

You CAN Make a Difference...

There is something you as a citizen can do to make a difference. Get the word out to others who feel as you feel and teach them the process of tracking a bill on the Internet and inserting themselves into the process. **You and others need to keep putting the pressure on the right people at the right time.** The process is the same in both the House and the Senate. However, for simplification we will reference the House.

Here are the key areas where you can insert yourself into the process and possibly make a difference:

1. **First and foremost, contact your own representative and senator to let them know your opposition or support for a bill.** Be courteous, include your full address, and give them your reasons for opposition or support. If you don't know who your Senator or Representative is, you can find out by going to <http://www.leg.state.or.us/findlegsltr>.
2. **When it goes to a committee, find out what committee it went to and write to the Chairperson of that committee as well as all of the members of the committee.** Let them know you are writing to them, or calling them, because they are on the committee that currently has the House Bill or the Senate Bill you are concerned with. Otherwise, they will follow protocol and refer you to your representative when they see you're out of their district. Express your concerns. You can get committee information by going to <http://www.leg.state.or.us/comm/commsrvs/home.htm>. Scroll down to the committee you're looking for.
3. **Watch the agendas for the committee/s you're interested in.** If you don't see the bill coming up on an agenda and it's a bill you want to see move forward, write to the Chair person and call him/her to encourage the Chair to please put it on the agenda and have a public hearing. You can find the agendas by going to <http://www.leg.state.or.us/07reg/agenda/webagendas.htm>
4. **Watch for a public hearing to come up on the agenda.** This is a chance for you to not only attend the public hearing, you can also testify before the committee for or against a bill. For instructions on how to do that go to <http://www.leg.state.or.us/comm/testify.html>
5. **The bill can go to a committee work session or be voted on by the members of the committee to either pass or not pass out of committee.** (There may or may not be another public hearing on the bill and it may or may not be referred to another committee).
6. **If the bill passes out of the committee,** contact your representative or senator (depending on which chamber the bill is currently located) and encourage them to vote according to how you feel about the bill (for or opposed), with your reasons for having the opinion you do. Be concise to give your message more impact. You can also contact the rest of the representatives or senators with your thoughts about the bill and how you would like for them to vote.
7. **If it passes out of the House (or Senate), repeat the tracking and emailing/calling process as previously outlined.**

To understand the timeline of a bill, read on.....

Brief timeline of what happens to a bill.

- An idea is drafted into a bill
- The bill gets a bill number (A House bill always begins with the letter H. A Senate bill always begins with the letter S.
- The day after its [first reading](#) in a floor session of the House, the bill is posted on the Internet. **You can now start tracking it.**
- The Speaker refers the bill to a committee and it is also forwarded to the Legislative Fiscal Officer and Legislative Revenue Officer for [fiscal](#) or [revenue impact](#) determination.
- The Committee Chairperson determines whether or not a bill will be put on the agenda for a public hearing and a work session. Many bills never get put on the agenda and they end up dying (swept under the rug and never heard of again).
- There needs to be 72 hours notice for a first hearing on a bill in committee. If there is an additional hearing on that bill, there is a 48 hour notice (not including weekends unless there is a Floor Session held on a weekend).
- The majority vote of the members of the committee determines whether or not a bill will be moved out of committee.
- If the bill does not pass in favor of the committee it is considered dead—swept under the rug never to be seen again.
- If the majority votes for the bill to be moved out of committee, the bill will get a second reading in the House. If there are amendments, it could take up to 7 days. If there are no amendments, it would take place in 3 days.
- A bill is up for a [third reading](#) at the next Floor Session, (with a rule suspension it could take place the same day). This is your signal that it will be voted on by all the members of the House. If the bill has a majority vote in favor, the bill is then sent to the Senate where it goes on the desk of the Senate President for committee referral.
- The whole process starts over again in the Senate just as it did in the House, hopefully ending with the bill getting enough votes on the floor of the both chambers to go to the Governor to sign.

If you have any questions about this process, or if Rep. Thatcher can be of service to you, please call her office at 503-986-1425