



**NATIONAL FEDERATION OF DEMOCRATIC  
WOMEN**

**WOMEN IN BLUE: A BLUEPRINT ON  
EFFECTIVE ADVOCACY**

**May 2011**

# WOMEN IN BLUE: A BLUEPRINT ON EFFECTIVE ADVOCACY

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## INTRODUCTION

The National Federation of Democratic Women (NFDW) is pleased to present this legislative handbook on its 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

“Women in Blue” is a proud tradition of our federated clubs which annually choose one day to speak with their legislators about issues that affect their local communities, their states, their country and the world. These issues are wide-ranging but are of particular relevance to women and families. Our NFDW colors are blue and white and the women dress in blue on that day as a symbol of their solidarity.

We hope that you will use this blueprint for advocacy to help you in your own community to develop policy, inform your elected officials about your important issues and, guide these issues through the legislative process so that your bills become laws. This handbook will also serve as a guide for working with your Congressional representatives in the House and in the Senate.

One of our goals of the NFDW is to encourage women to get involved in all aspects of the political process and to run for elected office. As elected officials, women can both initiate and shape policy to further our Democratic ideas.

We would like to thank the NFDW Legislative Committee, The Women in Blue Committee and the Woman’s National Democratic Club for assisting in this endeavor.

Special thanks to:

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Janice Haynes Davis – NFDW 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President and Legislative Chair

*"There is no such thing as being non-political. Just by making a decision to stay out of politics you are making the decision to allow others to shape politics and exert power over you. And if you are alienated from the current political system, then just by staying out of it you do nothing to change it, you simply entrench it."*

*Joan Kirner at Women Into Power Conference, Adelaide, October 1994*

## **WOMEN IN BLUE: A BLUEPRINT ON EFFECTIVE ADVOCACY**

In today's political arena, women make up more than fifty percent of the voting population. Women have become one of the nation's most vocal, strongest and reliable constituencies. Whether it is grass roots organizing, leading a cause or spearheading a movement, women are always in the forefront.

The influence a large female constituency can have on elected representatives is often underestimated. All elected officials realize they depend on their female constituency to campaign and keep them in office. For this reason, they must always consider the opinions and perspectives of women. A well organized group of women, working together for a common cause can make a huge difference on the outcome of an issue.

Women are and have been power brokers – we are the strength behind the throne, the political office, but we often cede our power to others. Here are some pointers on how we retain or regain our power, engage and use our political influence for societal good.

### **ARE YOU AN ADVOCATE?**

Did you work on your senator's campaign? Does your state representative attend your church? Was he/she in school with you? Are you members of the same social club? Or, do your parents play bridge together? Are the children or grandchildren of your representative taught by you (or in class with your children or grandchildren)? Does your job give you unique access to your senator? In short, does your existing network grant you access to your elected representatives? And, are your relationships positive? If you can answer "yes" to any of these questions, then you need have the foundation to become a professional or volunteer advocate. Use those relationships to reach out to your representatives as you begin to advocate on issues crucial to your organization.

Organizations like Women's Democratic Clubs were organized to bring like-minded women together to address common issues of concern in the political arena. While we cannot agree on every issue, we should agree on the process for determining which issues we prioritize and the strategies utilized by women of action. Thus, agreement is needed on issues and process. Every organization needs administrative staff. Someone should be designated to collect the contact information of the group, take notes and share those notes and other vital information with the group. This person, either a

secretary, administrative coordinator in the nerve center of the organization; and should have the authority to contact and share information. Information sharing keeps groups together.

Tip #1: Setting up a Facebook account or a list serve allows your organization to share information and involve all members in the advocacy process.

