

SPEAK YOUR TRUTH

HOW TO BE EFFECTIVE WHEN TALKING WITH LEGISLATORS & TESTIFYING AT THE
STATEHOUSE

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#1 THING TO REMEMBER:
LEGISLATORS ARE PEOPLE –
JUST LIKE YOU

TOP TIPS FOR WORKING WITH LEGISLATORS



BE HELPFUL



CALL AHEAD



BE PREPARED

BE PREPARED

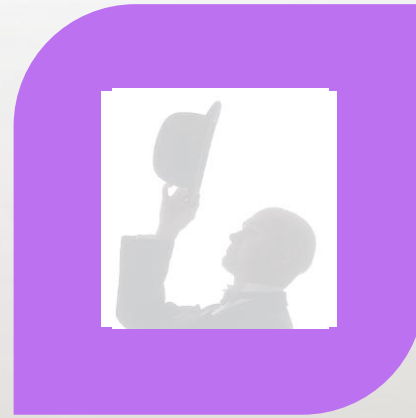
- Make sure you know why you asked for the meeting and what you want from the legislator.
- Practice staying calm and respectful before your meeting, too.
- It is your job to keep the meeting on track



TOP TIPS, CONTINUED

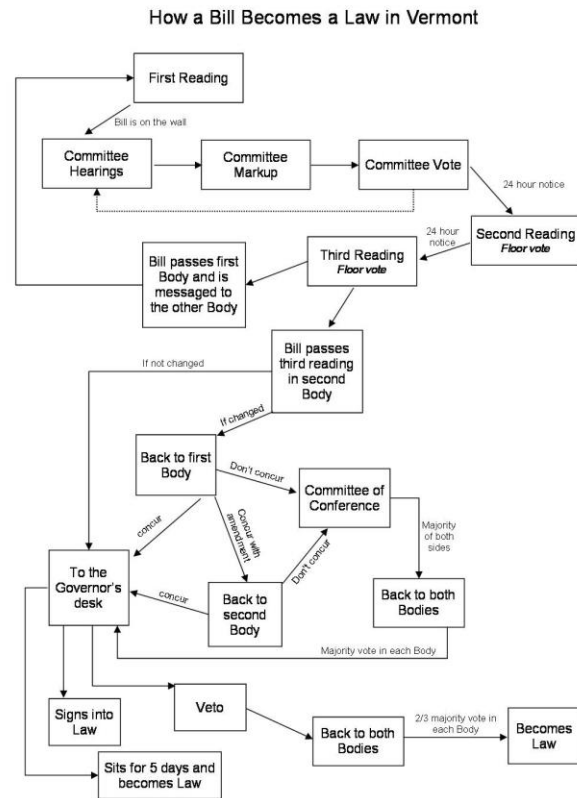


LEARN THE PROCESS



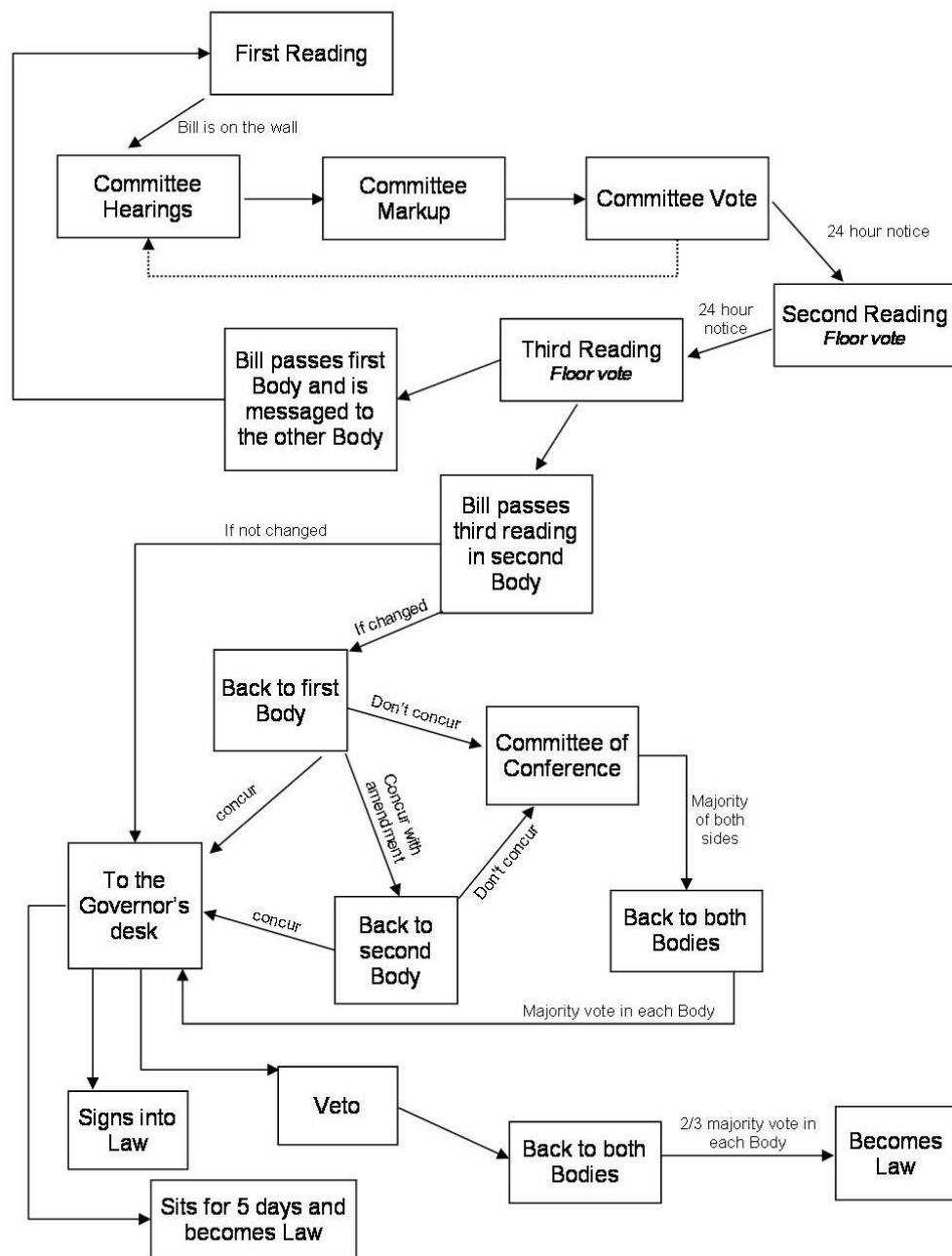
BE RESPECTFUL

LEARN THE PROCESS



- ✓ It helps if you are talking to a Decision Maker at a time when it will make a difference for them.
- ✓ If you are too early or too late, you will be less effective.
- ✓ Take some time to learn the bill process and be ready to talk to the legislator at the appropriate times in the process.

How a Bill Becomes a Law in Vermont



TOP TIPS, CONTINUED



STAY ON MESSAGE



TALK ABOUT OTHER
THINGS SOMETIMES



SAY THANK YOU



STAY ON MESSAGE – USE PIVOTS IF NECESSARY

- I see your point. The way I look at it is...
- That's a good question. (pause)
Here's how I think about this issue...
- The important thing to remember is...

REMEMBER: YOUR STORY IS INTERESTING & IMPORTANT

Legislators will want to know why you are interested in the issue & why you are advocating for your position.

It is always more effective to focus on what you want, rather than what you don't want

You will always know what is true for you, even if you don't know statistics or data. Always tell the truth.



