

A low-angle photograph of the Indiana State Capitol building, showing the large green dome and the American flag flying from the top. The building's facade is light-colored with classical architectural details like columns and pediments. The sky is a clear, bright blue.

Advocacy **In Indiana**

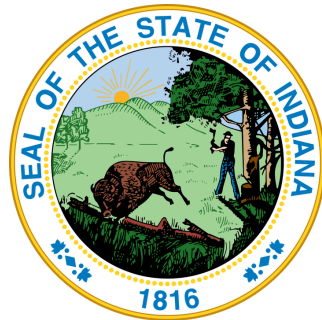


THE BRANCHES OF INDIANA'S GOVERNMENT

Executive

The executive branch administers the state government and enforces state laws. This branch of government consists of eight Constitutional offices which are elected by the citizens of Indiana. These offices are:

- **Governor**
- **Lieutenant Governor**
- **Secretary of State**
- **State Treasurer**
- **State Auditor**
- **Attorney General**
- **Secretary of Education**



This branch also consists of over 70 state agencies, boards, and commissions that report to the Governor and Lieutenant Governor.

Judicial

The judicial branch consists of the Supreme Court and the Appellate Court.

It is the job of the judicial branch to uphold the laws of the state and our nation.



Legislative

The legislative branch is "the voice of the people" and writes the laws that we must follow. The legislature has two chambers: the **House of Representatives** and the **State Senate**.

Indiana's General Assembly is a part-time legislature, meaning its members are only in session for a few months a year. However, the members of the General Assembly and their staff work for constituents year-round.



Did you know?



Finding your state legislator is easy! The Indiana General Assembly website lets you search by your address, track current bills, and learn more about how laws are made.

iga.in.gov/information/find-legislators

HOUSE

Consists of 100 state representatives representing approximately 60,000 Hoosiers each are elected for two-year terms.

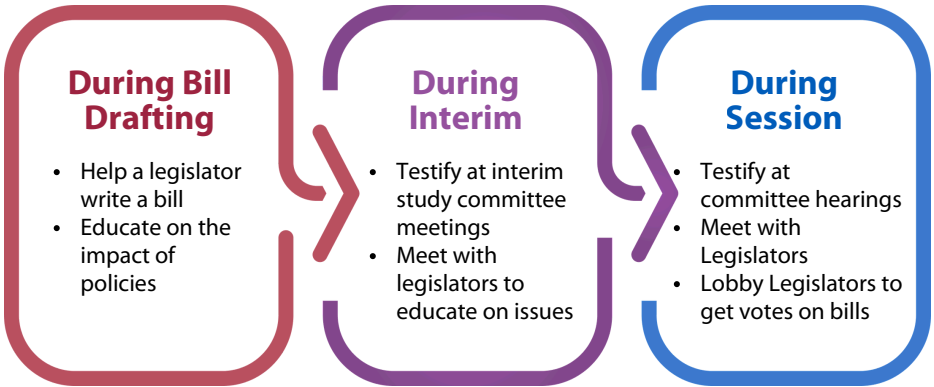
The Speaker of the House presides over the members when in session.

SENATE

Consists of 50 state senators representing approximately 120,000 Hoosiers each and elected for four-year terms.

The Lieutenant Governor presides over the Senate and may cast tie-breaking votes

Key times to influence legislation



Legislative Timeline

Even Years: "short" sessions

Take place from January to mid-March

Odd Years: "long" budget sessions

Take place from January to April

Interim

Study Committees take place from Mid-July to October

Bill ideas are formed and drafts are written between October and December

Strategies

for Influencing Policy Change

Identify the Issue

- What is the problem?
- Why is the issue important?
- What are the facts?
- Do you have the time and capacity to take this on?

Learn

- Know who the decision makers are: the champions, the hard-core opponents, and everyone in between.
- Know what issues the legislators support or oppose.

Collaborate

- Are there other people concerned with the issue?
- How can you work together?
- What are potential solutions?

Strategize

- What activities can you use to create change?
- Education? Advocacy? Lobbying?
- How can you make your case?

Implement

- Create a timeline and make task assignments.
- Who will do what and when?

