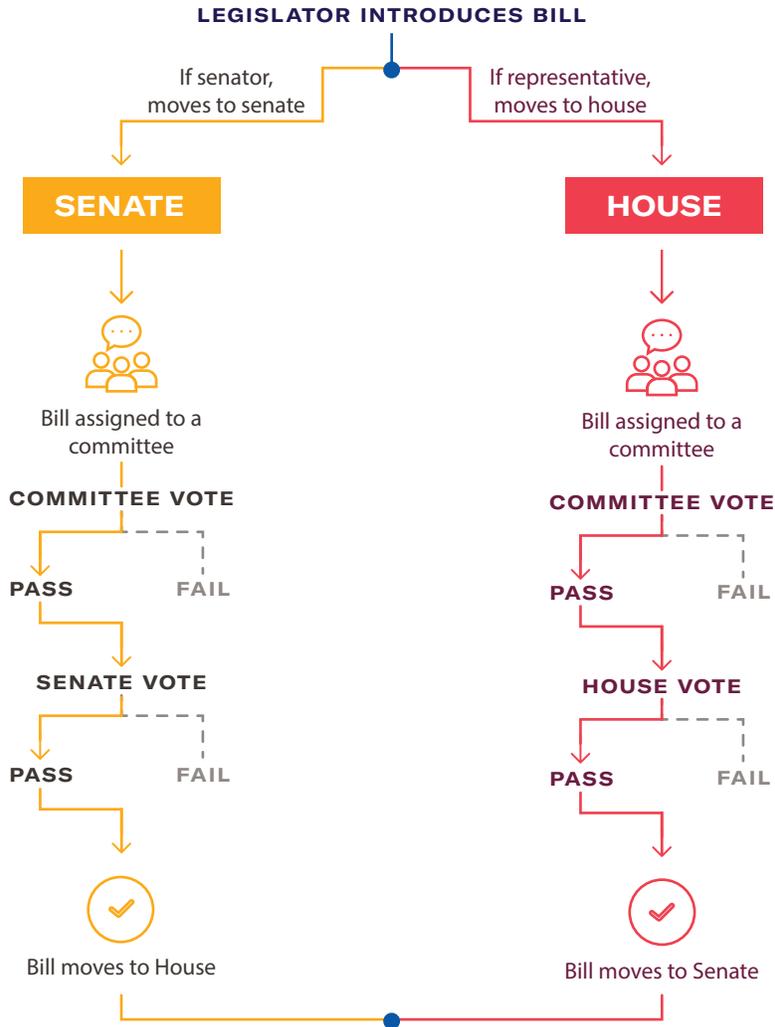


DRAFTING AND  
INTRODUCING BILLS



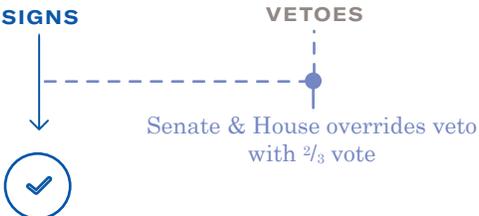
VOTING TO PASS  
OR KILL BILLS

# HOW A BILL BECOMES LAW



**BILL PASSES IN BOTH HOUSES**  
Once a bill has made it through one chamber, the process “repeats” in the other chamber. If the bill does not pass in both the House and Senate in the same form, it’s sent to a Conference Committee.

## GOVERNOR



**BILL BECOMES LAW!**

# WHAT YOU CAN DO AND WHEN

## BEFORE A BILL IS INTRODUCED:

- Research the issues, and your legislators.
- Connect with local special interest groups that analyze policy to learn about the bills they are supporting or opposing.
- Encourage your legislators to introduce bills on issues that you care about.
- Tell others why legislators need to act by sharing information in person, Online, and in the news.

**NOTE:** Check the Louisiana Legislature's website often:

<https://legis.la.gov/legis/home.aspx>.

This includes information about all bills and the calendar for the day.

## WHEN A BILL IS IN COMMITTEE:

- Contact committee members to ask them to support, reject, or amend the bill. Recruit your friends to contact them as well.
- Attend committee meetings. Testify at the hearing for or against the bill, particularly if you have a personal story.

