



ADVOCACY TOOLKIT

WHAT IS VOICES?

Established in 1992 through the vision of leading child advocates, VOICES for Alabama's Children was the first, and remains the only, organization to document the health, safety, education, and economic conditions of children in each of our state's 67 counties. From building public awareness to leading legislative advocacy efforts, all of VOICES' activities are based on a solid foundation of research. The organization's goal is to ensure that all Alabama children have the best chance to succeed in life.

VOICES focuses on the issues that matter most to children and families: health, safety, education, and economic security.

To give all Alabama children **THESE BENEFITS**, we must know how our children are doing now, determine our vision for their future well-being, understand what that means for all of us, and support the community programs and public policies that will help us reach that vision. VOICES for Alabama's Children is doing that through our:

RESEARCH on current child well-being that becomes the template for knowing what we need to address to help our children;

PUBLIC AWARENESS that helps citizens understand what's at stake and what we can do about it; and

REPRESENTATION of children at the Alabama Legislature so that when the state needs to play a role, we get child- and family-friendly public policy. Children will be our work force, consumers, and community leaders of the future.

What does VOICES do?

In order to **ADDRESS AND SOLVE** any problem, it must first be **MEASURED AND DOCUMENTED**. Each year VOICES collects data on a county-by-county basis depicting how children are faring in terms of health, safety, education, and family income that support their successful development. The data published in VOICES' annual Alabama Kids Count Data Book is the **ONLY** source of information of this kind.

Communities, philanthropic organizations, and engaged citizens can use this information to track the success of community programs and address the needs of children and families by determining where resources are needed most. VOICES' research provides a roadmap for communities and the state to improve the conditions of children so that we can build a better Alabama. Birmingham attorney and civic leader Eddie Friend has called VOICES the "PARCA of children's information." (The Public Affairs Research Council of Alabama (PARCA) is a nonprofit, nonpartisan corporation that exists to collect, synthesize and report information on issues of public interest affecting state and local government policy in Alabama.)

Using the information from Alabama Kids Count and other research on specific issues, **VOICES HELPS ALABAMIANS UNDERSTAND** the current conditions of our children, how we can improve those conditions, and what the consequences are for all of us if we don't.

In addition, VOICES **REPRESENTS** the needs of children before the Alabama Legislature. **POWERLESS CHILDREN NEED POWERFUL VOICES**. That's why we speak up on their behalf and help others do the same – to send a strong message to the state that it should do all it can to ensure Alabama's children have the best chance to become responsible, productive adults. Our state, representing our collective responsibility, has a key role to play in helping children succeed. By providing high-quality early learning and education programs, safe environments, and access to health care, Alabama can help our children succeed – or let other states continue to pass us by. The choice is ours. **VOICES, with a focus on prevention, is an advocate for child-friendly public policy** that will help all Alabama children succeed.

What kind of Alabama do we want?

It is up to us, and VOICES is leading the way by working for an Alabama in which **ALL CHILDREN WILL HAVE THE BEST CHANCE TO REACH THEIR FULL POTENTIAL.**

VOICES is working to see that all children have more opportunities to succeed in school and in life. By supporting policies that open new doors, we can increase the chances that our children will become more productive adults who contribute to the state's economic success and, ultimately, to an improved quality of life. And that will mean a better Alabama for all of us.

For more information about VOICES for Alabama's Children visit our

Website at: www.alavoices.org

Or contact us at: 334-213-2410

Or write us at: P.O. Box 4576, Montgomery, AL 36103-4576

Or email us at: vfac@alavoices.org

ADVOCACY - MESSAGING & COMMUNICATION

GETTING POLICY MAKERS TO HEAR YOUR VOICE

The dictionary defines democracy as a “system of government in which power is held by the people and exercised indirectly through elected representatives.” In order for a democracy to work the people must continuously communicate with their elected representatives. To help you in this process, VOICES for Alabama's Children has provided you with a few simple tips.

Legislators and other elected officials look to their constituents for support and direction. You are the very individuals who placed them in elected office and you are the ones who will either return them to office or vote to elect their opponents. Simply stated-your voice matters!

It only takes a handful of phone calls from district constituents to influence a House or Senate member on an issue. Even on the most controversial matters, most lawmakers say they only receive a dozen or so calls or letters asking them to vote a certain way. When you are calling or meeting with a representative, the following tips can help make one-on-one communication efficient and effective.

So, how can you best communicate with your legislator?

1. Writing a Legislator or Policy Maker

There are three basic ways to communicate your views: you can write, you can call, or you can visit. The letter or the e-mail is the most popular choice of communication with a legislative office. Every letter counts, but a personal letter is always more effective than a form letter or petition. If you decide to write, here is a list of suggestions to make your correspondence effective.

- Be concise, informed, and polite;
- Keep it simple. Address only one issue in each letter. Keep your letter short in an easy- to-read format with only a few sentences in each paragraph and white spacing between paragraphs;
- State your purpose in the first paragraph. If your letter pertains to a certain piece of legislation, identify it;
- Ask for their views on the issue or bill;
- Say whether you support or oppose a bill, and briefly why. Tell your legislator how it will affect you or members of your community;
- Tell the lawmaker who you are (a volunteer with the United Way, the director of the local child abuse shelter, an interested citizen) and be certain to mention that you are one of his constituents;
- Always include your full name and home address.

Remember that your letter does not have to be on fancy stationery or written in technical language. When it comes to communicating with your legislator any letter is better than no letter at all.

2. Addressing Correspondence and Greetings

To a Senator:

Senator (full name)
____(Room #) Alabama Statehouse
11 S. Union Street
Montgomery, AL 36130
Dear Senator,

To a Representative:

Representative (full name)
____(Room #) Alabama Statehouse
11 S. Union Street
Montgomery, AL 36130
Dear Representative,

3. Calling a Legislator or Policy Maker

Policy makers also pay attention when citizens take the trouble to call and convey their views, and the same general rules apply. Let them know concisely: who you are, what you are calling about, and what you want from them (i.e. support for a bill, opposition to a budget cut, etc.).

- You may call your lawmaker at the Statehouse, district office or place of employment. The number for House members at the Statehouse is (334) 242-7600; for Senators the number is (334) 242-7800.
- Identify yourself. Tell the person answering the phone who you are, where you're from and whom you represent. House members do not have any staff; you can leave a message with the receptionist. Senators have secretaries, making it easier to find out their schedules and when a more convenient time to call them back will be.
- Ask to speak with the lawmaker directly or leave a message with the aide that you support/oppose Senate Bill XXX or House Bill XXX on the issue of XXX.
- Be concise. State reasons for your support or opposition. Ask the representative's position on the bill.
- Don't burn bridges. Be polite even if the lawmaker does not agree with you. You might need him again in the future!
- Follow up the call with a thank you note briefly restating the conversation.

4. Visiting a Legislator or Policy Maker

Visits to lawmakers are important ways advocates can advance their cause. Elected officials can be visited on the job in Montgomery, back home in their district offices, or whenever they are engaged in public business (i.e. town hall meetings, in the Statehouse corridor, or at speech appearances).

Often you will only get a few minutes to make your point so it helps to have ready a short, 90-second version of what you want to say. Think in terms of the time it takes to shake hands or walk someone to the elevator. It is always smart to use the 90-second version first thing; if there is time, follow that with more details-like the impact in the legislator's district, or a more elaborate version of your message.

A visit to a policy maker should always include these things:

- Who you are and where you live
- Any group you belong to which is working on the issue, and the number of people involved
- What you came to talk about-in just a phrase or a few words
- What you want them to do (i.e. vote for, oppose)
- Something in writing such as a fact sheet or brief explanation of the how the issue is important to their legislative districts. Include your name, address, phone number and email address. This gives them the basic information and how to contact you with any questions.

We, at VOICES for Alabama's Children, hope these tips will be helpful in advocating for children and families in the Alabama Legislature. In a democracy, effective communication helps to tell our representatives how we wish to be represented. Remember that you cannot be persuasive if you are not understood.

So, inform yourself and involve yourself!

For more information on VOICES's legislative advocacy visit www.alavoices.org. Be sure to sign up for our legislative list serve (Sign Up for VOICES CAN!) on our website!

SHARING YOUR STORY WITH THE PUBLIC/MEDIA

Telling New Stories About Children's Issues

There is little doubt that television and newspaper play an important role in our lives. The way those issues are presented or framed by advocates and the media has a powerful impact on the attitude and responses that are elicited from the public.

What was believed to be effective and clear a few years ago, however, is proving not to be the case. Communication researchers are now able to tell us what works with the public and what doesn't. Advocates must retool their language and their approach to a story to elicit the responses they are seeking.

People turn on the T.V. or open the morning newspapers with preconceived beliefs, biases, and opinions. To help them listen to the stories we are telling, we must be aware of their beliefs, avoid using words that trigger negative responses, focus on solutions to problems, and put data and numbers in context.

I. Public Beliefs and Values

Across issues, there are some common themes that affect how people think about children's issues. In crafting effective communications, children's advocates and even reporters need to be sensitive to these long held beliefs.

1. **Individuals are solely responsible for their situations/Bootstraps Mentality** - Parental responsibility is the biggest stumbling block facing advocates. Many people can point to how they overcame adversity to be the successes they are today. They believe it is solely the parents' responsibility to raise and care for the child. Messages should incorporate ways to broaden this responsibility of parents in general to promote the well-being of all children. Speak of "our children" or "America's children" or "community responsibility."
2. **One person cannot make a difference** - While people firmly believe that an individual should be responsible for his or her own situation, they are also resigned to the belief that they are unable to make a difference in the

world. Instead of urging people to volunteer, which they believe can take too much time, ask them to talk to neighbors, church groups, and co-workers about what can be done about an issue.