Framing Your Message

Tell your name and where you are from	<i>My name is... and I go to ... high school.</i>
Issue (Include any current related bills, if there are any)	<i>I am writing to you to share my concerns about...</i>
What do you want to see happen?	<i>I would like for you to...</i>
Facts or Statistics	<i>Did you know that...</i>
Personal Story	<i>This is important to me because...</i>
Re-state what you want to see happen.	<i>Once again, I ask for you to please...</i>
Thank them and provide follow-up information.	<i>Thank you for considering my thoughts. You can reach me at...</i>

Consider this...

Guiding Questions for Building Your Message

1. Understand the Issue

- What is the issue you care about?
- Are there any bills related to this issue? If so, what are the bill numbers?
- Are those bills effective or addressing the issue well?
- What key facts, data, or examples help explain the issue?

2. Know Your Audience

- Who is your audience? (Legislators? Community members? Media?)
- What values or priorities does this audience care about?
- What type of message works best for them? (Written or spoken Social media, print, or in-person conversation?)

3. Define Your Goal

- What is your goal?
 - Raise awareness?
 - Build support?
 - Inspire action?
- What change do you want to see happen?

4. Personal Connection

- How does this issue impact you personally?

5. Prepare for Opposing Views

- What might the opposing viewpoint be?
- How would you respectfully respond to that perspective?



How a Bill Becomes a Law

A bill idea is suggested to a legislator who then authors or sponsors the bill.

At the legislator's discretion, the non-partisan Legislative Services Agency provides research and drafting assistance and prepares the bill in proper technical form.

After a bill is drafted and filed, it is then read by title for the first time to the legislative body. The Senate Pro Temp or the Speaker of the House refers the bill to a committee for review.

Committee chairmen schedule bill hearings that are open for public comment. Legislators debate, suggest amendments and vote on the bill. Because of the high volume of bills and time constraints, not every bill receives a hearing.

After committee approval, the bill goes again before members of the entire chamber. During what is known as the bill's Second Reading, the legislation may be amended by a majority vote of lawmakers

Idea developed

Bill drafted

Bill introduced
& referred to
committee

Committee
Action

Second
reading

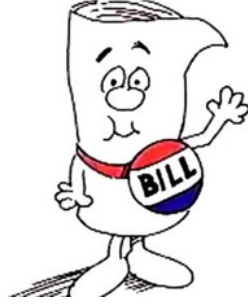


On the Third Reading, the bill is eligible for passage in its house of origin. The bill cannot be amended unless two-thirds of the legislators agree to changes. The bill passes when approved by a majority of members.

The bill goes through the same process as before but now in the second chamber. If the bill is amended, the first chamber must approve the changes before the bill is sent to the governor.

If the chamber of origin disagrees with amendments, the bill goes to a four-member bipartisan conference committee. If an agreement is reached, both chambers must approve the bill before sending it to the governor.

Upon receiving a bill, the governor may sign it, veto it, or let it become law without his signature. Vetoed bills may still become law if the veto is overridden by a majority vote in both the Senate and House of Representatives.



Advocacy Tips

When Meeting With a Legislator



Keep it short and simple.



Have your facts straight.



Be on time, polite, and patient.



Be a resource.



Before you leave, say “thank you” again.



Follow up: Leave your contact information and stay in touch with the legislator.



