

# DNA Advocacy Toolkit



Prepared by:  
Health Policy Advocacy &  
Scanning Committee

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# A Word From the Chair



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Advocacy is hard to describe because it's so very personal. That is because advocacy just means your voice. Whether a local school board or your states senator in D.C., you are the voice that can affect change but if you remain silent, your voice will not be counted for.

The DNA wanted to create a toolkit for all dermatology healthcare providers to be able to affect change where they see fit. We encourage you to look for small wins, these realistic achievements snowball into bigger wins through collaboration and visibility.

We encourage you to find a way to start down a path for change today. Learn about the political process, send an email to a representative, download a calendar of events, volunteer for a committee, join a patient advocacy group. Together, we will have our voices and our patient's voices heard.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Blake Bryant'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

**Blake Bryant**

Chair - Health Policy Advocacy and  
Scanning Committee

# What is Political Action?

Influencing Decisions that Affect Outcomes

Patient: Nurses do it every day

Legislative: Impacting the proposed laws and amendments being considered by the legislatures

Regulatory: Seeking to influence the agencies that implement federal laws (e.g. NIH, FDA)

Social Media: Using the media to affect public opinion about policy deliberations



*Nurses are generally considered credible and trustworthy, and legislators rely on our experience and expertise for information on healthcare, patient stories, and health policy.*



## Professional Obligation

As public health professionals, our acquired knowledge and diverse experiences can provide the basis for strong and effective public health policy and the achievement of health equity. Consistent with our standards of practice, it is our obligation and ethical responsibility to incorporate the identified needs of populations in policy development and implementation. It is also our professional duty to develop the skills needed to advocate for public health and the public health workforce before decision-makers.

## **How does influence happen?**

Influence is a persuasive process - it includes building relationships, understanding the perspectives of others, and having clarity about what you want and what they want. Describe the current state, establish a need/problem, describe the desired state, show mutual benefit. Influence isn't about winning; it is about solving a problem.

## **What's the difference between lobbying and advocacy?**

Lobbying involves attempts to influence specific legislation at the local, state, or federal level.

Advocacy is focused on educating about a specific issue. All lobbying is advocacy but not all advocacy is lobbying.

## ***What is a bill?***

A legislative proposal that if passed by both the House and the Senate and approved by the President/Governor becomes law. They are numbered after drafting and labeled with their chamber - Senate (SB) or House of Representatives (HR).

### **1. Bill Proposal and Drafting:**

A legislator, often in response to a constituent's suggestion, proposes a bill idea, which is then drafted in proper technical form, typically with the assistance of legislative staff.

### **2. Introduction to Congress:**

The bill is introduced in either the House of Representatives or the Senate.

### **3. Committee Review and Hearing:**

A relevant committee assesses the bill's merits in a hearing where the sponsor presents it, and stakeholders express support or opposition. The committee then votes on advancing the bill to the full chamber.

Continued



## ***What is a bill?***

### 4. Chamber Consideration and Vote:

The bill undergoes readings, debates, and potential amendments on the chamber floor. Members of the chamber then vote, requiring a simple majority for passage.

### 5. Second Chamber:

If approved, the bill moves to the other chamber, undergoing a similar process.

### 6. Conference Committee (if needed):

In case of differences between the two chambers' versions, a conference committee resolves the discrepancies.