3. **The worthy vs. the unworthy** - People want to be generous to those in need but believe many take advantage of the system. Counter this by incorporating into the message ways in which recipients are demonstrating worthiness.
4. **All problems can be traced to working women** - Focus group interviews reveal the belief that, because women are working rather than tying the neighborhood together, people no longer have the kind of relationships with neighbors that allow them to interact with children. Many believe that the plight of the working poor is partly due to the greed and standards of dual income families.

II. Start at the Beginning: Define the Problem

You cannot solve a problem that is not perceived to exist by the public. Coming forward with important "breakthroughs" in social remedies - programs that work or declining trends - will not matter much to the public unless the problem has already been established. Moreover, it is not merely the volume of news that determines an issue's ascension onto the policy agenda, but the composition of that news. How the problem is presented, its news composition, and the solutions determine how the public will view the issue. This is what is referred to as "framing."

III. Offer Solutions

Give direct appropriate public responses to the problem identified. This must be done early in the interview or speech. Solutions should incorporate big ideas. Use words like freedom, protection, stewardship, compassions, fairness, efficiency, legacy, protection to further define your solution.

IV. Using Metaphors to Define the Problem

The words you use to describe a problem or condition trigger certain frames of reference for the adult public. Frames connect, through language and symbol, to bigger models we hold about how the world works and to our core beliefs. Here are a few examples:

Child Care - Children are like plants. Growing from a seed to a flower requires a well qualified gardener who offers the plant plenty of water and sunshine and good soil. A growing baby needs caregivers who offer him plenty of love and care, as well as a stimulating environment. To improve the quality of a child's care while his parents are at work, an early childhood center needs to recruit and maintain well-qualified caregivers. One way to do this is to increase state subsidies to child care centers so that they can afford to hire the right gardeners for our precious children to grow and thrive.

Teen Violence - When communicating a violence prevention message, the journalist and child advocate must confront a number of counterproductive attitudes about violence - more police and more prisons are the solutions. Talk instead using metaphors that emphasize jobs and education. The following are some examples:

- Violence is a disease that strikes the community - and the community is like a body that must be kept strong and healthy to resist disease.
- Jobs and education are preventative medicine.
- Police and prisons are community painkillers.
- Kids' public behavior is everyone's business (studies show that violent crime is lower in a community that doesn't hesitate to correct behavior of their neighbors' kids)

- Reduce crime by talking to a neighbor

Education - Talk about education programs in terms of "the healthy development of children" or "investing in education for the future." "It's healthy" to develop your mind and your financial security. Wealth lends itself to an appropriate understanding of social assets including health and education.

It is important to realize that although the word "assets" literally has a financial meaning, the ordinary use of "assets" does not invoke a business frame. Do not apply a business frame to education. Phrases like "cost-benefit analysis" or the "future workforce" should be avoided because it leads to thinking about teachers not as mentors, nurturers, or professionals, but as "education resources" bought and used as cheaply and efficiently as possible. Moreover, do not talk about the right to education or the right to healthcare because this guarantees a battle on the issue. Talking about education or other child related issues in terms of rights is likely to stretch credibility and bring on resistance even from people who might normally support it. In addition, the terms "rights" has come to mean "human rights" or "civil rights" in the public mind.

Health Care - Everyone has a health care story and understands the need for good medical care. But when the healthcare conversation shifts to a discussion about children who are not covered by insurance, people often blame the parents. To keep strong support for universal access to health care for children, offer examples of children living in middle class families. Describe these families with insurance as being:

- Recently unemployed
- Divorced parents
- Part-time employees or employees of small companies that do not offer insurance

Talk about health concerns for children in terms of assets:

- "Health as an asset"
- "The wisdom of taking care of children's/family health"
- "Financial wisdom"

Legislative Process Outline

This information prepared by the Alabama Law Institute is only a highlight and brief of the legislative process, but it should give you an idea of how your laws are developed in Alabama.

I. THE LEGISLATURE

- A. Established in 1819.
- B. Consists of a Senate and House of Representatives.
- C. Meets annually in Montgomery for regular sessions.

II. THE LEGISLATORS

- A. Alabama has 35 Senators and 105 Representatives.
- B. Qualifications for Senator:
 - 1) Citizen and resident of Alabama for three years.
 - 2) Twenty-five years of age.
 - 3) Resident of the Legislative District for one year.
- C. Qualifications for Representative:
 - 1) Citizen and resident of Alabama for three years.
 - 2) Twenty-one years of age.
 - 3) Resident of the Legislative District for one year.

III. TERM OF OFFICE

- A. Representatives and Senators are elected for four year terms.
- B. Elections are held in even numbered years.
 - 1) Primary election held on first Tuesday of June to select candidates from major political parties.
 - 2) General election held first Tuesday after the first Monday in November to elect the legislators.

IV. THE LEGISLATORS FROM YOUR DISTRICT

- A. A list of members of the Legislature is available in the Secretary of State's office.
- B. Legislators have offices in the State House and an appointment can be made to see them.
- C. It is the legislator's duty to represent the people of their district.
 - 1) Let them know what you like or dislike.
 - 2) Your advice is instrumental in their decision-making.

V. WHEN THE LEGISLATURE CONVENES AND ADJOURNS

- A. Regular session beings on the second Tuesday in March on the first year after election and the first Tuesday of February on the second and third year and the second Tuesday in January on the fourth year.
- B. Special sessions may be called by the Governor.
- C. Regular sessions last for 30 legislative days and 105 calendar days.
- D. Special sessions are limited to 12 legislative days and 30 calendar days.

VI. THE SESSION BEGINS

- A. Organizational sessions convene on the second Tuesday in January following the election of legislators and are limited to ten consecutive calendar days.
- B. The various officers, leaders and employees for each body would include:
 - 1) President of the Senate
 - 2) Speaker of the house
 - 3) President Pro-term and Speaker Pro-tem

- 4) Secretary of State
- 5) Clerk of the House
- 6) Assistant Secretary and Assistant Clerk
- 7) Reading Clerks
- 8) Committee Clerks and secretaries
- 9) Enrolling-Engrossing Clerks
- 10) Doorkeepers and Sergeant at Arms
- 11) Security Officers
- 12) Pages

VII. VIEWING THE LEGISLATURE IN ACTION

A. The general daily order of business shall be:

Senate

1. Prayer
2. Pledge of Allegiance
3. Call to Order
4. Roll Call
5. Reading of the Journal
6. Signing of bills
7. Introduction of Bills
8. House Messages
9. Reports from Standing Committees
10. Reports from Selected Committees
11. Motions and Resolutions
12. Uncontested Local Bills
13. Bills on Third Reading
14. Other Business

House

1. Call to Order
2. Reading of the Journal
3. Prayer
4. Pledge of Allegiance
5. Roll Call
6. Approval the Journal
7. Approval of Leaves of Absence
8. Report of Standing Committee of Bills
9. Call of Districts
10. Report of Committee on Rules
11. Uncontested Local Bills
12. Bills on Consent
13. Unfinished Business
14. "Day Certain" Bills
15. Bills on Calendar
16. Senate Messages (at any time)

VIII. VOTING

- A. A quorum of members (18 Senators, 53 Representatives) must be present to transact business.
- B. Voting on the passage of motions or measures is done electronically in the House and by voice in the Senate; it becomes a part of the permanent public record (the "Journal").
 - 1) No member may vote unless that member is on the floor of the House (or Senate); if on the floor, the member may abstain from voting.
 - 2) Voting in the House is usually by electronic vote.
 - (a) To vote, the member flips a switch and the vote is recorded as a green "aye" or a red "nay".
 - (b) Votes are displayed on the electronic board.
- C. A majority vote is required for the passage of measures and ordinary business.

IX. COMMITTEES

- A. Each House has from 22 or 23 Standing Committees, ranging from 4 to 18 members each.
- B. These committees will cover the areas of:
 - 1. Agriculture & Forestry
 - 2. Banking & Insurance
 - 3. Business & Labor Relations
 - 4. Children
 - 5. Commerce & Transportation
 - 6. Constitution & Elections
 - 7. Education
 - 8. Environment
 - 9. Ethics
 - 10. Governmental Affairs
 - 11. Health
 - 12. Industrial Development
 - 13. Judiciary
 - 14. Local Government
 - 15. Local Legislation
 - 16. Military Affairs
 - 17. Rules
 - 18. Small Business
 - 19. Taxation and Appropriation
 - 20. Tourism & Marketing
- C. Each House's rules provide how the chairperson and vice-chairperson of each committee are selected.
- D. The committee system divides up the work of the legislature.
 - 1) Bills are assigned after first reading, by the presiding officer to a specific committee; committees do one of the following in acting upon a bill.
 - (a) Receives and takes no action
 - (b) Reports bill out of committee to floor of Senate or House as follows:
 - (i) Favorable
 - (ii) Favorable with amendment
 - (iii) Substitute
 - (iv) No recommendation
- E. Major revision of bills is done in committee.
 - 1) Here the public has the opportunity to testify in favor or opposition of a bill.
 - 2) Amendments may be made by motion in the committee, by committee reports, or substitute bills. All Changes in a bill must relate to the subject matter of the bill; unrelated amendments may not be tacked on.

X. KINDS OF LEGISLATIVE MEASURES

- A. A bill is proposed law. All statutes must be enacted through a bill.