Advocacy Tips

When Writing to a Legislator



Use correct address and salutation



Type or write your letter clearly



Use your own words



Keep message brief and focused



Be specific about how the issue affects you



Know your facts

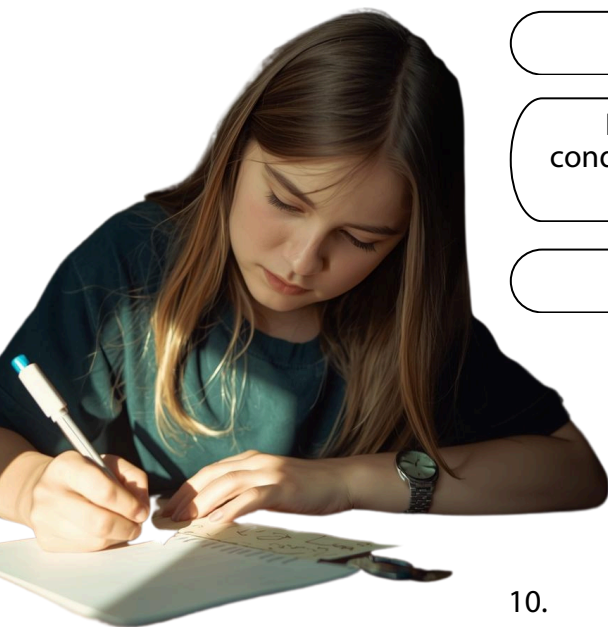


Find out how your legislator voted on this issue or similar issues in the past

Be persistent

Don't use a negative, condescending, threatening, or intimidating tone

Say thank you



Advocacy Tips

When Calling a Legislator

Start the Call

Say:

"My name is _____,
and I am from _____."

Share Your Opinion

"Please let the Senator/Representative know that I support/oppose (bill number and title)."

You may want to ask: *"What is the legislator's opinion on this issue?"*

State Your Ask

"I would like to urge him/
her to vote for/against
this provision because
_____."

Explain Why

Give one or two reasons for your position.

Explain how the issue affects your community, school, or personal life.

End the Call

Always end politely:
"Thank you."

Provide Contact Info (if asked)

Some offices may request your full name and mailing address so they can follow up.

If you want a more detailed conversation, ask the staff person to relay your name and phone number to the legislator or policy staff and request a return call.

Advocacy Tips

When Providing Testimony

Address the committee chair and members and introduce yourself.

"Good morning Mr. Chairman and members of the committee. Thank you for the opportunity to speak in support of House Bill _____. My name is _____ and I am (job title) at (your employer)"

Share why this is an important issue for you.

- Personal story either about yourself or someone you know.
- Add data or other information that helps make your case.

Discuss why you feel this bill would help (or hurt) the issue and why you feel legislators should vote in support or opposition.

Close by saying,

"Thank you for considering my opinion on this important issue and I hope that you will vote in support (or opposition) of this bill."

Committee chair will ask committee members if they have any questions. Wait for questions- if there are none you can go back to your seat.

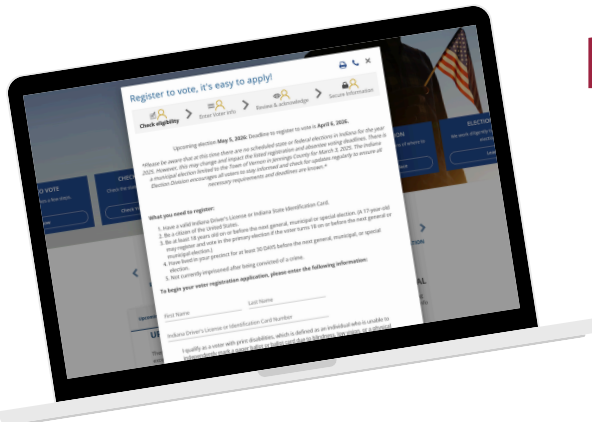
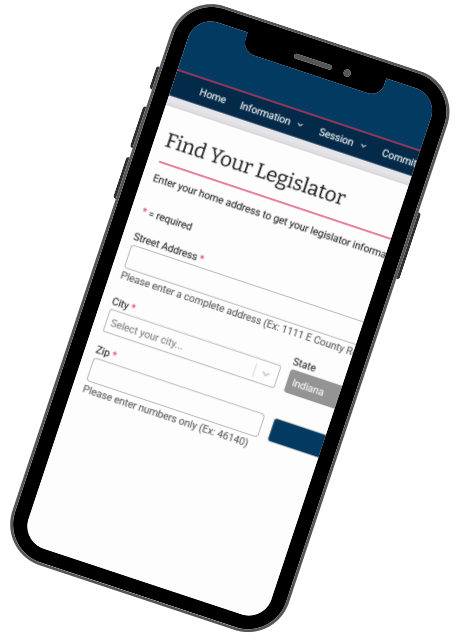


Take Action!

Find Your Legislator



iga.in.gov/information/find-legislators



Register to Vote



indianavoters.in.gov/

My representatives

Federal

President: _____

Senator: _____

Senator: _____

U.S. Representative: _____

State

Governor: _____

State Senator: _____

State Representative: _____

Local

Mayor: _____

City Councilor: _____

Follow along!



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mccoyouth.org/advocacy



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