### **WHAT ARE THE ISSUES OF INTEREST TO YOUR ORGANIZATION? ARE YOU THE EXPERT ON THIS ISSUE?**

Whether you advocate individually or in a group, you need to know the issues. As a women's organization, often there is an expectation that we will focus on women's issues. And, in the past, we have focused on children's health, pay equity and women's rights, health, human rights and equality, women and families, military and veteran's affairs, the economy and immigration. Whatever the focus of your organization, look at not just the subject but also the government funding for the work associated with implementation of the policy issues. Thus, your organization should keep up with budget and appropriations issues and legislation related to your subject matter priorities.

As mentioned above, there are a myriad of issues that can be discussed, some on the national agenda, others local and specific to your community or organization. However, before meeting with your elected official:

- Do your homework. Research the issue and research your state's legislative delegation positions on this issue.
- Become astute on the subject matter. You do not need to become an expert, but you should know how experts on this subject assess the legislation; and you should understand the nuances of the legislation and the subject.
- Research the pros and cons and anticipate responding to questions about both.
- Be able to answer questions about why you support or do not support the legislation.
- Know the drafter (maker) of the legislation, co-sponsors, legislative history, and action taken to date. You automatically label yourself as a volunteer if you have not taken the time to know where the bill is in the pipeline.
- In addition to the original bill, be aware of any subsequent amendments or proposed changes.
- Make sure your opinion of the bill/amendments can be substantiated with as many credible facts as possible. The status of proposed legislation can usually be tracked on the state legislator's, the state legislature's websites.
- What impact will the legislation have on you, the family, and the community? And, why is your organization supporting this legislation?

## WHAT ARE THE DESIRED OUTCOMES?

Political organizations have varied agendas. Some believe access is more important than advocacy, while others want the opportunity to advocate and testify. The bottom line is that your group desires to influence the political process. While all states follow a similar legislative process, there are differences in how legislation is developed and/or reviewed which may have an impact on the substance and passage of legislation.

For example, Maryland legislators have bills written by the Legislative Services Division during the recess period and pre-file those bills before the beginning of the legislative session. While the D.C. Council uses staff to write bills which are filed during the two year legislative session. Other states regularly use sunset provisions to limit the duration of the legislation, especially if the legislation is controversial and politicians desire to review the issues once again, while local legislatures typically limit use of the sunset process.

Knowing the preferred use of these and other nuances of the legislative process will help you to better understand the times when your organization can exert influence on specific bills.

And, if you are serving as an organizational representative, strategic sessions should be conducted prior to the legislative meeting to 1) ensure that the organization has and understands the message and position that will be taken in the meeting; 2) develop an agenda for the meeting with the legislator; 3) speak with one voice to the public about the message being transmitted to the legislature; and 4) understand how the organization will use the meeting to continue its advocacy efforts.

Tip #2: Often nonprofit groups are reticent about advocacy, however, keep in mind that your expertise may allow legislators to request your testimony. Knowledge of the subject moves your organization beyond advocacy to providing subject matter expertise.

## KNOWING THE LEGISLATIVE PROCESS

Every American citizen at some point in his or her education learns about how a bill becomes law in the U.S. legislative system. Often that lesson depicts a linear process starting with bill introduction and ending with the President's (or the Governor's) signature. But anyone who watches the evening news or reads the daily newspaper observes a process that is actually less tidy, often more contentious, and significantly more dynamic than that linear model suggests.

According to Lee Hamilton, former Congressman and Director of The Center on Congress at Indiana University, "The standard textbook diagram of the basic legislative process...is accurate...as far as it goes. But to get a truer sense of how a bill really becomes law, you need to probe deeper. The actual process is far more dynamic, complex, and challenging. The standard diagram cannot possibly convey the