- B. Resolutions, unlike bills, do not result in new law. They can be used by the drafter as a vehicle to accomplish several functions.
 - 1) To express policy.
 - 2) To amend Alabama's Constitution. An amendment to the Constitution may be proposed by joint resolution passed by a three-fifths vote in both the House and Senate in order to be put on the next general election ballot. No action of the Governor is necessary.
 - 3) To amend legislative rules.
 - 4) To take action on federal constitutional issues.
 - 5) To create interim study committees.
 - 6) To provide for administrative details of each house, such as when to adjourn and when to meet again.
 - 7) To express congratulations, commendation, or sympathy.
 - 8) To repeal agency rules.
- C. There are two types of resolutions: simple and joint.
 - 1) Simple resolutions are resolutions of a single house, to express that house's opinion on a particular matter.
 - 2) Joint resolutions are passed by both houses and submitted to the Governor for his approval, except for constitutional amendments which do not require the Governor's approval.

XI. PARTS OF A BILL

- A. There are 7 parts of a bill. They are:
 - 1) Designation. The designation identifies the bill number, the house of origination, and the sponsor of the bill.
 - 2) Synopsis. The synopsis briefly explains what the bill is about.
 - 3) Formal Title. While the formal title need not be an index to the bill, it is required to contain a general description of the subject matter of the bill, expressed as briefly as possible.
 - 4) Subject Title. Following the formal title is the subject of the bill, citing the sections of Alabama statutes affected.
 - 5) Enacting Clause. The enacting clause must read "BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF ALABAMA."
 - 6) Body. In the body of the bill, the purpose or proposal is actually set out. "New" matter is underscored, and matter to be deleted is stricken through.
 - 7) Effective Date Clause. If there is no effective date provided in the bill, it takes effect when the Governor signs it.

XII. STEPS ENACTING A BILL

- A. A legislator prepares a bill or has it prepared in typewritten form on line numbered standard size paper.
- B. The bill is then dropped in the "hopper" by delivery to Secretary of Senate, or Clerk of the House.
- C. The bill then is read for the first time by title only.
- D. The bill then is assigned to the appropriate committee.
- E. A standing committee then studies the bill, and holds a hearing, as previously set forth.
- F. If the bill is reported out of committee the chairman signs the report and the report is delivered to Secretary of the Senate or Clerk of the House.
- G. The report of the committee returned to the body constitutes a second reading.
- H. The bill is read for the third time and must be read at length unless reading is waived.
- I. If the bill receives a majority vote it is declared passed and sent to the other body.
- J. The other house then goes through the same process as outlined above, including first and second readings, assignment to committee, hearing, etc.
- K. If the bill receives majority vote of the second house it then goes to house of origination for enrollment:
 - 1) If the bill is amended in the second house it is then necessary to send it to first house for concurrence on amendment.
 - 2) If first house does not concur in amendments, a conference committee is then chosen from each house.
 - 3) If both houses accept conference committee report, the bill is deemed passed and then enrolled.
- L. The bill is then signed by:
 - 1) Secretary of the Senate, if originating in Senate; or by Clerk of the House, if originating in the House.
 - 2) Speaker of the House
 - 3) Presiding Officer of the Senate
- M. The signed bill is then enrolled and sent to the Governor.
- N. The enrolled bill becomes law if:
 - 1) Governor signs.
 - 2) Governor does not sign or veto, in 10 days.

- 3) Both houses pass it over the Governor's veto (by majority vote of the total membership of each house).
- O. The enrolled bill is filed with Secretary of State and receives an Act Number, as example, Act 99-177.
- P. Those provisions of the Enrolled Act that are general, public, and permanent in nature are compiled in the Alabama Code.
- Q. The Constitution may be amended – in two different ways:
 - 1) Amendments may be proposed by bill or resolution in one house, read on three separate days, and passed by a three-fifths vote in that house. Next the measure goes through the same procedure in the other house. If the measure is successful in both houses, it is submitted to the people and must receive a majority vote to become part of the Constitution.
 - 2) An amendment may be passed if a majority of the Legislature passes a bill or resolution calling for a constitutional convention, setting out the number of delegates to the convention, and providing for an election to decide whether the convention will be held. No constitutional convention has been held in Alabama since the present Constitution was adopted in 1901.

XIII. WHEN BILLS BECOME EFFECTIVE

- A. Generally, bills become effective upon passage by the Legislature and when signed by the Governor unless another date is specified.
- B. General appropriation bills become effective on October 1st following the date of their passage.
- C. Crime bills without a specified effective day take effect 60 days after their approval.

XIV. WHO PREPARES AND INTRODUCES BILLS

- A. Anyone may draft a bill; however, because even the most simple bill requires careful preparation, attorneys in Legislative Reference Service will do the majority of drafting and must review each bill prior to introduction.
- B. The Alabama Law Institute, a group of lawyers specializing in code revision, is responsible for many of the major law revisions.
- C. Only legislators may introduce bills.
- D. The Governor and other citizens must obtain a legislator to sponsor a bill.

XV. FISCAL NOTES

- A. The Legislative Fiscal Office prepares a written cost estimate (fiscal note) for each bill that will have any direct financial impact on the state.
- B. The fiscal note is designed to show the cost to the state.

XVI. WHEN BILLS MAY BE INTRODUCED

- A. Bills may be prefiled for introduction on the first day of the session.
- B. Bills may be introduced at any time during the session before the 26th legislative day.
- C. Local bills must be advertised in the paper for four weeks before introduction.
- D. More than 2,000 bills are now introduced each session. Of these less than 25 percent are passed and become part of Alabama law.

XVII. BUDGET ISOLATION

- A. A Constitutional amendment requires the Legislature to give priority to the passage of a budget. Other than bills may be passed prior to the passage of a budget with the approval of a resolution of not less than three-fifths of a quorum present.
- B. Each house develops its own procedure for routinely handling bills during budget isolation.

XVIII. RECORD OF LEGISLATIVE ACTIVITY

- A. A journal is kept in both the House and Senate.
 - 1) Time of convening
 - 2) Record of those present, absent and excused

- 3) Report of committees
 - 4) Reading of bills and measures
 - 5) How every member voted on a measure, etc.
- B. A "Calendar" is prepared in each house and is provided daily to each legislator.

XIX. LOBBYING AND LOBBYISTS

- A. Lobbyists serve as information agents for both the legislators and the group they represent:
- 1) They may represent civic groups, interested citizens, business associations, etc.
 - 2) They provide expert witnesses, develop background material and give assistance to law makers.
 - 3) Lobbyists are considered an integral part of the law-making process.
- B. Lobbyists are required to register with the Alabama Ethics Commission and with the Secretary of the Senate and Clerk of the House.

ALABAMA'S LEGISLATIVE PROCESS

by
McDowell Lee
Former Secretary of the Senate
1963 - 2011
Senate Document No. 3
Revised 2011

In order to understand the legislative process, it is necessary to know something about the nature of the lawmaking body itself.

There are 140 members of the Legislature: 105 members of the House of Representatives and 35 Senators, whose districts are based upon population. The current districts were realigned based on the 2000 census. After the 2010 census, the Legislature will pass legislation redistricting, according to population shifts and increases/decreases. This new redistricting legislation will take effect, commencing with the 2014 legislative elections. Under the Constitution of the United States, the Legislature also has the duty of redistricting Alabama's congressional seats, based upon the same census data.

The salary of legislators is fixed by the Constitution at \$10.00 per day, plus expenses in an amount fixed by the Legislature (see below). A travel allowance of \$.10 per mile from the member's home to the Capitol and return is paid once for each legislative session. The current allowance for expenses is \$50.00 per diem for three days during each week that the Legislature actually meets during any regular session, special session or organizational session, and \$4,174.00 per month expenses, year-round, with an automatic cost-of-living increase each April 1st.

Each member is also paid \$50.00 per diem for the performance of his or her duties as a member of any duly authorized interim legislative committee or subcommittee thereof, conditional upon actual attendance, and 51 cents per mile for one round trip per week of actual attendance at such interim committee meetings. Standing Committees may meet between legislative sessions and are paid for these meetings in the same manner as state employees are reimbursed for travel.

To be eligible for the office of State Senator, a person must be at least 25 years of age; for the office of Representative, at least 21 years of age. Both Senators and Representatives must be qualified voters and must have been resident citizens of Alabama for three years. They must have lived in their respective counties or districts at least one year immediately preceding their election. They must continue to reside in their respective counties or districts during their terms of office. No person convicted of embezzlement of public money, bribery, perjury, or other infamous crimes is eligible for membership in the Legislature. Each house has the power to punish its members, and with the concurrence of two-thirds of the Chambers, a member may be expelled. A member who is expelled for corruption is not thereafter eligible for membership in the legislature.

Members of the Legislature are privileged from arrest and service of civil process while attending or going to or from a legislative session, except in cases of treason, felony, violation of their oath of office, or breach of peace. Any remarks made in a speech or debate on the floor of either house by a member cannot be questioned in any other place.

Members of the Legislature serve for terms of four years. They are elected on the first Tuesday after the first Monday in November, with the most recent election occurring in 2010.

The office of legislator is unique in that the term begins on the day after the election and expires on the day after the election four years later. The terms of Constitutional Officers such as Governor, Lieutenant Governor, Secretary of State, etc. begin and end in the month of January.

Because the terms of all members of the Legislature begin and end at the same time, the newly elected and reelected members must reorganize the Legislature every four years soon after their election. This is done in what is known as "organizational" sessions. These sessions begin on the second Tuesday in January following the election of members of the Legislature, and are limited to ten consecutive calendar days. No business can be transacted at this session except the organization of the Legislature, the election of officers, the appointment of standing and interim committees, the determination of contested elections, and the canvassing of election returns.