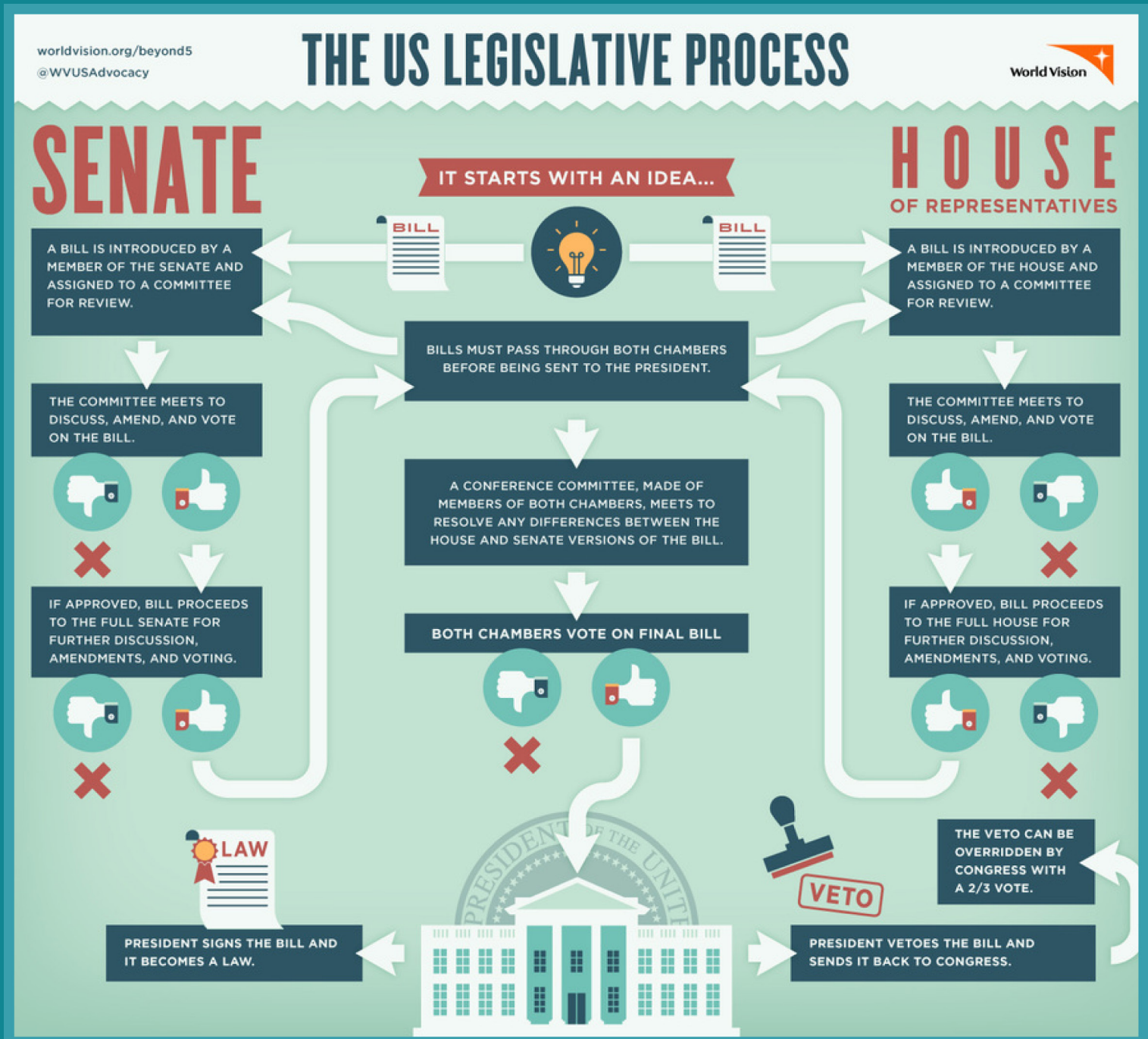
### 7. Presidential Action and Enactment:

After final approval by both chambers, the bill is sent to the President for their action. The President may sign it into law, veto it, or let it become law without a signature. If signed or not vetoed within a certain period, the bill becomes law. If vetoed, it can still become law with a two-thirds majority vote in both chambers.





## How a bill becomes law



# ARE PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS ALLOWED TO ADVOCATE OR LOBBY?

The Dermatology Nurses Association (DNA) has tax-exempt status from the IRS, allowing engagement in advocacy and lobbying for specific issues. However, participation in political campaigns for or against candidates is prohibited. DNA focuses on advocating for improved dermatology care, nursing professional status, and patient health. Members should be aware of advocacy guidelines, and individuals should clarify whether they represent themselves or the organization when participating in advocacy activities.





# LEGISLATIVE OFFICE STRUCTURE

Typical Congressional Office Staff consists of:

**Chief of staff** - Closest to member and oversees other staff.

**Interns** - Greet guests and answer phones.

**The Legislative director and several legislative assistants (L.A)** - monitor legislation, advise the member, address constituent concerns, research issues for the member.

**Personal scheduler**

**Press secretary** – works with the media and acts as spokesperson.  
Legislative correspondents - respond to mail

Your primary contacts will be the legislative assistants, often one specializing in health affairs. The L.A.s are often more knowledgeable about certain issues since they are on the front lines and bring the information to the members.

When corresponding, it is important to note that you indicate that you are a constituent. Individual letters carry more weight than form letters and postcard campaigns.

At this time, email is preferred to “snail mail”. Since the anthrax scare in 2001, all postal mail undergoes detailed scrutiny, hence, delivery is delayed. This is especially important when issues are time sensitive.