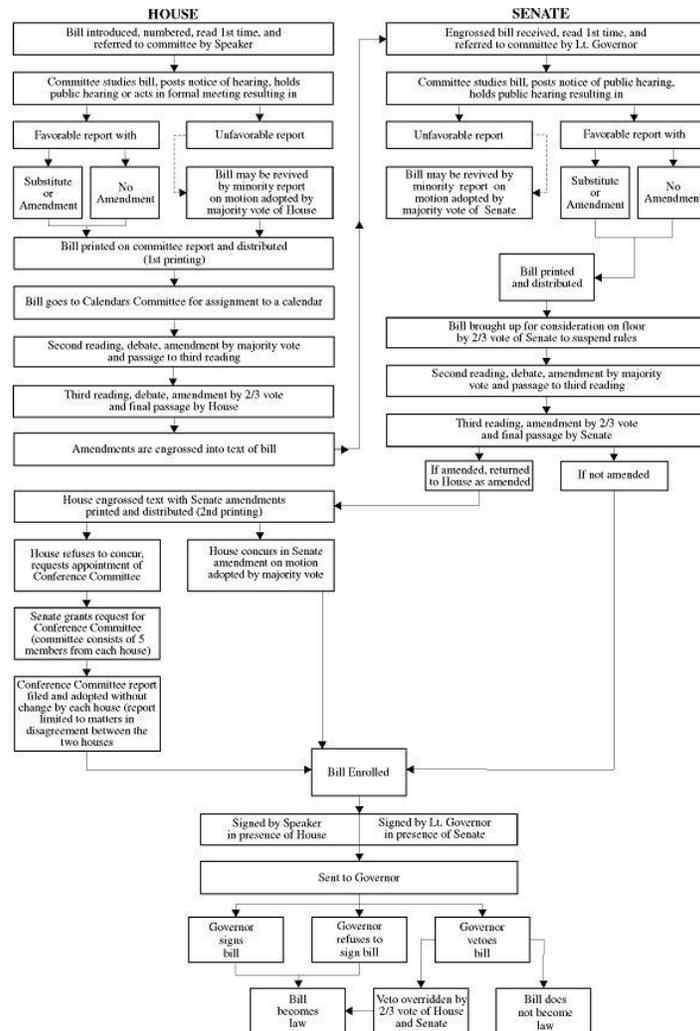
obstacles, the strategies, the hard work, the defeats and victories, and the sheer excitement that attend the legislative process.” However, the basics of the legislative process are as follows:

### **Basics of the Legislative Process**<sup>i</sup>

*(Process and terminology may vary slightly from state to state)*

- 1. Sponsored:** A Representative or Senator decided to sponsor the bill, usually with co-sponsors.
- 2. Introduced:** The sponsor introduces the bill on the floor, and the bill is given a number.
- 3. To Committee:** The bill is assigned to a committee; one of the committee’s subcommittee hears the bill, through a presentational process, and may amend votes to hold, or recommend the bill. If recommended, the full committee hears, may amend, and can then vote the bill out of committee, when it goes to the floor. They may also table it (which means the bill is dead for that session).
- 4. To the floor:** If voted out of committee, the bill goes to the floor for a vote. In some cases, a bill may be required to go through Rules Committee before it can get on the agenda for a floor vote. The Rules Committee evaluates the provisions of the bill to be sure they satisfy legal requirements.
- 5. Floor Vote:** On the floor, where the full legislator votes, the bill may be amended, passed, or killed.
- 6.** In a bicameral legislature (most states—with the notable exception of Nebraska—have two houses of the legislature, generally, a “House” and “Senate”) the bill may simultaneously go through the equivalent process in the other chamber, or may automatically proceed to the other chamber after passage in the first.
- 7. Reconciled:** If differing versions are passed in the House and Senate, the bill goes to a Conference Committee (made of equal numbers from each chamber) which can change the bill however it sees fit. The conference version must go back to both chambers for yea or nay votes as-is; no floor amendments allowed.
- 8. Governor's Signature:** The final version of the bill as passed by both chambers must be signed by the governor to become law.
- 9. Lifespan:** Each legislative session starts with a clean slate; bills not voted on in the previous session must be reintroduced to be active.

