

# The Whens and Wheres of Advocacy (#2)

Dear Instructor,

This segment is meant to provide advocates an understanding of the legislative cycle, and how a bill becomes a law. Please use this video for the class. <https://youtu.be/ueUDSvEZUKw>

If and only if that video is unavailable, use this backup link <https://youtu.be/rM3XMN2QdsQ>

## **Flow Chart**

The flow chart should be reviewed before the video. However, it may be helpful to have people follow along on the chart as the video progresses. The chart describes the basic steps of how a bill becomes a law. The explanation below describes those steps, and includes the times these are covered in the video.

[Video time] in brackets. Title on flow chart in *underlined italics*.

[0:14 – 0:24] *Bill Is Introduced*: All bills must have a legislator as their author. If individuals or advocacy groups want to create a bill, they have to find a legislator who will do that for them. Once the bill is “introduced,” it gets sent to committees for hearings.

[0:26 – 0:42] *Committee Hearings*: A bill gets “heard” (debated) in a policy committee. If it passes, it goes to a fiscal committee. While those two types are not discussed in the video, the policy committee asks “is this bill a good idea?” The second asks “are we willing to spend money to cover the cost of this idea?” The best time for advocates to fight for or against a bill is in the policy committee.

[0:42 – 1:00] *Floor Action*: Every bill has to be debated by the entire Legislature. Advocates can ask their own representatives to support or oppose it, but they do not attend this type of hearing.

[1:01 – 1:07] *Committee Hearings, Floor Action (blue boxes)*: The same process happens again!

*Returned To Original House*: Not in video. This is a technical process, and is not a good time for advocates to make their case.

[1:08 – 1:19] *Bill Goes To Governor*: This is another good time to advocate. Letters to the Governor can help convince him to sign or veto a bill.

[1:20 – 1:33] Not on flowchart. The Legislature almost never overrides a veto. This is not a good opportunity to advocate.

*Classroom Discussion Topics: Are there any laws you heard of that matter to you? Have you ever shared your opinion about a bill? Have you heard of any laws that affect the developmental disabilities service system? Why does your voice matter?*