

# ***IMPORTANT FACTS TO KNOW***

## **Federal**

## **State**

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| ⇒ 100 Senators (2 per state)                                      | 59 Senators (1 per district)                                     |
| ⇒ Elected to a four year term on a rotating basis every two years | Elected to a four year term on a rotating basis every two years  |
| ⇒ 22 Congresspersons (1 per district) Elected every two years     | 118 Representatives (2 per Senate Dist.) Elected every two years |

Legislative hearings are scheduled and conducted by committees/sub-committees of both houses.  
Most hearings are open to the public.

### Majority

### Minority

(Same for both State and Federal Legislative)

The party with the largest number of elected members in the House or Senate\*

The party with the second largest number of elected members in the House or Senate.\*

\*Leadership, i.e., committee chairmanship, comes to a member primarily because of seniority and party positions

## ***KNOW YOUR LEGISLATORS***

READ THEIR BIOGRAPHY – (obtain from their local office) i.e., educational background, military service, occupation, number of years in legislature, family, etc.

LOCATE PEOPLE YOU MAY BOTH KNOW – friends, relatives, neighbors, business, etc.

BE AWARE OF THEIR SCHEDULE – (at home and Capitol), remember their time is controlled by committee meetings, required floor time, staff analysis, etc.

KNOW THEIR STAFF – secretaries, research staff, aides, etc.

## ***MAKING CONTACTS***

### 1. Correspondence:

a. Written letter – See sample page 4

b. Telegram –

1. Personal Opinion Message – this can be sent to the President, the Vice-President, Congresspersons and Senators (can contain up to 20 words). You are not charged for any name and addresses. Message delivered next day.
2. Mailgram – can contain up to 100 words, can be sent to anyone, not just public officials. Delivered day after message sent.
3. Night letter – 15 words can be sent at night and arrive next day at a reduced rate.
4. Telegram – 15 words can be sent immediately

### 2. Telephone Calls

⇒ Quickest method but is unlikely to achieve direct communication with the legislators.

3. Personal Visit –
  - a. Call and make an advance appointment.
  - b. Identify who you are and/or represent and what your area of expertise is.
  - c. Do your homework and be prepared.
  - d. Be on time.
  - e. Be brief, informal, friendly and to the point.
  - f. Summarize major points of discussion before ending the meeting.
  - g. Invite him/her to visit your school and/or meet with you organization.
  - h. Back home send a letter of thank you with any requested information.

## ***KNOW YOUR BE'S***

1. BE INFORMED .....Of all issues concerning vocational education (appropriations, policies, target groups, clientele) before talking to the legislators or their staff.
2. BE KNOWLEDGEABLE.....Know some personal data and background information about your legislators first.
3. BE PRACTICAL.....Have a well thought out program of action you could recommend.
4. BE BRIEF.....Legislators are very busy people.
5. BE FAIR.....Legislators want to do the fair thing.
6. BE UNDERSTANDING.....Try to understand your legislator's positions and you will go further.
7. BE FRIENDLY.....Keep in touch all year, not just when you want something.
8. BE CONSTRUCTIVE.....You don't like to be scolded or preached to, neither do legislators.
9. BE REALISTIC.....Legislators may have to compromise with each other.
10. BE REASONABLE.....Recognize that there are legitimate differences of opinion.
11. BE THOUGHTFUL.....Commend the right things they do.
12. BE CHARITABLE.....If you feel your legislators failed you, evaluate if you did a good job of informing them of the issues.
13. BE A GOOD OPPONENT.....Fight issues (not people), and be ready with an alternative solution
14. BE CONSISTENT.....Send them information on a regular basis, not just when you want them to vote for something.

# ***WHEN WRITING YOUR LEGISLATOR***

(USE PERSONAL STATIONARY)

Your Home

City, State, Zip

Date

The Honorable \_\_\_\_\_  
Room Number and Building Name\*  
City, State, Zip\*

Dear Representative (Senator) \_\_\_\_\_

1. Identify yourself, Reference to your occupation or background.
2. Identify the bill, or issue you are concerned about; give correct bill number or describe it by popular title (i.e. vocational education appropriations).
3. Write your own views concerning the bill; relate your own experiences and observations based on facts; describe the problems that could develop or be solved; state it in your own words.
4. Thank him/her for taking your views into consideration; request support/defeat of the bill; request a reply.

Sincerely,

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Your Full Name)

Address

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\*Refer to Legislative Handout.