### **A MODEL OF THE LEGISLATIVE PROCESS**



## DETERMINING WHO TO MEET

Knowing the process, you should now consider when and with whom you will meet to discuss the legislation of interest to you. Here is a quick checklist to aid in determining with whom you should meet to address the legislation:

- **Your state legislator.** He/she automatically will listen to you. You are their constituent.
- **Author of the legislation.** He /she want as many co-sponsors as possible. If he/she believes you can compel other legislators to sign onto the bill, you will have an interested audience. Alternatively, if the legislation is subject matter specific and you have an expertise in that subject, the author may want to hear your comments/critique of the legislation.
- **Committee chair or members to which the legislation has been referred.** The committee members determine whether the bill will or will not get out of committee; and if you believe you can convey your concern effectively or alternatively cause the committee to vote on (or

retain) the bill in committee, you might seek to meet with the legislative chair or committee members about the bill.

- **Legislative or committee staff.** Staff members are an invaluable resource to the legislator; and may well provide you with an opportunity to have an in-depth conversation about the specific legislation. While it is not like meeting with the legislator, often staff can pick the appropriate time and circumstances under which to initiate discussion of your concerns/issues. They may well be the better advocate; however, you might wish to evaluate their knowledge of the issue and ability to translate your concerns prior to determining whether to meet with the staff.

Above all study the legislative structure, the power points for influencing the process and the biographies of the legislator and/or his/her staff to best determine who you might wish to meet with. Commonalities often ensure that your meeting does not go unnoticed. In addition to mutual state residence, you might consider visiting legislators who attended the same college, are of the same religious denomination or who know family and kin if you believe your issues will be remembered and supported by that legislator.

Tip #3: Some people are lifetime, professional staffers; others are young people hoping to enter politics. Get a sense of the people working with your legislator, develop relationships which benefit you not just now, but anticipate future relationships, needs. Today's intern may be tomorrow's senator.

## GETTING THE MEETING

With technology, most legislators have websites and e-mail addresses on their websites to forward meeting requests. Use these methods to submit initial meeting requests. Typically, the meeting applications ask the reasons for your meeting. Use specificity to ensure that the screener understands which issues matter to you.

Should the staff not get back to you in the time stated on the webpage, or alternatively, if no time is stated there, call or pen a short letter to your legislator asking for a meeting. I have found that the local Congressional staff is much more responsive to state constituent requests. However, if you are reaching out to a legislator outside of your state, i.e. because you have professional interests in the legislation, or you have other common interests include those in your letter or mention it in your conversation.

In addition to introducing yourself, and if you are a constituent, identifying yourself as such:

- request a meeting time; and if possible give more than one alternative
- state the expected number to be in attendance
- if applicable, request a room to host your organization on the day at the legislature; or

request a room to host a reception for representatives following meetings.

Representatives receive lots of correspondence. Brevity and precision is the key to making your correspondence stand out. Be specific regarding your request for the meeting. And, include your address, e-mail address, and a call back number. Have your letter hand carried or personally delivered to your legislator's office.

Virtually every legislator now has a scheduler. Get the name of the scheduler and work with her to ensure that you get on the legislators' calendar. If you initially started with an e-mail, please make sure the scheduler is aware of your electronic request to ensure that there is no double booking. The Chief of Staff or the legislator's primary state person can typically help with rooms and/or reception space. Use them, and above all remember to mention their support and assistance in your follow-up correspondence with the legislator.

### **AT THE MEETING**

One of the most effective ways to influence the decisions of a legislator is with a face-to-face visit. Frequent contacts are necessary to associate your face and name with your cause. Whether you will meet one-on-one or with a group, plan the meeting and develop an agenda to cover all the points you wish to make. Pick just one or two issues to discuss.