# 6 Years

Average time to pass a piece of legislation, the process is difficult to ensure quality laws and bringing up bills brings voice and visibility to the issue

# 1500 +

Number of bills presented to congress between 2017-2019, and 124 of them passed into law, including those passed by incorporation



# Organizational Partnerships

*A COLLECTIVE VOICE IS STRONGER THAN A LONE ONE. IT IS THE COLLECTIVE THAT REPRESENTS POLITICAL POWER AND INFLUENCE*

- Association of Dermatology Administrators & Managers (ADAM)  
- <https://www.ada-m.org>
- American Nurses Association (ANA)  
- <https://www.nursingworld.org/practice-policy/advocacy/>
- British Dermatological Nursing Group (BDNG)  
- <https://bdng.org.uk/>
- Children's Melanoma Prevention Foundation (CMPF)  
- <https://www.melanomaprevention.org>
- The Cicatricial Alopecia Research Foundation (CARF)  
- <https://www.carfintl.org>
- Coalition of Skin Diseases (CSD)  
- <https://www.skincoalition.org>
- Infusion Nurses Society (INS)  
- <https://www.ins1.org>
- International Pemphigus & Pemphigoid Foundation (IPPF)  
- <https://www.pemphigus.org/become-an-advocate/>
- International Psoriasis Council (IPC)  
- <https://www.psoriasisCouncil.org>
- The National Alopecia Areata Foundation (NAAF)  
- <https://www.naaf.org>
- National Council on Skin Cancer Prevention  
- <https://www.skincancerprevention.org/>
- National Psoriasis Foundation  
- <https://www.psoriasis.org>
- National Student Nurses Association  
- <https://www.nsna.org>
- Nursing Community Coalition  
- <https://www.thenursingcommunity.org>
- Melanoma Action Coalition  
- <https://www.melanomaactioncoalition.org>
- SunWise  
- <https://www.epa.gov/sunwise>
- The Women's Dermatologic Society  
- <https://www.womensderm.org>

# How to Formulate an Ask



Encourage the legislator to consider specific issues through two types of requests: policy or relational asks. Policy asks will enact a legislative change and relational asks build rapport for future collaboration. Policy requests may include introducing, voting for or against legislation, cosponsoring bills, writing letters to agencies, or gathering information. Relationship-building requests involve community visits, writing articles, submitting statements, participating in online discussions, giving speeches on the floor, holding town halls, and using social media to support or share information about the issue.

# Advocacy Tips to Remember

*Regardless of which method you utilize to contact a legislator or decision-maker, remember the following tips:*

## You are a source of information

Legislators have limited time, few staff members and, at times, limited time to devote to any one issue. You are someone that can fill in the information gap.

## Maintain credibility

Give accurate information. You will lose credibility if you do not do your research and inadvertently give false or misleading information.

## Know your supporters

The legislator will want to know what group, individuals, state agencies and/or other legislators are working with you and/or your organization on the issue(s) you are presenting.

## Know your opposition

Be prepared by understanding the opposition's viewpoint. Anticipate their arguments and provide the legislator with rebuttals and answers to those arguments.

# Advocacy Tips to Remember

*Regardless of which method you utilize to contact a legislator or decision-maker, remember the following tips:*

## **Remember that you are developing a relationship**

Make the legislator aware of connections you have to the issue, even if you think it is insignificant. It could make a difference. Make more than one contact with the legislator.

## **Do not be afraid to admit you don't know**

If your legislator asks you for information you do not have or asks something you do not know, tell them you do not know the answer and offer to obtain the information for them. Provide this information in a follow-up meeting, phone call, or letter.

## **Have a specific ask**

When you want a vote, information or answers to questions, ask directly and be specific.

## **Follow-up**

Later, follow-up with an inquiry to ask if the legislator did what they said they would. Thank them if they did or ask them for more information if they did not vote as they said they would.





Don't Fry Day Toolkit : National Council on Skin Cancer Prevention:

<https://skincancerprevention.org/get-involved/dont-fry-day/dfd/>

## Other Helpful Resources

- Govtrack: <https://www.govtrack.us/>
- Alliance for Patient Access: <https://allianceforpatientaccess.org/advocacy/>
- Search Tools | Congress.gov | Library of Congress:  
<https://www.congress.gov/help/search-tools-overview>
- Sample of Legislation Written for Derm Patients:  
<https://www.ilga.gov/legislation/102/SB/10200SB2158.htm>

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**A sincere  
thanks  
to all who helped  
create and share  
this document.**