**NOTE:** If you're not attending a committee meeting in person, you can watch live and on-demand recordings of House committee meetings here and Senate committee meetings [here](#). For instructions on submitting public comments online, go to the weekly schedule for the **House** or the **Senate** and click the PDF icon next to the meeting. For people who do not feel comfortable giving in-person testimony, public comments are typically due at noon the day before the committee meeting, but deadlines can change rapidly and without much notice.

## WHEN A BILL IS ON THE FLOOR:

- Contact your legislator to support, reject, or amend the bill. Ask your friends to do the same.
- Tell people why you think the bill should or should not pass by posting on social media or writing a letter to the editor in your local newspaper.

## WHEN A BILL IS ON THE GOVERNOR'S DESK:

- Contact the Governor's office to encourage signing or vetoing the bill.
- Identify other people who may have special influence with the Governor and contact them.

**NOTE:** If you don't get the outcome you're hoping for, stay positive. Passing quality legislation takes time.

# WAYS TO CONTACT YOUR LEGISLATOR



## CALL THEM OR WRITE THEM

Most members maintain a legislative district office. The following hyperlinks will give you the district office addresses, telephone numbers, fax numbers, and email addresses of your legislators:

[House of Representatives  
Member Information](#)

[Senate  
Member Information](#)

During legislative session, you can also mail your letters to the Capitol.

**Representative XXX**  
State Capitol  
P.O. Box 44486  
Baton Rouge, LA 70804-4486

**Senator XXX**  
State Capitol  
P.O. Box 94183  
Baton Rouge, LA 70804-4183

**NOTE ON MAILED OR EMAILED CORRESPONDENCE:** Every elected official has a state-issued email address, which means the note you send should be securely received. Keep in mind during the legislative sessions or busier times of year, your lawmaker might be away from their desk during normal hours or they might not get your note in time for a crucial vote. In times of urgency, consider calling or showing up to their office or the Capitol.

### → TIP 1

Know your district and name of your legislator

### → TIP 2

Plan out what you will say

### → TIP 3

Remember to mention the bill number (if there is one) and why you are calling or writing

### → TIP 4

Make it short and sweet and get to your point quickly

### → TIP 5

Tell a personal story – You don't have to be a policy or academic expert on the issue. Your personal experience makes you an expert

### → TIP 6

Problem, solution, action (ie. "Vote yes on HB xxxx!")



## MEET THEM IN PERSON

Outside of session, many legislators attend or host events in their district. Attend town halls, forums, and other meetings where they are speaking. Come prepared with a question. Be sure to introduce yourself afterward.

During session, go to the State Capitol and visit your legislators. Senators have offices at the Capitol, and you can request a meeting with them there. To maximize your opportunity for a meeting, you should request a meeting as far in advance as possible.

Unfortunately, House members do not have individual Capitol offices. But you can catch them as they're walking around the Capitol, in the cafeteria, or in the hallways between committee hearings or before heading to the floor for a vote.

**Go to their office.** You can find the addresses of every state representative's district office using this [list](#) and every state senator using this [list](#). Out of session, legislators have more time. Set up a meeting and bring like-minded friends.



### STEP ONE

Schedule your meeting



### STEP TWO

Be flexible, but firm



### STEP THREE

Prepare and education yourself and establish a clear goal



### STEP FOUR

Follow up and say thank you!

## CONNECT WITH YOUR LEGISLATORS EARLY AND OFTEN

FIRST THINGS FIRST:

FIND YOUR LEGISLATOR

[www.legis.la.gov/legis/FindMyLegislators.aspx](http://www.legis.la.gov/legis/FindMyLegislators.aspx)



# LEGISLATIVE ADVOCACY



**ELECTED OFFICIALS**

**CONSTITUENTS**

- If legislators don't hear from you, they assume you approve of their actions.

## STAY UP TO DATE

Throughout the session, the ACLU of Louisiana will send regular updates on what's happening in the Capitol and ways you can take action.

**Here's how to stay connected.**



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