Here are some simple steps to follow:

- Always introduce yourself and all the members of your group, even at a second or third meeting. Don't put the legislator or their staff member in the awkward position of having to grope for your name.
- Get down to business quickly. Begin on a positive note. State the Bill number, title and author, or state the issue, your position, and what you want him/her to do.
- Thank him/her for previous support. Legislators like to know that you know of their record. If you don't know the record, thank him for taking the time to meet with you.
- Be specific, be clear and be simple. Provide information about how this issue impacts his/her constituency and people throughout the state. Use fact sheets, charts, statistics, etc.
- Use personal stories or anecdotes. Remember, your job is to persuade... and a personal story will leave an image that the legislator will remember when he/she votes on the issue.
- Ask what you can do. Ask if you can provide further information, arrange a tour of local services, or contact others.
- Leave brief written materials. Your legislator will file the materials and refer to them when questions come up later and/or when he/she votes on the issue.

*I felt somehow for many years that George Washington and Alexander Hamilton just left me out by mistake. But through the process of amendment, interpretation, and court decision, I have finally been included in "We, the people."*

**Barbara Jordan**

## **FOLLOW UP AFTER THE MEETING**

Immediately after the meeting, a designated person should write a thank you note to the legislator summarizing the meeting and/or the actions expected of either or both parties. If no action items were agreed upon, a general thank you note should be penned. The manner in which you sent the original inquiry should be the same manner by which you send the thank you note. Thus, if you sent the meeting request via email, you should use the same mode of transmitting the thank you note.

A leader should be identified prior to the meeting to ensure that the group is kept informed of all communications with the elected representatives and any other action taken regarding the meeting. The leader should correspond via e-mails and conference calls. Keeping an open line of communications with the legislator is germane to the overall success of your advocacy efforts as well as keeping the group together.

Additionally, a debriefing and strategy session should be conducted with organization members to ensure all understood the legislator's position(s); and the proposed actions to be taken as a result of the meeting. Your action plan should be consistent with your strategic plan and agenda prepared earlier.

## **CONCLUSION**

Whether your organization works alone or in a coalition with other groups who have similar interests, you need to determine whether you are advocating on one issue or bill to influence outcome; and/or alternatively to change the vote of the legislator(s) that you have identified.

Women's organizations have effectively engaged in lobbying and/or advocacy throughout history. Through societies and clubs, women have sought and continue to seek to advise state and federal legislators on current issues and problems, devise strategies for social change, and execute plans that created institutions, laws and programs for the benefit of our communities.

Planning and execution are central to the work of any organization; and this book is a primer on to assist Women in Blue on the political process. It does not contain everything that one might need to effectively advocate but it does include a blueprint to support our legislative endeavors. Continue to use your creativity to engage in the legislative process.

## DEFINITIONS

**Legislative Research Services** responds to requests for information and analysis from individual legislators as well as from legislative committees. The agency is nonpartisan and is a source of independent, objective information, research, and analysis. They provide immediate help with short requests as well as immediate assistance for legislators and staff conducting their own research; and also provide written responses and more substantial analyses. Many states have legislative research services with varying levels of support services for legislators. The Federal equivalent is the Congressional Research Service.

[Referendum](#) (plural *referenda* or *referendums*) are a democratic tool related to elections in which the electorate votes for or against a specific proposal, law or policy, rather than for a general policy or a particular candidate or party. Referenda may be added to an election ballot or held separately and may be either binding or consultative, usually depending on the [constitution](#). Referenda are usually called by governments via the legislature, however many democracies allow citizens to petition for referenda directly, called [initiatives](#).

**Sunset provision** or **sunset clause** are provisions in [statute](#) or [regulation](#) that terminate or repeal all or portions of the law after a specific date, unless further [legislative](#) action is taken to extend it. Most laws do not have sunset clauses; in such cases, the law goes on indefinitely.

Some states have [Sunset Advisory Commission](#) which oversees the utilization of state Sunset Acts. Texas, Alabama, Arkansas and Colorado have Sunset Advisory Commissions.