## How to Organize a Personal Visit Or Group Function With a Legislator

1. **Call the legislator's home office** and suggest a date and alternative time for the visit or activity (i.e. school visit, breakfast meeting, banquet, reception, etc.).
2. **Identify who you are**, what your area of interest is, who you represent and what you want.
3. **Indicate the approximate number of people involved** and the legislator's responsibility.
4. **Ask is the legislator would like media coverage**, (if appropriate).
5. **Do YOUR homework!** Agree on which issues to discuss, your position and make a brief, strong case.
6. **Confirm the appointment by phone**. For a group activity follow-up with a written invitation.
7. **Leave a written summary of your viewpoints** with the legislator following the meeting.

8. **Send a letter of thanks** and remind him/her of any commitments agreed upon after the visit or activity.

## **How to make legislative contacts.**

1. Correspondence - letters, news articles, etc.
2. Phone calls - not unless urgent
3. Personal contacts - these are best in legislators home district
  - set up an open house in the ag department
  - invite to ag classes
  - invite to section meetings
  - assist legislator in fund raiser/campaign(not an FFA Chapter activity)

## **When to make legislative contacts.**

1. Now - fall blitz campaign
2. December - inform them of activities that you attended at the National Convention
3. December - send Christmas cards
4. January - invite to school for FFA week
5. February - publicize FFA Week activities
6. March - involve legislator in chapter banquet and AG Day activities
7. April - start contacts for support of AG ED line item
8. May - inform legislator of award winners and invite to FFA Convention
9. Spring - attend Legislative Awareness activity
10. Spring - gear up for the Line Item awareness activities

## BEST WAYS TO AFFECT LEGISLATORS

1. When talking to your legislator, be brief. Explain why they should vote yes or no on the Agriculture Education line item.
2. If you call and leave a message, give your day and night phone number and request that they return your call.
3. When writing to your legislator:
  - a.) Use personal stationary
  - b.) Correspondence should be typed or handwritten neatly
  - c.) Be brief and to the point
  - d.) Keep letter or notes to one page
4. Invite them to banquets, open house activities, leadership training schools, contests, etc. They need to publicity for reelection purposes and are always looking for such activities to attend. If they do attend a function, take pictures and put them in the paper.
5. Write thank yous for legislative support!
6. Look at the legislative process to pick an appropriate time to discuss the bill. Break down your contacts with legislatures in three time periods:
  - a.) before session
  - b.) during session
  - c.) after session
7. The most effective place to contact legislators is in their home district offices.
8. Get to know your legislator on a personal level so he/she will know you on a first name basis.
9. When writing to legislators, request a reply as to how they voted and why!
10. General rule to remember: Praise publicly Criticize privately
11. Respect your legislator and the office they hold.

\*These were taken from a session conducted by Representative Duane Noland and lobbyist Rich Clemons from Growmark at the 1993 Annual ILCAE meeting.



## *Glossary of Selected Congressional Terms*

- 1. Act** – *The term for legislation which has passed both houses of Congress and has been signed by the President or passed over his veto, thus becoming law.*
- 2. Amendment** – *Proposal of a Congressman to alter the language or stipulations in a bill or act. It is usually printed, debated, and voted upon in the same manner as a bill.*
- 3. Appropriation Bill** – *Grants the actual monies approved by authorization bill. Normally an appropriation bill originates in the house, and is not acted on until its authorization measure is enacted. Regular appropriations are supposed to be passed before the start of the fiscal year to which they apply, but in recent years this has rarely happened. In addition to general appropriation bills, there is another type – SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATIONS. These are normally passed after the regular appropriation, but supposedly before the fiscal year to which they apply. Deficiencies are passed in the same fiscal year to which they apply but in recent practice have been called supplements.*
- 4. Authorization Bill** – *Authorizes a program and puts a ceiling on monies that can be used to finance it. Usually enacted before appropriation bill is passed.*
- 5. Bills** – *Most legislative proposals before Congress are in the form of bills, and are designated as H.R. (House of Representatives) or S. (Senate) according to the house in which they originate and by a number assigned in the order in which they were introduced.*
- 6. Bills Introduced** – *Any number of legislators may join in introducing a single bill. Many bills in reality are committee bills and are introduced under the name of the chairman of the committee or subcommittee as a formality. All appropriation bills fall into this category, as do many other bills, particularly those dealing with complicated, technical subjects. A committee frequently holds hearings on a number of related bills, and may agree on one of them or on an entirely new bill.*
- 7. Bills Referred** – *When introduced, a bill is referred to the committee which has jurisdiction over the subject with which the bill is concerned.*
- 8. By Request** – *A phrase used when a Senator or Representative introduces a bill at the request of an executive agency or private organization but does not necessarily endorse the legislation.*
- 9. Calendar** – *An agenda or list of pending business before committees of either chamber. Bills are listed there in order, but may be called up irregularly by the*

*Majority Leader either by a motion to do so, or by obtaining the unanimous consent of the Senate. Frequently the Minority Leader is consulted to assure unanimous consent. Only cloture can limit debate on bills thus called up.*

