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

VOTING TO PASS OR KILL BILLS

DRAFTING AND INTRODUCING BILLS
HOW A BILL BECOMES LAW

LEGISLATOR INTRODUCES BILL

If senator, moves to senate
If representative, moves to house

SENATE

Bill assigned to a committee
COMMITTEE VOTE
PASS
FAIL

SENATE VOTE
PASS
FAIL

Bill moves to House

HOUSE

Bill assigned to a committee
COMMITTEE VOTE
PASS
FAIL

HOUSE VOTE
PASS
FAIL

Bill moves to Senate

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

SIGNS
VETOES
Senate & House overrides veto with 2/3 vote

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.
• Amend public hearings. Testify at the hearing for or against the bill, particularly if you have a personal story.

NOTE: If you don’t feel comfortable attending meetings in-person, you can email your public comments. For instructions, click the agenda link next to the meeting link. Public comments are typically due at noon the day before the committee meeting.

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

WAYS TO CONTACT YOUR LEGISLATOR

CALL THEM OR WRITE THEM

- **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 they can connect to

- **TIP 6**
  Problem, solution, action (ie. “Vote yes on HB xxx!”)

MEET THEM IN PERSON

- **STEP ONE**
  Schedule your meeting

- **STEP TWO**
  Be flexible and patient

- **STEP THREE**
  Prepare and educate yourself and establish a clear goal

- **STEP FOUR**
  Follow up and say thank you!

CONNECT WITH YOUR LEGISLATORS EARLY AND OFTEN

FIRST THINGS FIRST,
RESEARCH YOUR LEGISLATOR

www.legis.la.gov/legis/FindMyLegislators.aspx
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.

LAACLU.ORG

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