



Government Affairs 101

How Hearts for Home Care can influence decision-making

STEP	POTENTIAL FOR INFLUENCE	
1 THE BILL IS DRAFTED AND INTRODUCED BY A LEGISLATOR A legislator drafts and introduces a bill in the legislature. When it is introduced, the bill is given a bill number.	 <p>By meeting with a legislator in their office, you can have a one-on-one conversation about your challenges which could inspire him or her to sponsor or cosponsor proposed legislation.</p>	<p>The bill is referred to the committee(s) that handles the issue(s) covered by the bill.</p>
2 COMMITTEE VOTES ON THE BILL	 <p>Before a committee votes on a bill, they will hear testimony from experts in the field and constituents who will be affected by the legislation (or lack of legislation). Your brief and honest testimony can inform all legislators on the committee about the issue ahead of their vote.</p>	<p>If it passes the committee, the bill goes before the entire chamber for consideration.</p>
3 FULL CHAMBER VOTES The legislation is considered, debated, and voted on by the entire chamber.	 <p>When you receive an "action alert" in your email, you can click through to easily contact all of your legislators in a few moments with suggested comments urging them to support the bill.</p>	<p>If it passes in one chamber, it is referred to the other chamber for consideration, where it repeats the process.</p>
4 REFERRED TO CONFERENCE COMMITTEE When the versions of a bill passed by two legislative chambers are different, the legislation is referred to a conference committee composed of legislators from both chambers, who will try to agree on a single version. The final version is voted on by both chambers.	 <p>This is another step in the legislative process where one-on-one contact with key legislators can have an immense impact in the process. Sitting down for an office visit with a legislator on the conference committee can drive home the importance of key aspects of the legislation.</p>	<p>If it is passed by both legislative chambers, the final legislation is referred to the executive branch.</p>
5 EXECUTIVE BRANCH DECIDES The president, governor, mayor, etc. can either sign it or reject it (also known as a "veto"). If the bill is signed, it becomes law.		<p>If signed into law, it goes to the proper administrator within the executive branch to implement.</p>
6 BILL BECOMES LAW The executive branch works to carry out the new law. Most states and the federal government publish explanations of the law so those affected understand how to follow it. Executive branch agencies, like state health departments, often publish their own regulations as well.	 <p>Once a government agency determines how it plans to put a new law into action, it publicizes its plans and asks for comments from the public. You can offer written or verbal comments during this "comment period" to ensure the bill is implemented as intended.</p> <p>After the bill passes, you can also talk up this accomplishment! Publicly share information on the new bill with people in your network who will benefit from the changes and thank legislators who supported it.</p>	

TIP: Legislators usually oversee the work of government agencies, and have great influence on how regulations are carried out. Make your voice heard by contacting your elected officials about regulatory issues that concern you.