

a family's guide to advocacy

The Office of Government Affairs & Community Relations supports the community and legislative goals of Children's Hospital. We work with other departments throughout the Hospital, and with community groups and government officials. We also work with patient families. We gratefully acknowledge the support of the Hospital's Family Advisory Council for helping us explore ways to communicate with families on issues that affect all children.

 The Children's Hospital of Philadelphia®
Hope lives here.

OFFICE OF
GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS & COMMUNITY RELATIONS

For more information, call 267-426-6904 or
visit www.chop.edu/govt_affairs.



Together We Can Make a Difference

7/19/5-06



“be our voice”

dear family,

Like most parents, you've probably wondered what you can do to help protect the health and safety of your child — in the community and the wider world. This brochure was created to help you learn how to speak up on your child's behalf. With the right information, you can advocate effectively for your child.

Children have no vote. But they do have a voice — yours.

For more information, call 267-426-6904
or visit www.chop.edu/govt_affairs.



“be our champion”

what is advocacy?

LEGISLATIVE ADVOCACY

Legislative Advocacy

Advocacy means “to speak up.” Legislative advocacy is speaking up for another or championing a cause, in order to change public policy.

As citizens, we have the ability to change laws, including those that affect children. We can do this by voicing our concerns to our legislators — writing letters, making phone calls and/or speaking in front of committees.

The creators of our Constitution wrote that freedom of speech is protected. Standing up for our beliefs is the right of every citizen, because our system works best when citizens are active participants. Learn about public policy and express your views. You can make a difference for your child – and all children.

COMMUNITY ADVOCACY

Community Advocacy

This type of advocacy draws a community’s attention to important issues at a local level (such as neighborhoods, schools and healthcare facilities). Community advocacy works by gaining support from our fellow citizens and elected representatives to bring about change.

make the connection

HOW TO FIND YOUR LEGISLATOR:

CapwizXC™: <http://capwiz.com/chop/home>

Through a computer program called CapwizXC, Children's Hospital allows you to identify your legislator by ZIP code. This program will also educate you about the law-making process and how you can make a difference. There are pre-written letters about specific issues that you can send to your elected officials. CapwizXC allows you to advocate from the comfort of your own home. If you do not have a computer at home, you may try your local library or The Connelly Resource Center for Families in the Main Building at CHOP.

Additional Web sites to help you identify your state legislator:

Pennsylvania: www.legis.state.pa.us

New Jersey: www.njleg.state.nj.us

Delaware: www.legis.state.de.us

HOW TO WRITE TO YOUR LEGISLATOR:

First, keep it simple. State your purpose in the first paragraph by asking your legislator to do something specific (sponsor a bill or vote for or against a specific measure, for example). Use the next two paragraphs to explain why this matters to you. The more clearly and passionately you can explain how this issue will affect you or your family, the more likely the official will be to act in your interest.

ADDRESS YOUR LETTER AS FOLLOWS:

**When writing to a
U.S. senator or
state senator**

The Honorable Mary/John Doe
(mailing address here)

Dear Senator Doe:

**When writing to a
U.S. representative or
state representative/
assemblyman**

The Honorable Anne/James Jones
(mailing address here)

Dear Ms./Mr. Jones:

**When writing to
a governor**

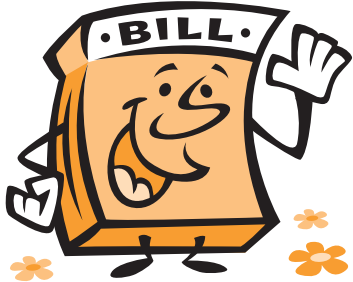
The Honorable Mary/John Doe
(mailing address here)

Dear Governor Doe:

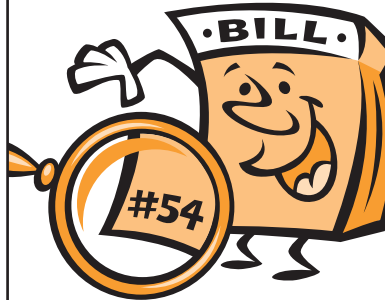
the birth of a law

Every law begins life as a bill, in either the House of Representatives or the Senate. Here is an example of how a bill becomes a law in the Pennsylvania General Assembly.

A bill is introduced on the House floor.



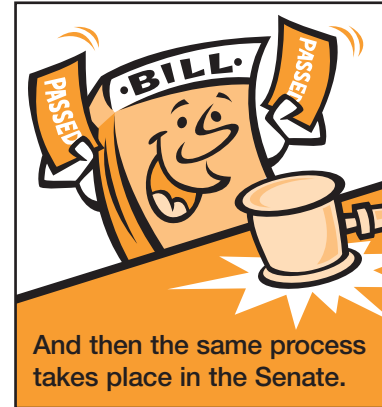
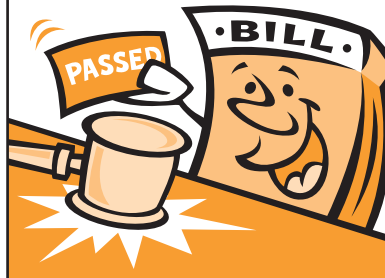
A clerk examines the bill and assigns it a number.



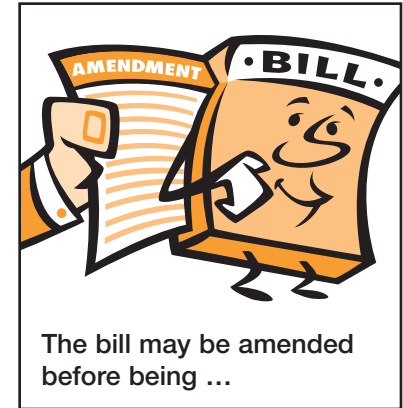
It is then sent to the appropriate committee.



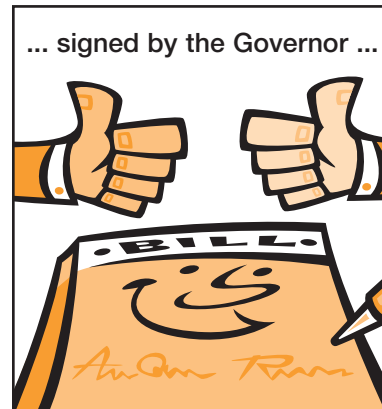
If the committee reports favorably, the bill gets the vote of the full House.



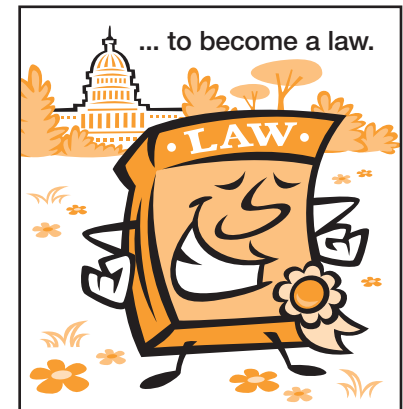
And then the same process takes place in the Senate.



The bill may be amended before being ...



... signed by the Governor ...



... to become a law.

If amendments are made in one house, the other house must agree. In most states, a governor may veto all or part of the bill. If the governor fails to act on the bill, it may become law without his or her signature.





“be our hero”

for more information

American Academy of Pediatrics
www.aap.org/advocacy.html

Pennsylvania state Web site
www.state.pa.us

National Association of Children's Hospitals
www.childrenshospitals.net

The Children's Hospital of Philadelphia
www.chop.edu

Office of Government Affairs & Community Relations
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