FOLLOW UP IF YOU DON'T KNOW THE ANSWER

When you are talking with Decision Makers about issues that are important to you, you don't have to know everything.

It is helpful to understand what is happening in their decision-making process and some things about them as people.

It is ALWAYS ok to say you don't know the answer and to let them know you will follow up with the answer.

TOP TIPS FOR TESTIFYING

1

Know where legislators are in the process, and what questions they are asking

2

Know what you want and be clear with your request

3

Be prepared for anything – more time, less time, questions, etc

TESTIFYING TIPS, CONTINUED

- Ground Yourself before You Testify.
 - Make sure you have a method for calming yourself down before you start & while you are testifying, so you can be heard and so you can be effective.
- Face the Decision Makers
 - Get yourself all settled and look at the legislators before you start talking. Smile and thank them for the opportunity to testify.



TESTIFYING TIPS, CONTINUED

- Tell a Story.
 - Make sure it is relevant to the issue and to your request, and that it illustrates the need for the change you are asking for.
- Make a Specific Request.
 - All too often legislators hear a long list of complaints, and no suggestions about how to solve the problems. Even if you don't know the exact mechanism for how to achieve what you want, make sure you clearly state what it is you do want, so the policy makers know what their goal should be.
- Practice before You Go to the Hearing.
 - Make sure you can say what you want to say within the allotted time frame without rushing. If you have more, submit additional materials via email.



#1 thing to remember:

Legislators are people.