At these organizational sessions, each house of the Legislature chooses its officers and adopts its rules of procedure; appoints the members of the various "standing" committees, or committees of the Legislature established to perform certain duties for the entire four-year term of the Legislature. The Lieutenant Governor is the President and Presiding Officer of the Senate. The Senate selects one of its members to preside in the event the Lieutenant Governor is absent at any time. This member is called the "President Pro Tempore", or temporary president. Other officers and employees are elected and appointed for each house; in the Senate, they are Secretary of the Senate, Assistant Secretary of the Senate, and other personnel as deemed necessary.

The Legislature convenes in regular annual sessions on the first Tuesday in February, except (1) in the first year of the four-year term, when the session will begin on the first Tuesday in March, and (2) in the last year of a four-year term, when the session will begin on the second Tuesday in January. The length of the regular session is limited to 30 meeting days within a period of 105 calendar days. There are usually two meeting or "legislative" days per week, with other days devoted to committee meetings. Special sessions of the Legislature may be called by the Governor, with the Proclamation listing the subjects which the Governor wishes considered. These sessions are limited to 12 legislative days within a 30 calendar day span. In a regular session, bills may be enacted on any subject. In a special session, legislation must be enacted only on those subjects which the Governor announces in his proclamation or "call." Anything not in the "call" requires a two-thirds vote of each house to be enacted.

The Constitution provides that no law shall be passed except by a bill, which is a proposed law written out in the proper form. When approved by the legislative body and the Governor, the bill becomes an act. The lawmaking process begins with the introduction of the bill in either the House of Representatives or the Senate. Bills may be introduced in either house, with one limitation---bills which increase or decrease revenue must originate in the House of Representatives.

The order of business in each house provides a time for the introduction of bills. In order to give the people of a particular locality advance notice of the intent to introduce a bill affecting that locality, the Constitution provides that local and special bills (that is, those bills which apply to a particular named locality) must be advertised in a newspaper published in the county affected (or posted if there is no newspaper) for four consecutive weeks before introduction. Documentary proof that this notice has been provided is required before a local or special bill may be introduced. This process is known as Notice and Proof.

Bills are assigned consecutive numbers, as introduced, to facilitate identification. No bill can become an act until it has been read on three separate days in each house. Upon introduction, a bill is usually read by title only, constituting the first reading of the bill. Because a bill is usually read by title only, it is important that the title give the members notice of the subject matter contained in the bill.

All legislative bodies operate mainly through committees in doing their work of considering bills. Committee action is probably the most important phase of the legislative process. The framers of the present Constitution of Alabama were conscious of the importance of the committee system, and inserted a provision in the Constitution stipulating

that no bill may be enacted into law until it has been referred to, acted upon by, and returned from, a standing committee in each house. Reference to committee immediately follows the first reading of the bill. Bills are referred to committees by the Lieutenant Governor and the President Pro Tempore in the Senate, and by the Speaker in the House of Representatives.

The Constitution states that each house shall determine the number of committees and the numbers vary from quadrennium to quadrennium. Each is set up to consider bills relating to a particular subject of legislation. A bill dealing with health matters, for example, would be referred in both houses to the committee on health; a bill dealing with schools would be referred to the committees on education. Other committees deal with such subjects as business and labor, public welfare, conservation, agriculture, governmental affairs, local legislation, etc.

Standing committees are charged with the important responsibility of examining bills and recommending action to the Senate or House. Usually on days when the Legislature is not in session, the committees of each house meet and consider the bills that have been referred to them to decide if the assigned bills should be reported for a second reading.

For most bills, the recommendations of the committee are followed, although either house is free to accept or reject the action of the committee. Bills reported favorably by a committee are placed on the regular calendar.

After a committee has completed work on a bill, it reports the bill to the house during the reports of committees in the daily order of business. Reported bills are immediately given a second reading. The houses do not vote on a bill at the time it is reported; however, reported bills are given a second reading and are placed on the calendar for the next legislative day. This second reading is made by title only. Local bills concerning environmental issues affecting more than one political subdivision of the state are given a second reading when reported from the local legislation committee and re-referred to a standing committee where they are then considered as a general bill. Bills concerning gambling are also re-referred when reported from the local legislation committee but they continue to be treated as local bills. When reported from the second committee, these bills are referred to the calendar and do not require another second reading.

The regular calendar is a list of bills that have been favorably reported from committee and are ready for consideration by the membership of the entire house.

Bills are listed on the calendar by number, sponsor, and title, in the order in which they are reported from committee. They must be considered for a third reading in that order unless action is taken to consider a bill out of order. Important bills are brought to the top of the calendar by special orders or by suspending the rules. To become effective, the Resolution setting Special Orders must be adopted by a majority vote of the house. These Special Orders are recommended by the Rules Committee of each house. The Rules Committee is not restricted to making its report during the Call of Committees and can report at any time. This enables the committee, especially toward the end of the session, to determine the order of business for the house. This power makes the Rules Committee one of the most influential of the legislative committees.

Any bill, which affects state funding more than \$1,000, involving expenditure or collection of revenue must have a fiscal note. Fiscal Notes are prepared by the Legislative Fiscal Office and signed by the chairman of the committee reporting the bill. They must contain projected increases or decreases to state revenue in the event the bill becomes law.

Regardless of how a bill is reached on the calendar, when the bill is considered and adopted, this is called a third reading. It is at the third reading of the bill that the whole house gives consideration to the bill's passage. At this time, the bill may be studied in detail, debated, amended, and read at length before final passage.

After the bill has been discussed, each member casts his/her vote as his/her name is called alphabetically. The Senate is rather small, and voting may be done effectively in that house by manual roll call. The membership of the House is three times larger than that of the Senate, and individual voice votes would require a great deal of time. For this reason, an electronic voting machine is utilized in the House of Representatives. The House members vote by pushing buttons on their desks, and their votes are registered by colored lights which flash on a board in the front of the chamber. The board contains all of their names and shows how each member voted. The votes are electronically recorded in both houses.

If a majority of the members who are present and voting in each house vote against the bill, it has failed passage. If the majority vote for the bill, it is recorded as passed. If amendments are adopted, the bill is sent to the Enrolling and Engrossing Department of that house for engrossment. Engrossment is the process of incorporating amendments into the bill before transmittal to the second house.

A bill that is passed in one house is transmitted, along with a formal message, to the other house. Such messages are always in order and are read (in the second house) at any suitable pause in business. After the message is read, the bill receives its first reading, by title only, and is referred to committee. In the second house, a bill must pass successfully through the same steps of procedure as in the first house. If the second house passes the bill without amendment, the bill is sent back to the house of origin and is ready for enrollment. If the bill is not reported from committee or is not considered by the full house, the bill is dead. However, the second house may amend the bill and pass it as amended. Since a bill must pass both houses in the same form, the bill with amendment is sent back to the house of origin for consideration of the amendment.

The house of origin, upon return of its amended bill, may take any one of several courses of action. It may concur in the amendment by the adoption of a motion to that effect; then the bill, having been passed by both houses in identical form, is ready for enrollment. Another possibility is that the house of origin may adopt a motion to non-concur in the amendment and the bill dies. Finally, the house of origin may refuse to accept the amendment but request that a conference committee be appointed. The other house usually agrees to the request, and the presiding officer of each house appoints members to the conference committee.

A conference committee meets and discusses the points of difference between the two houses and tries to reach an agreement on the bill. If an agreement is reached and if both houses adopt the conference committee report, the bill is finally passed. If either house refuses to adopt the report of the conference committee, a motion may be made for further conference. If a conference committee is unable to reach an agreement, it may be discharged, and a new conference committee may be appointed. Some highly controversial bills may be referred to several different conference committees. If an agreement is never reached in conference, the bill is lost.

When a bill has passed both houses in identical form, it is enrolled (prepared in final form for transmittal to the Governor). The enrolled copy is the official bill, which, after it becomes law, is kept by the Secretary of State for reference in the event of any dispute as to its exact language. After a bill has been enrolled, it is sent back to the house of origin, where it must be read again (unless this reading is dispensed with by a two-thirds vote), and signed by the presiding officer in the presence of the members. The bill is then sent to the other house where the presiding officer in the presence of all the members of that house also signs it. The bill is then ready for transmittal to the Governor.

When the bill reaches the Governor, he may sign it and thus complete its enactment into law.

If the Governor disapproves the bill, he may veto it, in which event he must return it to the house in which it originated with a message explaining his objections and suggesting amendments which will remove such objections, if it is

possible to do so by amendment. The bill is then reconsidered, and if a majority of the members elected to both houses agrees to the executive amendments, it is returned to the Governor, as he revised it, for his signature.

If a majority of the members elected to each house approve a vetoed bill as the Legislature passed it, it becomes a law notwithstanding the Governor's veto.

If the Governor fails to return a bill to the house in which it is originated within six days after it was presented to him (Sundays excepted), it becomes a law without his signature, unless the return was prevented by recess. In that case the bill must be returned within two days after the Legislature reassembles or it becomes a law without the Governor's signature.

Bills that reach the Governor less than five days before the end of the session may be approved by him within ten days after adjournment. Bills not approved within that time do not become law. This is known as a "pocket veto". It is the most conclusive form of veto, for the Legislature, having adjourned, has no chance to reconsider the vetoed measure.

Alabama is one of the states in which the Governor has the power to accept or reject any particular item of an appropriation bill without vetoing the entire bill. In this event, only the vetoed item of the appropriation bill is returned to the house of origin for reconsideration by the Legislature. The remainder of the bill becomes law.