**10. Chamber** – *Meeting place for the total membership of either the House or the Senate, as distinguished from the respective committee rooms.*

**11. Clean Bill** – *Frequently after a committee has finished a major revision of a bill, one of the committee members, usually the chairman, will assemble the changes plus what is left of the original bill into a new measure and introduce it as a “clean bill.” The new measure, which carries a new number, is then sent to the floor for consideration. This often is a time-saver, as committee-recommended changes do not have to be considered one at a time by the chamber.*

**12. Cloture** – *The process by which debate can be limited in the Senate, other than by using unanimous consent.*

**13. Committee** – *A subdivision of the House or Senate which prepares legislation for action by the parent chamber, or makes investigations as directed by the parent chamber. There are several types of committees. Most standing committees are divided into subcommittees which study legislation, hold hearings, and report their recommendations to the full committee. Only the full committee can report legislation for action by the House or Senate.*

**14. Concurrent Resolution** – *A concurrent resolution, designated H. Con. Res. or S. Con. Res., must be passed by both houses but does not require the signature of the President and does not have the force of the law. Concurrent resolutions generally are used to make or amend rules applicable to both houses or to express the sentiment of the two houses. A concurrent resolution for example, is used to fix the time for adjournment of a Congress.*

**15. Conference** – *A meeting between the representatives of the House and Senate to reconcile differences between the two houses over provisions of a bill. Members of the conference committee are appointed by the Speaker and the house must reach agreement on the provisions for the bill (often a compromise between the versions of the two chambers) before it can be sent up for floor action in the form of a “conference report.” There it cannot be amended, and if not approved by both chambers, the bill goes back to conference. Elaborate rules govern the conduct of the conferences. All bills which are passed by House and Senate in slightly different form need not be sent to conference; either chamber may “concur” in the other’s amendments.*

**16. Congressional Record** – *The daily, printed account of proceedings in both House and Senate chambers, with debate, statements, and the like reported verbatim. Committee activities are not covered, excepting their reports to the parent body.*

**17. Continuing Appropriation** – *When a fiscal year begins and Congress has not yet enacted all the regular appropriation bills for that year, it passes a joint resolution “continuing appropriations” for Government agencies at rates generally based on their previous year’s appropriations.*

**18. Deficiency Appropriation** – *An appropriation to cover the difference between an agency’s regular appropriation and the amount deemed necessary for it to operate for the full fiscal year. In recent years deficiency bills have been called supplemental appropriations.*

**19. Enacting Clause** – *Key phrase in bill saying, “Be enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives...” A successful motion to strike it from legislation kills the measure.*

**20. Engrossed Bill** – *The final copy of a bill as passed by one chamber, with the text amended by floor action and certified to by the Clerk of the House or the Secretary of the Senate.*

**21. Enrolled Bill** – *The final copy of a bill which has been passed in identical form by both chambers. It is certified to by an officer of the House of origin (House Clerk or Senate Secretary) and then sent on for signatures of the House Speaker, the Senate President, and the U.S. President. An enrolled bill is printed on parchment.*

**22. Germane** – *Pertaining to the subject matter of the measure at hand. All house amendments must be germane to the bill. The Senate requires that amendments be germane only when they are proposed to general appropriations bills, bills being considered under cloture, or often when proceeding under an agreement to limit debate.*

**23. Hopper** – *Box on House Clerk’s desk where bills are deposited on introduction.*

**24. Marking up a Bill** – *Going through a measure, usually in committee, taking it section by section, revising language, penciling in new phrases, etc. If the bill is extensively revised, the new version may be introduced as a separate bill, with a new number.*

**25. Pair** – *A “Gentlemen’s Agreement” between two lawmakers on opposite sides to withhold their votes on roll calls so their absence from Congress will not affect the outcome of record voting. If passage of the measure requires a two-thirds majority, a pair would require two members favoring the action to one opposed to it.*

**26. Quorum** – *The number of Members whose presence is necessary for the transaction of business. In the Senate and House, it is a majority of the membership. If a point of order is made that a quorum is not present, the only business in order is*

*either a motion to adjourn or a motion to direct the Sergeant-at-Arms to request the attendance of the absentees.*

**27. Recision** – *An item in an appropriation bill rescinding, or cancelling, funds previously appropriated but not spent.*

**28. Rider** – *A provision, usually not germane, tacked on to a bill which its sponsor hopes to get through more easily by including in other legislation. Riders become law if the bills embodying them do. Riders providing for legislation in appropriations bills are outstanding examples, though technically they are banned.*

**29. Standing Vote** – *A non-record vote used in both House and Senate. A standing vote, also called a division vote, is taken as follows: Members in favor of a proposal stand and are counted by the presiding officer; then Members opposed stand and are counted. There is no record of how individual Members voted.*