

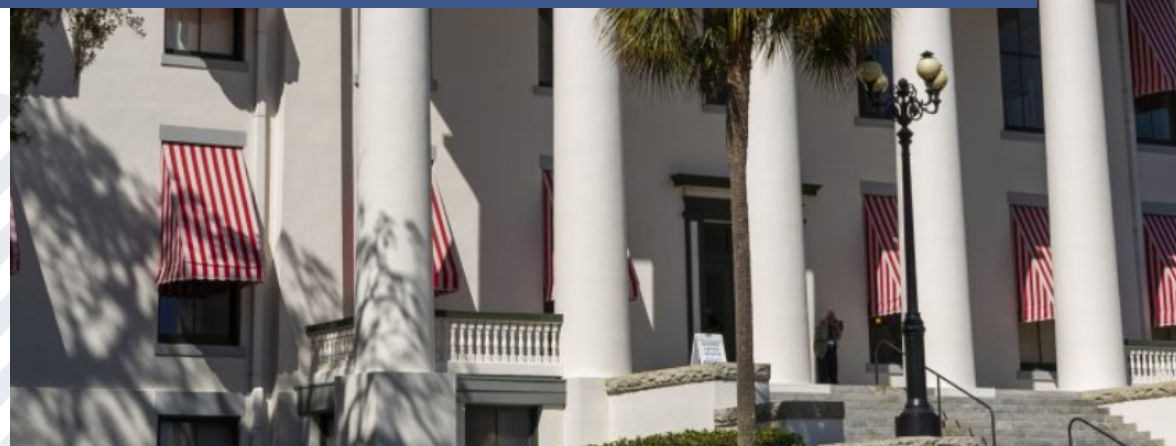


Advocacy 101:

How to Speak so that Lawmakers Listen



About us



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- Executive Director, Jacksonville Classical Academy
- Former grassroots and political events coordinator in DC

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- Lobbyist & nonprofit consultant
- Former teacher



Goals

We will discuss...

- Basic understanding of the legislative process
- The job of a legislator
- Tips for effective communication
- Ideas for engaging elected officials
- Ultimately, how to achieve your advocacy goals

A photograph of the Florida State Capitol building, a grand neoclassical structure with a prominent portico supported by columns. The building is set against a clear blue sky, with palm trees and other greenery in the foreground. The image is partially obscured by a dark blue overlay at the bottom and a decorative graphic of white diagonal lines in the top left corner.

Florida's Legislature

- Annual 60 day session (counted consecutively)
- 6-7 committee weeks
- Annual budget—*the only constitutionally required action the legislature must take*
- Part-time legislature
- Bi-cameral



Two Chambers

House

- 120 members
- District= 179,000 residents
- 2 year terms, 4 terms max= 8 yrs
- Top down leadership, more partisan

Senate

- 40 members
- District= 538,000 residents
- 4 year terms, 2 terms max= 8 yrs
- Independent, less partisan

Passing Legislation



Easy as 1, 2, 3...100


- Imagine a funnel
- Process is intentionally difficult, designed to preempt bad legislation
- Hundreds of steps have to go right, only one has to go wrong