Sometimes what the Legislature wishes to accomplish cannot be done simply by the passage of a bill but requires amending the Constitution. The bill or joint resolution is drafted to propose an appropriate amendment to the Constitution. Such a bill or joint resolution is introduced in the same manner as other bills and resolutions and follows the course of ordinary bills, except that it must be read at length on three different days in each house; it must be passed in each house by a three-fifths vote of all the members elected; and it does not require the approval of the Governor. A constitutional amendment proposed by the Legislature bypasses the Governor and is deposited directly with the Secretary of State. It is then submitted to the voters of the state at an election (the time of which is fixed by the Legislature) held not less than three months after adjournment of the session in which the amendment is proposed. The Governor announces the election by proclamation, and the proposed amendment and notice of the election must be published in every county for four successive weeks before the election. If a majority of those who vote at the election favor the amendment, it becomes a part of the Constitution. The result of the election is announced by proclamation of the Governor.

One of the common misconceptions about the Legislature is that the members work only for the two or perhaps three days which the Legislature meets each week. People usually visit the Legislature on a day when the houses are in session, and wonder how it ever gets anything done in view of the apparently confused, disorganized picture presented by the legislators on the floor. What people fail to realize is that most of the work of the Legislature is done by committees. Actually, they are the backbone of the legislative process. Behind every bill of general importance considered on the floor of each house, lies many hours of careful work by the members of the standing committee to which the bill was referred. The Legislature as a whole relies on its committees to dispose of the frivolous, dangerous, or less important measures and to report out only those bills deserving the consideration of the entire house.

By working through standing committees, the legislature can have each bill considered by a group of members who have special knowledge of the content. Some members of the Legislature have expert knowledge of particular subjects of legislation, and these members are usually placed on committees to take full advantage of this specialized knowledge. For this reason, the Legislature usually accepts the recommendations of the standing committees. As has been noted, however, the Legislature does not completely abdicate its responsibility for the careful consideration of pending bills. If the need arises, the members of either house can force a committee to take action on a bill, or they can ignore the committee's recommendations.

A great deal of legislative work is performed by interim committees, or committees which are appointed to consider important subjects of legislation between the sessions of the Legislature. Interim committees are composed of members of both houses, and they meet to consider special problems that the Legislature thinks should be studied carefully before a bill is drafted for introduction.

In addition, most states, including Alabama, have a Legislative Council. This is a permanent or continuing interim committee, composed as follows: From the Senate, the Lieutenant Governor and President Pro-Tempore, the Chairmen of Finance and Taxation, Rules, Judiciary, and Governmental Affairs, and six Senators elected by the Senate; From the House of Representatives, the Speaker and Speaker Pro-Tempore, the Chairmen of Ways and Means, Rules, Judiciary, and Local Government, and six Representatives elected by the House. Also serving are the majority and minority leaders of each house. The Legislative Council meets at least quarterly to consider problems for which legislation may be needed and to make recommendations for the next legislative session. A number of significant statutes have been placed on the books as a result of the Council's activity.

There are two state agencies that are indispensable to the work of the Legislature: The Legislative Reference Service (LRS) and the Legislative Fiscal Office (LFO). LRS is the bill drafting and legal research arm of the Legislature, and LFO prepares bills and a statement of the fiscal impact on the state for each bill that is considered by the two houses. Legislators rely on these two agencies for their expert assistance.

Twentieth century technology is making itself felt in legislative halls through the use of computers. In Alabama, legislative information is updated daily, and the current status of any piece of legislation can be retrieved in a matter of minutes. Both houses of the Legislature print their own calendars and various status reports are available, both for use by the members and staff and for the public. Legislators have laptop computers where they can access the latest information on pending matters.

In summation, the legislative process may be aptly compared with the iceberg. What the casual observer sees of the legislative process, as he/she observes the Legislature in session, is comparable to the one-eighth of the iceberg that is visible above the water. The background work of studying problems requiring legislative solution is comparable to the submerged seven-eighths of the iceberg. It is not apparent on the surface, but it is there.

This background work of study and research is probably the most important aspect of the legislative process. Its importance will increase even more as the problems of our society, with which the Legislature deals, grow ever more technical and complex.

THE ALABAMA LEGISLATURE

PASSAGE OF A HOUSE BILL

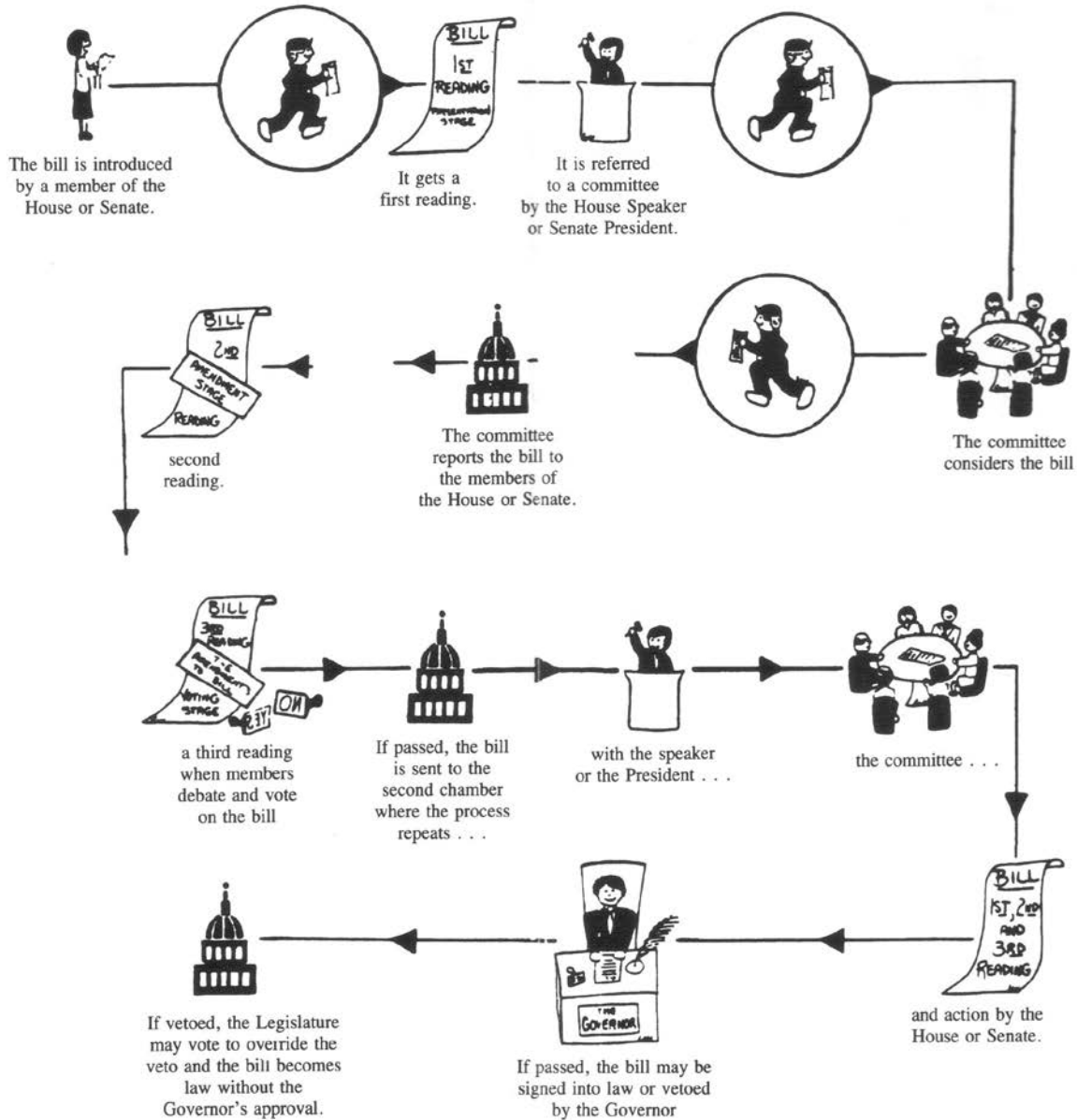
1. Introduction in the House, first reading, and referral to appropriate committee.
2. Committee hearings, discussion, etc. Bill may die in committee from lack of action or by vote.
3. Reported from committee, second reading, and placement on calendar.
4. Amendments, debate, third reading and vote on passage.
5. If bill passes, it is sent to the Senate. If not, bill may receive no further consideration, unless reconsidered.
6. First reading and referral to appropriate committee in the Senate.
7. Committee hearings, discussion, etc. Bill may die in committee from lack of action or by vote.
8. Reported from committee, second reading, and placement on calendar.
9. Amendment, debate, third reading and vote on passage. If it fails to pass, it may receive no further consideration, unless reconsidered.
10. If bill passes in identical form by both houses, it is returned to House, enrolled, signed by presiding officers of both bodies, and sent to the Governor.
- 10A. If bill passes with a Senate amendment and the House concurs, it is enrolled, signed by presiding officers of both bodies, and sent to the Governor.
- 10B. If bill passes with a Senate amendment and the House does not concur, bill may be sent to conference committee composed of members of both bodies.
11. If conference committee agrees to a compromise, report of conference committee is sent to both bodies. If not, bill dies from lack of action or another conference committee may be appointed to try to resolve differences.
12. If both bodies accept compromise, bill is enrolled, signed by the presiding officers of both bodies, and sent to the Governor.
13. BILL BECOMES LAW:
 - (a) If Governor signs;
 - (b) If Governor fails to sign while Legislature is in session, as provided by the Constitution; or
 - (c) If, having been vetoed by Governor, it is repassed by a majority vote of both bodies. If not repassed, bill is dead.

