

HOW TO GET / BE INVOLVED IN THE STATE LEGISLATURE MAKE A DIFFERENCE!

How do I know what bills are pending before the legislature? There is a grid tracking all introduced bills and where they are in the process called a **Status Sheet** which is updated daily. Go to <http://www.leg.state.co.us/> and click on **Status**.

How do I know when a bill will be heard in hearing or scheduled for a floor vote? There is a calendar for the House and for the Senate which is updated daily during session. Go to <http://www.leg.state.co.us/> and click on **Calendar**.

How can I observe or monitor actual legislative proceedings? You can go to the capitol in person. All are welcome. You can listen to audio broadcast by going to <http://www.leg.state.co.us/> and clicking on **Audio Broadcast**. For proceedings on the House floor you can go to <http://www.coloradochannel.net/>.

When is the best time to weigh in on legislation? The earlier the better. If you can weigh in prior to introduction of a bill that has the best window for impact. Otherwise, try to weigh in prior to committee hearing, if possible. If you miss that window you can weigh in at hearing on the floor or as it heads to the 2nd chamber.

What can I do to impact legislation? You can call, email, write or meet with elected officials, draft letters to the editor or op ed pieces, blog or send information to your e-lists or phone trees to mobilize others to contacted elected officials. You can tell groups and other activists you are affiliated to try to grow a coalition to do the same thing. You can **ask legislators** to vote yes / no and tell them why and you can **shape public opinion** by getting education, information out to the press, blogs, or both. You can share **research** or **expertise** or prepare a **fact sheet** to on why to support or oppose a bill.

Who do I contact? It is always a good idea to contact your **own legislator** who represents you and let them know you live in their district. You can find out who your elected officials are by contacting: <http://www.votesmart.org/index.htm>. You also want to contact the **people on the committee** prior to a committee vote and the **members of the chamber** prior to a floor vote. All contact information for legislators can be found at: <http://www.leg.state.co.us>. Click on **Contact Information**.

Tips for maximum impact on legislators: Be **brief**, be **polite**, include a few **reasons**, and how to **follow up** with you for more information.

What if I want to suggest a new bill / law? You only need to find **one** legislator willing to introduce your idea as a bill and it can be introduced. The legislative session runs January – May. Given our deadlines it is best to approach a lawmaker by the November *prior* to the legislative session because we have a limit on the # of bills we can carry.

How do I testify? You have a constitutional right in Colorado to testify. Show up at the designated time and hearing room (see calendar) and **sign in**. There will be a witness sign-in sheet for every bill. When the Chairperson calls your name come forward, **introduce yourself**, who, if anyone you represent. Then prepare about 3 minutes of your **comments** on whether you support or oppose the bill and why. At that time the committee may have questions. Wait until the Chair calls on you by name to answer. (This creates a clear audio record of who is speaking). Then proceed to answer. If you cannot make it to testify in person, you can also **prepare written comments**, submit them to the Chair and **ask that they be included in the record**.

Who is lobbying for / against bills in Colorado? You can look up information about who lobbies in Colorado, who they work for, how much they are paid, and which bills they are lobbying by going to: <http://www.sos.state.co.us/> and click on **Lobbyists**.