Easy as 1, 2, 3...100

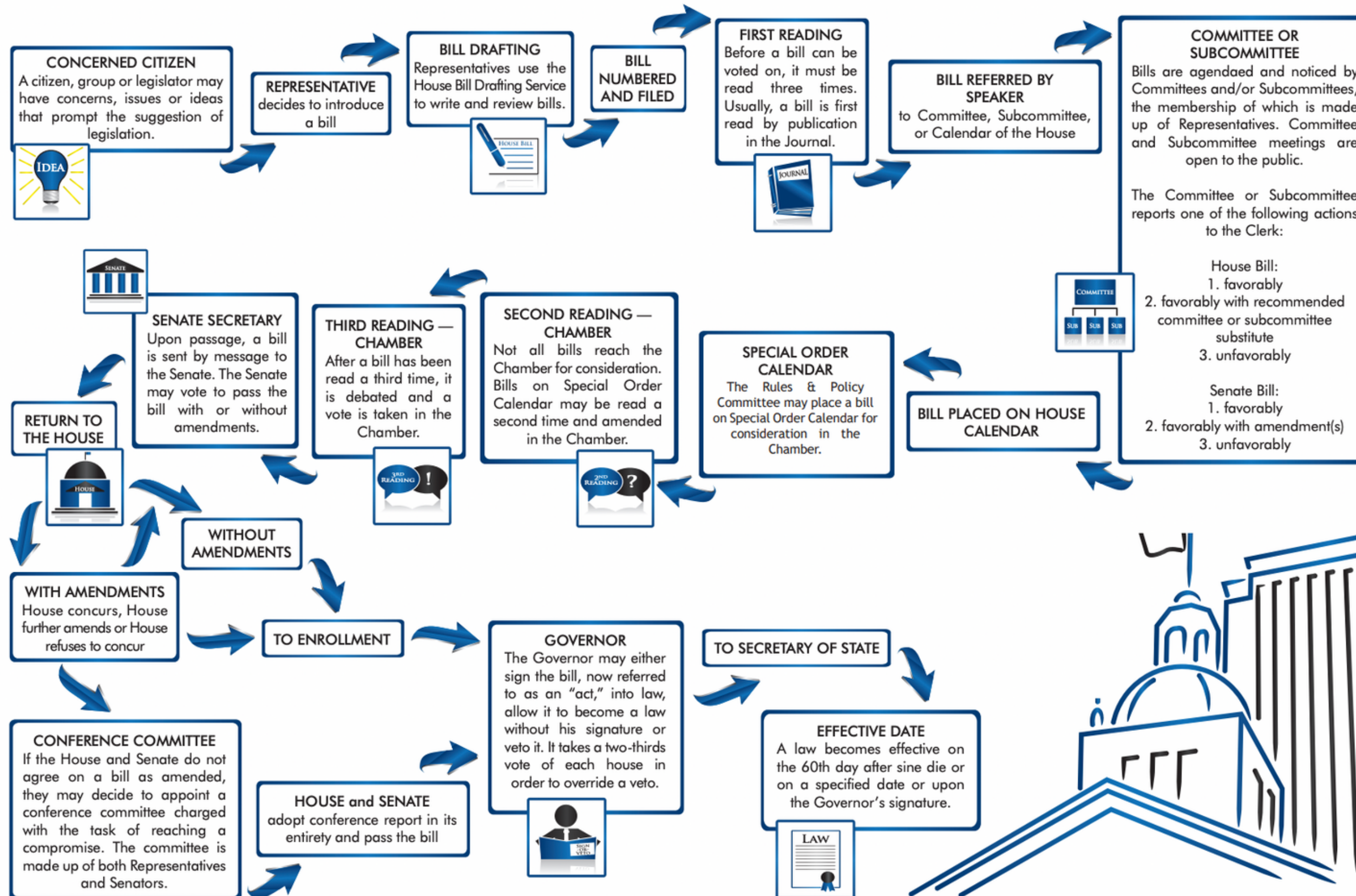
2023 Legislative Session:

- 1721 bills filed (*1679 general + 42 local*)
 - 414 passed one chamber
 - 348 passed both chambers
 - 341 approved
 - 7 vetoed
- 

Florida House of Representatives

HOW AN IDEA BECOMES A LAW

OFFICE OF THE CLERK
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES





The Lawmaker

- Part-time job
- Expertise in a few areas
- Required to make thousands of decisions on hundreds of issues
- Advocates constantly competing for their attention
- How do you stand out?



A Day in the Life

District/Non-Session

7:30–11am: Meetings, office time
11am–5pm: Day job
5pm–8pm: District/campaign events
8–10pm: Day job (from home)
Weekend: District/campaign events

Capitol/Session

8–10am: Meetings every 10 min
10am–12pm: Committee
12–12:30pm: Lunch at desk
12:30–2pm: Committee
2–5pm: Floor session
5–6pm: Meetings, office time
6–10pm: Dinner, meetings, events

Pro-Tips on Communications

Pro Tip #1: Don't let your first meeting be during session.

- Session is a fast-paced, harried environment NOT conducive to in-depth policy discussions or relationship-building.
- Session is the time to cash in on the relationship & trust you've already built.

Pro-Tips on Communications

Pro Tip #2: Always Have an Elevator Pitch Ready.

- Most communications happen outside of an appointment.
- You never know how long you will have to get your message across.
- Be clear about your ask--how can they help?

Pro-Tips on Communications

Pro Tip #3: Assume they know nothing.

- Avoid industry jargon, acronyms, etc.
- Even if you think they know the issue, still remind them.
- Stick to the most important points.

In the Meeting

Remember KISS--Keep It Simple, Stupid!

- Assume, and communicate, their good intentions.
- Have both data & real people/examples.
- It's ok to say "I don't know, but I'll find out"
- Always have a leave-behind - keep it short & sweet!

Build the Relationship

Successful advocacy is a long-term relationship, not a one-time event.

- Ideally, include constituents who are impacted by the policy; these real-life examples help to remind them of the importance later.
- Invite them to events or to tour your facility.
- Remember to follow-up on any data requests or questions.
- Periodically send communications to stay on their radar (relevant articles, announcements, etc.)-- plus, aides and campaigns are always looking for interesting content!



Success Story: Closing the Childcare Funding Gap

- 5+ years of advocacy
- At least half a dozen bills filed on the issue
- Bi-partisan, "feel good" issue
- Still work to be done
- RESULT? \$25 million in the 2022-23 budget to provide \$200 per 0-5 child per month to help cover the out-of-pocket costs for early learning/child care *statewide*.



Success Story: Cornerstone Capital Funding

- Lower school opening need
- \$16.9 million tax exempt municipal bond
- Upper school and gym need
- RESULT? \$1.2 million in the 2023–24 state budget to pay for capital costs



Get Involved: You Pick 3

- Chamber of Commerce
- Local Political Meetings
- List of Influencers
- Tours
- Event invitation for Influencers
- Connected Parents/Board Members
- BNI
- Rotary Club
- Kiwanis
- Handwritten cards



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