



Civics 101: State Politics

April 1, 2017

Tricia Farley-Bouvier

State Representative
3rd Berkshire District

Massachusetts Legislature

- Senate
- 40 members
- Senate President
Stan Rosenberg
(Amherst)
- House of
Representatives
- 160 members
- Speaker of the
House Robert DeLeo
(Winthrop)

Committees (examples)

Joint Committee on Children Families and Persons with Disabilities

Joint Committee on Labor and Workforce Development

House Committee on Ways and Means

House Committee on Technology and Intergovernmental Affairs

Joint Committee on Mental Health and Substance Abuse

Joint Committee on The Judiciary

Joint Committee on Education

Joint Committee on Housing

Advocacy 101

The role of a good advocate is to teach elected officials about their issue

Know your state representative and senator and make sure they know you

- Stop by the office
- Introduce yourself at an event

Least effective method of communication with elected officials

- Sign a petition
- Ubiquitous email

Better to send a non-generic email or letter or call telling us why the issue at hand is important to you and how it affects you personally

For Key Issues

- Tell me the truth
- Teach me
- Give me good, reliable data
- Invite me to your workplace
- Provide opportunities for me to listen to people who are directly impacted
- Help me come up with proposals for solutions and work with me to get them implemented

Be a Voter

Legislative Process

Advocacy



Bill Filing by the 2nd Wednesday in January of the first annual session of the General Court



Be in touch with your legislator BEFORE January if you would like them to file a particular bill

Each filed bill has a docket number, i.e. HD1234 or SD1234



Co-sponsorship of bills- this is a 2-week period of time usually the last 2 weeks in January



Contact your Representative or Senator and ask them to co-sign bills that are important to you



Bills are assigned to Committees by the House Clerk- this usually happens from early February through March



When the Clerk assigns the bill to a committee the docket number is no longer relevant and a bill number is assigned. The bill can now be located on the public website www.MAlegislature.gov

Legislative Process

Advocacy

Committees hold public hearings on bills- these usually begin in April

Contact the Chair of the Committee to request the bill be heard soon. Provide testimony in person or in writing about why the bill is important to you and ask that it be moved out of committee.

Executive Session of the Committee is held (vote bill out of Committee)

Contact Committee members, educate them on the details

First Reading

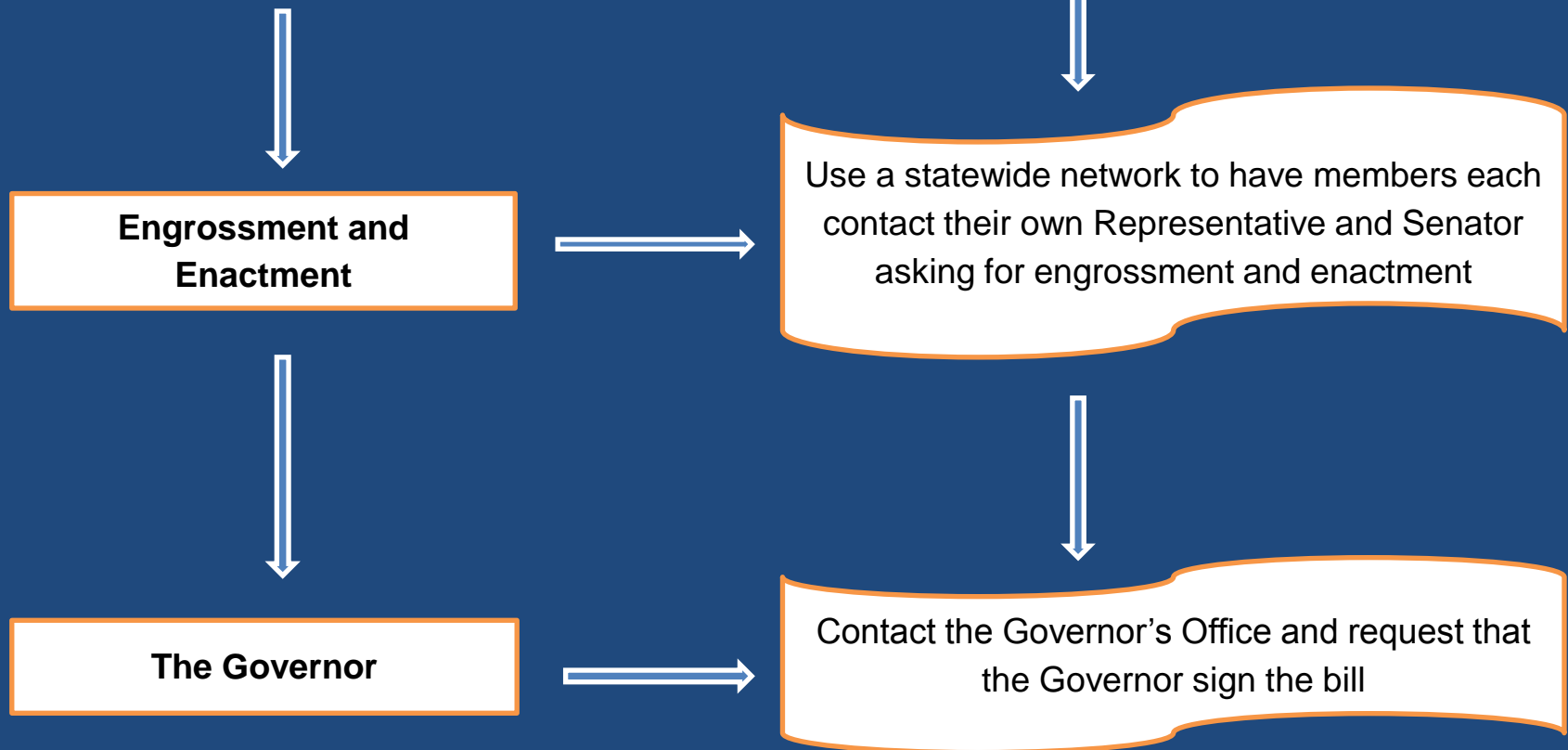
Second Bill Reading

Third Bill Reading

Contact Committee Chair to ask that the bill move out of Third reading

Legislative Process

Advocacy



Government is not something that only happens in a marble building, with a golden dome, on a hill in a faraway city. State government happens in every city, big or small, in every town and neighborhood of our Commonwealth.