THE ALABAMA LEGISLATURE

PASSAGE OF A SENATE BILL

1. Introduction in the Senate, first reading, and referral to appropriate committee.
2. Committee hearings, discussion, etc. Bill may die in committee from lack of action or by vote.
3. Reported from committee, second reading, and placement on calendar.
4. Amendments, debate, third reading and vote on passage.
5. If bill passes, it is sent to the House of Representatives. If not, bill may receive no further consideration, unless reconsidered.
6. First reading and referral to appropriate committee in the House.
7. Committee hearings, discussion, etc. Bill may die in committee from lack of action or by vote.
8. Reported from committee, second reading, and placement on calendar.
9. Amendment, debate, third reading and vote on passage. If it fails to pass, it may receive no further consideration, unless reconsidered.
10. If bill passes in identical form by both houses, it is returned to Senate, enrolled, signed by presiding officers of both bodies, and sent to the Governor.
- 10A. If bill passes with a House amendment and the Senate concurs, it is enrolled, signed by presiding officers of both bodies, and sent to the Governor.
- 10B. If bill passes with a House amendment and the Senate does not concur, bill may be sent to conference committee composed of members of both bodies.
11. If conference committee agrees to a compromise, report of conference committee is sent to both bodies. If not, bill dies from lack of action or another conference committee may be appointed to try to resolve differences.
12. If both bodies accept compromise, bill is enrolled, signed by the presiding officers of both bodies, and sent to the Governor.
13. BILL BECOMES LAW:
 - (a) If Governor signs;
 - (b) If Governor fails to sign while Legislature is in session, as provided by the Constitution; or
 - (c) If, having been vetoed by Governor, it is repassed by a majority vote of both bodies. If not repassed, bill is dead.

A BILL BECOMES LAW



VISITING THE ALABAMA STATE HOUSE

Legislative Schedule:

The Alabama Legislature meets in annual Regular Sessions, each of which can consist of no more than 30 Legislative (meeting) days, within a 105 calendar day period. By statute, the dates for convening of annual sessions, for each year of a quadrennium (4-year period), are as follows (all times, Noon):

- 1st Year: 1st Tuesday in March
- 2nd Year: First Tuesday in February
- 3rd Year: First Tuesday in February
- 4th Year: 2nd Tuesday in January

(For example, the 2011 Regular Session was the first such regular session held in the new quadrennium, elections having been held in November 2010.)

Special Sessions may be called at any time, by the Governor, for emergency or extraordinary reasons. Special Sessions can consist of no more than 12 Legislative (meeting) days, within a 30 calendar day period. In his/her Proclamation, calling the Legislature into such session, the Governor will state the date and time for convening of such session.

Meeting Days:

Once in session, whether Regular or Special, the Legislature regulates its own schedule of meeting days and times for convening. Normally, the schedule of a Regular Session consists of Legislative (meeting) days on Tuesdays and Thursdays, with Committee meetings held on Wednesdays. However, please note, that this schedule can change from week to week, and that Committees may meet on Tuesdays and Thursdays, while their respective body is not in actual session.

Therefore, before planning a trip to see the Legislature in session please be sure of its planned meeting days and times of convening. You may do this by calling the Senate, at (334) 242-7800, and the House of Representatives, at (334) 242-7600. After hours, you may call these numbers to receive a recorded message, stating the day and time each body will next meet.

Alabama State House:

The Alabama Legislature is housed in the Alabama State House, originally built as the State Highway Department Building. The Legislature met in the State Capitol, 1851-1985, at which time complete renovation and restoration of the Capitol began, and the legislature began convening in the State House.

Address & Occupants:

The Alabama State House is located at 11 South Union Street in Montgomery, behind the historic State Capitol.

The State House provides office spaces for the following:

- Alabama State Senate (7th Floor)
- Secretary of the Senate & Senate Staff (7th Floor)
- Senate Gallery (8th Floor)
- Senate Committee Meeting Rooms (6th & 7th Floors)
- Lt. Governor (7th Floor)
- House of Representatives (4th, 5th & 6th Floors)
- Clerk of the House & House Staff (5th Floor)
- House Gallery (6th Floor)
- House Committee Meeting Rooms (6th Floor)
- Speaker of the House (5th Floor)
- Legislative Reference Service (6th Floor)
- Legislative Fiscal Office (6th Floor)
- Legislative Reapportionment Office (8th Floor)
- Joint Briefing Room (8th Floor)
- Governor's Legislative Office (2nd Floor)
- State Budget Office (2nd Floor)
- Attorney General (3rd & 4th Floors)

Parking:

Parking in the Capitol Complex is extremely limited, particularly during Legislative sessions. There is metered parking on most streets in the complex, operated and controlled by the City of Montgomery. Please note that meters have a two-hour maximum and that re-feeding of meters is prohibited by the Montgomery Police Department. The City of Montgomery currently assesses a \$10.00 fine for each citation given for vehicles parked at expired meters.

The State of Alabama offers free public parking at Crampton Bowl, three blocks east of the State House at 1022 Madison Avenue.

The State of Alabama offers handicapped parking, in keeping with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), on the Washington Avenue side of the State House.

State House Hours & Access:

Legislative office hours are 8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. During Legislative sessions, evening hours are extended if either of the two houses of the Legislature is still in session. Access to the State House is provided during any hour that the Legislature is in session.

Visitors to the State House should enter through the doors on Union Street. Disabled access is available through the Washington Avenue entrance. For security reasons, all other entrances are locked, and not accessible to the public. Visitors must sign in and receive a visitor's tag to wear while in the building.

Please be aware, that during a Legislative Session, all visitors to the State House must pass through metal detectors upon entrance. Security personnel will confiscate, and hold, all firearms, knives and any other weapons, until the visitor exits the building.

Public Galleries:

On Legislative (meeting) days, visitors may view the Senate and House of Representatives from their respective Galleries. The Gallery for the Senate is located on the 8th Floor of the State House; the Gallery for the House of Representatives is located on the 6th Floor. Visitors to the legislative Galleries are required to be seated, and may not stand for the purposes of viewing the proceedings below.

Please note, that Rules of Decorum prohibit the display of any sign, placard, banner or other visual device in the respective Galleries. In addition, no demonstrations, clapping, cheering, jeering, or other vocal or audible actions are permitted in the Galleries. Visitors also are prohibited from making any motion, designed to attract the attention of any legislator or legislators.

Legislative security personnel are stationed in the Galleries to maintain order.

Because of the ever-increasing number of visitors on Legislative days, it is not uncommon for the Galleries to be filled on certain days. No visitor will be allowed admittance to the Gallery, if all seats are taken. However, legislative security personnel may, from time to time, place a limit on the amount of time a group may spend in the Gallery, in an effort to allow other visitors admittance.

Each Gallery has a special, reserved section to accommodate persons in wheelchairs. Legislative security personnel will escort such persons to this area.

The Galleries are open during any hour that either of the two houses of the Alabama Legislature is in session.

Committee Meetings:

All meetings of the House Standing Committees and Senate Standing Committees, held for the consideration of legislation, are open to the public. From time to time, public hearings are held on certain legislation, at which time individual citizens may testify before the committee holding such public hearing, either in support or opposition to the legislation under consideration. Please consult the Joint Rules for specific requirements governing public hearings. The public may witness, but not testify, at committee meetings during which legislation is being considered, but for which no public hearing is being held.

Visitors should note that most committee meeting rooms are very small, and do not accommodate large numbers of persons. The times of Standing Committee Meetings are posted on the 5th, 6th, and 7th floors of the State House.

Meeting With Your Legislator:

If you wish to meet with your Representative or Senator, on a Legislative Day, it is best to call ahead to make an appointment.

Tour Groups:

Groups wishing to make special arrangements to tour the historic Capitol Complex, should contact their Representative or Senator as far in advance of their proposed visit as possible. Your Representative or Senator can assist you in making sure that your visit to the Capitol Complex is properly scheduled. Please note that tour groups, and individual visitors to the Capitol Complex, are most numerous in the Spring months.

Legislative Information

To find information on your legislator, visit www.legislature.state.al.us or call Senate information at (334) 242-7800 or House of Representatives information at (334) 242-7600.

IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS (Area Code 334)

Senate Office	242-7800
House Office	242-7600
Secretary of the Senate	242-7806
Clerk of the House	242-7609
Lt. Governor	242-7900
Speaker of the House	242-7668
Senate Bill Status	242-7826
House Bill Status	242-7730
Senate Public Information	242-7836
House Public Information	242-7730
State House Tours	242-7096

ELECTION INFORMATION

For information regarding elections and registering to vote, please visit the Alabama Secretary of State's website at:
<http://www.sos.state.al.us/Elections/Default.aspx>

or call the Secretary of State's Election Division at 1-800-274-8683 or 334-242-7210.

VOICES for Alabama's Children
Post Office Box 4576
Montgomery, AL 36103-4576
334-213-2410
E-Mail: vfac@alavoices.org
Website: www.alavoices.org

ADVOCACY DURING ELECTIONS

Our yards are adorned with candidate's signs and our televisions glow with political advertisements, which can only mean one thing:

Elections are not far away!

So what can you do as a child advocate? Advocating during an election year is not only important, but can also be easy. The following tips provide information on election year advocacy that will make a child advocate's work much easier and encourage others to get involved, as well.

NOW is the time to get to know the candidates –

While campaigning is a fast and furious time for candidates, they have even less time after they are elected. Many elected officials, especially state lawmakers, have a career or a job outside of their job as a lawmaker. Getting involved from the very beginning and getting to know your candidate now will 1) allow you to establish a strong and trusting relationship with them and 2) give you a clear idea about where they stand on issues affecting children. Working for a candidate during the campaign is the best way to get to them. Candidates need volunteers to work in their campaign offices, answer phones, go door-to-door with brochures, host meet-and-greet events in your neighborhood, and of course, donate financially. There are many ways to get involved and many opportunities to get to know your candidates.

Candidates (elected officials) are people too –

An elected official summed up his experience in running for public office by saying, “when you run for public office everything changes and people look at you differently – almost like you are no longer human.” Candidates and elected officials are people too and much of their work is controlled by their human perceptions. They like to know that people care about them; not just what they can do for people in an official capacity. The old saying is true for candidates just as with other people – “people don't care how much you know until they know how much you care.” Learning the personal interests of your candidate as well as his or her family and important events in their lives allow you to strengthen your relationship with them. Knowing your candidate on a personal level will strengthen your advocacy and will help you learn how to better approach that particular candidate after he or she is elected.

Candidates are asking you to “hire” them –

Although candidates are people too, they are asking you to hire them. They want your vote so that they can work for you by representing you in an official capacity. So, while it is important to get to know them on a personal level and to respect their official position, a child advocate should never be intimidated by a candidate, elected official or an official position.

Stay vigilant to hold candidates (elected officials) accountable –

Candidates make many promises during a campaign. Some of those promises will be easily attainable while others will not be achieved for many years. It is the child advocate's job to track the voting records of those officials they elect. However, don't wait until a vote is over to communicate with your official. Communicate with them frequently. Then after they vote, if they vote in a favorable manner thank them, but if they do not, allow them the opportunity to explain. Officials will not always be able to vote in a favorable manner regarding your issues and it is important not to burn the bridges you have carefully constructed, however, they should not consistently vote unfavorably toward your issues either

***Remember this is the prime time for
child advocates to be heard, so -***

Inform yourself, Involve yourself and VOTE for our children's well-being!

GLOSSARY OF LEGISLATIVE TERMS

ACT. A bill which has passed both houses of the Legislature, been enrolled, certified, approved by the Governor or passed over the Governor's veto, or otherwise becomes law.

ADJOURNMENT. Termination of a legislative day upon the completion of business with the hour and day of the next meeting being set prior to adjournment.

ADOPTION. Approval or acceptance; usually applied to amendments, resolutions, and motions.

AMENDMENT. Any change proposed to be made to a bill or resolution by adding, substituting, or omitting.

APPEAL. A parliamentary procedure for challenging the decision of a presiding officer after a Point of Order is made regarding a ruling of the chair. In an appeal from the ruling of the chair, the body votes in the affirmative to sustain the ruling of the chair, and in the negative to support the appeal. If the required affirmative vote under the rules is met, the chair is sustained and the ruling stands. If the required affirmative vote under the rules is not met, the ruling is voided.

APPORTIONMENT. Establishment of legislative and senatorial districts from which legislators are elected.

APPROPRIATION. Allocation by law of state funds for various departments of government, state schools, and other specific uses. One of the prime responsibilities of the Legislature is this power to allocate, or appropriate, state moneys.

APPROVAL BY THE GOVERNOR. Signature of the Governor on a bill passed by the Legislature, whereupon the bill becomes an act. (Constitutional amendments do not require the Governor's signature).

ARCHIVES. Public records kept by the Secretary of State and later by the Department of Archives and History. These include copies of all measures considered at each session, journals, registers, and other legislative documents.

BICAMERAL. Consisting of two houses. All states have bicameral legislatures except Nebraska, which has only one house (unicameral).

BILL. A proposed law presented to the Legislature for consideration. If the bill is passed by both houses and signed by the Governor (or otherwise has become law), it becomes an act (law).

BUDGET. Suggested allocation of state moneys presented by the Governor to each regular session of the Legislature by the second legislative day. The appropriation bills are based largely on this budget.

BUDGET ISOLATION. The procedure by which the passage of the two budget bills (general and education) is given priority in the regular session. Passage of any other legislation must be preceded by the adoption of a resolution exempting it from the budget isolation process.

CALENDAR. A list of bills and resolutions by title, printed each legislative day, which have been reported out of committee and are ready for third reading. Bills not disposed of on that legislative day are carried over in the same order to the next day's Calendar.

CHAIR. An abstract designation of the presiding officer.

CLERK OF THE HOUSE. The chief officer of the staff of the House of Representatives. He hires and supervises all House staff, processes bills at the desk during sessions, and assists the Speaker in interpreting rules. He is elected by the membership of the House.

CLOTURE. The agreement of a 3/5 majority of the Senate that debate on a given measure shall cease at a specified time. This parliamentary procedure, in resolution or petition form, is used only as a last resort to end a filibuster. (The House does not have a cloture provision.)

CODE OF ALABAMA. The whole body of Alabama law. In 1977, the Legislature officially adopted a new Code (the first since 1940) which has been in preparation since 1975, to be known as the Code of 1975 until such time as it is recompiled.

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE. A device which enables the Senate or House to use the greater flexibility of procedure available to committees. Any action informally agreed upon in a committee of the whole must be taken officially in full session. There is no record taken of action by a committee of the whole.

COMMITTEES (STANDING). Groups of senators or representatives appointed by the presiding officers to act on bills in a certain area of interest.

COMMITTEES (INTERIM). Joint legislative committees appointed to study a specific problem between sessions, to report to the Legislature before a certain date with recommendations. Such committees are usually created by joint resolution.

CONCURRENCE. Agreement by one house to an amendment added by the other house. Also, adoption of a joint resolution originating in the other house.

CONFERENCE COMMITTEE. Committee composed of members of both houses appointed by the presiding officers, to resolve differences between the two houses on an amended bill. Said committee reports recommendations and/or amendments back to the Legislature for further action.

CONFIRMATION OF APPOINTMENTS. The Senate is required by law to concur in certain Governor's appointments before such appointees can officially begin to serve. The process consists of consideration by the Conference Committee, a motion on the Senate floor to confirm, and a roll call vote. House action is not required.

CONSENT CALENDAR. A listing of non-controversial bills which have been through the consent calendar process (see [THE LEGISLATIVE PROCESS](#)) and are to be considered before the regular order calendar on each legislative day.

CONSTITUENT. A citizen residing within the district of a Legislator.

CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT. A bill which amends the Constitution of Alabama. After legislative enactment, it must be accepted or rejected by the people at a state-wide election.

CONVENE. To meet in formal legislative session.

DEBATE. To argue the merits of a bill, pro and con. "Extended debate" is a euphemism for filibuster.

DESK. The area in front of the presiding officer's rostrum where the Secretary (or Clerk) and Reading Clerk supervise paperwork, receive messages from other house, and consult with the presiding officer.

"DESK IS CLEAR". "There is no pending business before the Senate (or House)." This statement usually precedes an adjournment motion.

DIED IN COMMITTEE. The defeat of a bill by the decision of a standing committee not to return it to the full house for a second reading.

DISTRICT. That division of the state represented by a legislator, determined on the basis of population.

DOORKEEPER. An official appointed by the Senate (or House) to admit authorized personnel into the legislative chambers.

ENACTING CLAUSE. In Alabama, "Be It Enacted By The Legislature Of Alabama". This phrase, which follows the title, is a necessary part of every bill.

ENGROSSMENT. The incorporation of amendments into a bill before it is sent to the second house.

ENROLLMENT. The final processing of a bill or resolution, incorporating all amendments, after passing both houses. This is the document that is signed by both presiding officers and the Governor.

EXECUTIVE AMENDMENT. An amendment proposed by the Governor to a bill that has been passed by the Legislature. If the Governor proposes an amendment to a document, it is then returned to the Legislature for further action.

EXECUTIVE SESSION. A closed meeting. This applies to standing committees and on rare occasions, legislative bodies. They sometimes go into executive session on crucial committee action, or when personalities are involved. This procedure is seldom used.

EX OFFICIO. The holding of a particular office by reason of holding another; for example, the Lieutenant Governor is ex officio a member of the Legislative Council by virtue of his office.

FAVORABLE REPORT. The recommendation of standing committee that a bill be passed, either in its original form or with amendment or substitute.

FILIBUSTER. A strategic device by which a minority can control the floor through "extended debate" on a controversial measure for the purpose of either delaying or preventing passage. A Senator may speak for two one- hour periods on any debatable measure before the Senate.

FISCAL NOTE. A statement attached to a "money" bill when it is returned to either house from committee. Usually, prepared by the Legislative Fiscal Office, it gives the estimated amount of increase or decrease in revenue or expenditures, and the present and future fiscal implications of a piece of pending legislation.

FLOOR. The working area of either chamber of the Legislature.

GERMANE. Relevant; an amendment must be germane to the bill which it amends.

GRANDFATHER CLAUSE. Laws providing new or additional professional or business qualifications often contain a "grandfather clause", exempting persons presently practicing an affected profession or business from having to comply.

HOPPER. The mythical depository where bills are dropped for introduction. Actually, bills are either pre-filed with the Secretary of the Senate or Clerk of the House, or are handed up to the desk when the districts are called.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES. The "lower house", comprised of 105 members, each representing a district based on population.

INDEFINITELY POSTPONE. To "kill" a bill; in this case, "indefinitely" means "forever", unless the bill is reconsidered under the rules.

JOURNAL. The official chronological record of the proceedings of the Senate and House, certified, indexed, printed and bound at the close of each session.

LAY ON TABLE. A motion to defeat an amendment or motion; this can be accomplished by voice vote or roll call vote, when requested.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE. Permission to be absent for good cause, granted by unanimous consent at the beginning of each legislative day.

LEGISLATIVE REFERENCE SERVICE. The legislative agency which drafts bills and conducts research at the request of members of the Legislature.

LOBBYIST. A representative of a special interest group whose function is to research and influence legislation affecting his special interest.

LOCAL BILL. A bill which affects only one county or city mentioned by name in the bill. It might be an extension of city limits, a pay raise for a county official, or a local tax. In the Senate, these bills are usually passed by an automatic 25-0 vote, after having been approved by the local delegation. Local bills must be advertised for four consecutive weeks in the local newspaper before introduction, and an affidavit of such advertisement is entered in the journal.

MESSAGE. An official communication from one house to the other or from the Governor to the Legislature, usually transmitting bills or resolutions; they become part of the official journal.

MOTION. Formal suggestion offered by a member; it can be a motion to adopt an amendment, a motion to lay on the table, a motion to adjourn, etc., and, when it is "put" (or officially received by the presiding officer), it is acted upon by voice vote or roll call.

NOTICE AND PROOF. The "notice", published in a local newspaper, that a local bill affecting that county or city will be introduced; and "proof" of publication for four consecutive weeks prior to introduction in the Legislature. (See LOCAL BILLS).

OFFICIAL COPY. A copy of a bill, made immediately after introduction, which may be substituted for the original in the event it is lost. This procedure prevents time lost in reintroducing a bill.

ORGANIZATIONAL SESSION. A brief, 10 calendar day session held at the beginning of each administration. The only business which may be transacted is as follows: swearing-in of members, canvassing of returns, appointment of committees, adoption of rules, and adoption of resolutions.

PAIR. A gentleman's agreement between legislators on opposite sides of a question to withhold their votes. Generally, this involves an absent member who (1) wishes to have his position recorded and (2) wants to be sure his absence will not affect the outcome. A pair, while recorded in the Journal, is not taken into account in tallying a vote.

PASSAGE. Favorable floor action on a bill upon its third reading.

PER DIEM. Literally, per day; daily expense money paid members of the Legislature.

POINT OF ORDER. A statement by a member calling attention to an alleged breach of order or parliamentary procedure, upon which the presiding officer must rule.

POINT OF PERSONAL PRIVILEGE. A statement by a member not relevant to the pending business, such as a request to be recorded as voting "aye" or "nay" on a previous roll call, a protest against a newspaper article, or an invitation to a social gathering. There is a five minute limitation, by precedent, on such statement.

POSTPONE. To delay consideration of a measure until a specific legislative day or hour of the same day.

PREFILE. To introduce a bill prior to a regular session; the bill is numbered and informally referred to a standing committee at this point, and on the first legislative day it is read and formally referred to the same committee.

PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE. The Lieutenant Governor; in his absence, the President Pro Tem or any other designated Senator.

PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE. Literally, president "for a time"; elected from its membership by the Senate, he usually, but not necessarily, presides in the absence of the Lieutenant Governor.

PRESIDING. Administering the business of the Senate or House, controlling the order of business, referring bills, interpreting rules, voting only in case of a tie (in the Senate only), recognizing members to speak.

PRIVILEGE OF THE FLOOR. Permission to be in the legislative chambers as set out in the rules.

PUBLIC HEARING. Committee meeting open to the public, on a specific bill, with interested parties invited to testify.

QUORUM. The required number of members present to transact business.

READING CLERK. The member of the staff who assists the Secretary (or Clerk) by calling the roll, tabulating votes, reading bills, messages and resolutions, and otherwise assisting at the desk.

READING, FIRST. The reading of a bill at length (unless dispensed with by 2/3 vote, as is usually the case) upon introduction, after which the presiding officer refers same to an appropriate standing committee for study.

READING, SECOND. The reading of a bill when it is reported out of committee on any day subsequent to its first reading, along with announcement of committee action; the presiding officer then orders said bill placed on the calendar for the next legislative day.

READING, THIRD. The reading of a bill when it comes up for consideration on the calendar. It is at this point that amendments are considered and the bill is passed or defeated. If it is passed, it is then transmitted to the other house.

REAPPORTIONMENT. Re-division of the state into equal legislative districts based on the most recent census.

RECONSIDERATION. A process whereby a measure previously adopted or defeated can be reopened (within a strict time span) and again acted upon.

REFERENDUM. A method by which a measure adopted by the Legislature may be submitted to popular vote.

REGISTERS. A set of books kept in the Senate and House offices setting out by title all bills received in each house, with each action posted daily by register clerks. By the close of each session, the complete history of each bill is thus available chronologically. These registers become part of the archives.

REGULAR SESSION. In Alabama, the annual convening of the Legislature is for 30 legislative days within a span of 105 calendar days. In the first year of an administration, the session begins on the first Tuesday in March to allow the new Governor time to prepare the proposed budget. In the second and third years the session begins on the first Tuesday of February. The fourth year, being an election year, the Legislature convenes on the second Tuesday in January.

RESCIND. Annulment of an action previously taken.

RESOLUTION. A formal legislative document not having the binding effect of law, but expressing opinion,

SINE DIE. Adjournment "without day", that is, without designating a day to which the Legislature adjourns; final adjournment of a session.

SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE. The presiding officer of the House, elected from its membership by the House at each Organizational Session.

SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE. Speaker "for a time", or vice-speaker, also elected from its membership by the House at each Organizational Session. His duties are similar to those of the President Pro Tempore of the Senate.

SPECIAL ORDER CALENDAR. A list (in resolution form) of calendar bills to be given priority of consideration, regardless of their place on the calendar, upon adoption of said resolution. This procedure is often used near the end of a session when the calendar has grown to an unworkable size.

SPECIAL OR EXTRAORDINARY SESSION. A session, limited to 12 legislative days within 30 calendar days, called by the Governor for a specific purpose set out in his proclamation. Any measures not included in his call require a 2/3 majority for passage.

SPREAD UPON THE JOURNAL. Print at length and enter in the Journal any bill, petition, report, speech, etc.

STATUS OF BILL. The progress of a bill at any given time in the legislative process. It can be in committee, on the calendar, in the other house, etc. This can be determined either by referring to the registers of either house (see REGISTERS), or by referring to the computer system, which also provides a constant update on all legislative action.

STATUTES. Individual laws which comprise the Code of Alabama.

STOP THE CLOCK. To extend the constitutional deadline of midnight on the last legislative day by pulling the plug of the electric clock in the Senate or House chamber. When this is done, it is primarily to allow the staff to complete the massive paper work required before sine die adjournment.

SUBSTITUTE. An amendment in the form of an entire bill. When adopted, a substitute becomes the bill.

SUSPEND THE RULES. To temporarily (and by unanimous consent) set aside the rule involved in an action for the sake of expediency.

SYNOPSIS. An informal summary (as opposed to the title) of a bill, required by rule to be attached to each bill, other than a local bill, upon introduction. This is usually in layman's rather than lawyer's language.

TAB SHEET (SENATE) OR JIMMY SHEET (HOUSE). A chronological "log" of all motions, bill actions, roll calls, and all other official floor action in each house, recorded by a clerk in the Senate or House chamber. It is from this record that the journal of each house is compiled.

TABLING. Laying on the table, or killing.

TIE VOTE. An equal yea-nay vote (such as 17 yeas, 17 nays), which in the Senate can be broken by the Lieutenant Governor.

TITLE OF BILL. The title, or caption, of a bill precedes the enacting clause and is an abbreviated, formal statement of the subject matter contained therein.

VETO. The action of the Governor in disapproval of a measure; on its return to the Legislature, each house either sustains the veto or overrides it.

WITHOUT RECOMMENDATION. A report on a bill from a standing committee which returns a bill to the full house for consideration but without the endorsement of the committee.

DID YOU KNOW?

Every four (4) years the Alabama Legislature meets in an organizational session:

- Limited to 10 consecutive calendar days
- Decide on leadership in House and Senate
- Review and decide on rules governing operation of two chambers
- Committee Assignments/Hierarchy

Alabama House of Representatives:

- 105 Members
- Top leadership positions: Speaker of the House and House Speaker Pro-Tem

Alabama Senate:

- 35 Members
- Top leadership positions: Lt. Governor and President Pro-Tem

Regular Session:

- Limited to 30 legislative days within 105 calendar days
- Tuesdays and Thursdays are legislative meeting days
- Wednesdays are committee meetings

Special Session:

- May be called by the Governor
- Limited to 12 Legislative Days, within a 30 calendar day period

The House and Senate Committees:

- Committee system divides up work of the legislature
- Certain committees focus on specific issues
- Committee meetings are open to the public
- 24 Committees in the Senate
- 15 Committees in the House

Alabama has two budgets: General Fund Budget and the Education Trust Fund Budget

Committees responsible for the Education Trust Fund Budget:

- House Education Finance and Appropriations
- Senate Finance and Taxation-Education

Committees responsible for the General Fund Budget:

- House Government Finance and Appropriations
- Senate Finance and Taxation-General

The House and Senate Rules Committees:

- Sets the work schedule for their chambers
- Majority of work schedule is at the discretion of Rules Chair and Rules Committee members
- Most senior member given priority for the order in which bills will appear on special order calendar

Lobbyists:

- Provide and assist with research on bills and on the specific issue and their impact
- Provide concise information
- Serve as information agents for both legislators and the groups(s) they represent
- Are required to register with Alabama Ethics Commission and the Secretary of the Senate and the Clerk of the House

Advocates – What **YOU** Can Do:

- Legislators speak on your behalf so they need to hear from YOU!
- Educate yourself about your legislators – their jobs, civic involvement, church, etc.
- Establish a relationship with your legislators by communicating with them by phone, e-mail, regular mail, or personal visits so that when you call on an issue they will already know you.
- Sign up for VOICES legislative updates and alerts to receive information and talking points on children's issues. You can help your legislators understand the issue by being informed.
- Be aware of timing – Legislative alerts will tell you what action is needed and when.
- When you call or e-mail use talking points.

Alabama Legislative Information System Online (ALISON)

<http://alisondb.legislature.state.al.us/acas/ACASLoginIE.asp>

“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed people can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.”

~ Margaret Meade