## RESOURCES

THOMAS was launched in January of 1995, at the inception of the 104th Congress. The leadership of the 104th Congress directed the Library of Congress to make federal legislative information freely available to the public. Since that time THOMAS has expanded the scope of its offerings to include the features and content listed below. <http://thomas.loc.gov/>

GovTrack.us is a tool by [Civic Impulse, LLC](#) to help the public research and track the activities in the U.S. Congress, promoting and innovating government transparency and civic education through novel uses of technology. Launched in 2004 as a hobby of [Joshua Tauberer](#), GovTrack.us was the first website worldwide whose primary goal was to provide free comprehensive legislative tracking for everyday citizens and to embrace Web 2.0 and open data for government information. GovTrack.us was a 2006 [Webby Award nominee](#) and has been covered in [The New York Times](#) and [The Washington Post](#). <http://www.govtrack.us/>

OpenCongress brings together official government data with news coverage, blog posts, public comments, and more to give you the real story behind what's happening in Congress. Small groups of

political insiders and lobbyists already know what's really going on in Congress. Now, everyone can be an insider.

OpenCongress is a free, open-source, not-for-profit, and non-partisan public resource website. OpenCongress is a project of the [Participatory Politics Foundation](#), a 501(c) 3 non-profit organization with a mission to encourage civic engagement. The [Sunlight Foundation](#) is our Founding and Primary Supporter. To read more about our mission, our open data sources, and how Congress works, see [about OpenCongress](#). To read more about how individuals and organizations can use this site to find and share the best available info about their political interests, see [how to use OpenCongress](#). <http://www.opencongress.org/>

**STATE LEGISLATIVE TRACKING MECHANISMS** Include<sup>ii</sup>:

**Alabama**

[THE ALABAMA LEGISLATURE](#)

THE ALABAMA LEGISLATIVE INFORMATION SYSTEM

**Alaska**

[Alaska Bill Search for Current Session](#)

Using the "Query" link on this page, search current bills using key words.

**Arizona**

[Search Current and Past Session Bills of Arizona](#)

This form will allow you to search the Overviews, Introduced Bills and Engrossed versions of bills for terms that you specify in your keyword search, or jump to a specific bill number.

**Arkansas**

[Arkansas General Assembly](#)

Bill Status Query

[Arkansas General Assembly](#)

Bill Status Query

**California**

[California Bill Information](#)

The Index provides a list of all bills introduced during the current session. It also provides an Index for the all past session to 1993-94.

[California Current Bills Directory Listings](#)

Directory Listings for current Senate and Assembly Bills

[Search California Bill Information](#)

Search bills, resolutions, and constitutional amendments by either bill number, author and/or

keyword.

## Colorado

[Colorado Prior Session Information](#)

Colorado General Assembly Legislative Session Information back to 1997.

[Search Regular Session Colorado Bills](#)

Search the regular session bills.

[Session Laws of Colorado](#)

Immediately after the adjournment of each session, the Office of Legislative Legal Services indexes and publishes all the bills and concurrent resolutions passed at that session.

## Connecticut

[Connecticut General Assembly Text Search 2006 -1988](#)

This page allows a variety of document searches (Bills, Statutes, Constitution, etc.) by number, title, or text.

[Connecticut House Current Session List of Bills](#)

House bill list with links to full text.

[Connecticut Senate Current List of Bills](#)

Senate bill list with links to full text

## Delaware

[Delaware Current Legislation](#)

This gateway page allows you to search or browse Delaware legislation.

## District of Columbia

[District of Columbia Legislative Information System--Legislation](#)

Browse or search DC current legislation.

## Florida

[Florida Bills Online](#)

This general search page provides both Simple Search (Individual Words) and Complex Search (Phrase Search) of Florida bill text. Use the drop down windows to choose the session and the chamber.

## Georgia

[Georgia Current Session Legislation](#)

This will allow you to search current legislation publicly available at this site.

## Guam

[Search Current Guam Bills](#)

From this page, you can download the text of Guam bills that have been introduced and passed.

## Hawaii

[Hawaii Current Legislation](#)

Directory Listing of Hawaii Senate and House Bills and Resolutions

[Hawaii Legislative Status and Documents](#)

Searchable current legislative session Bill and Resolution Status, Text, and Committee Reports.

[Hawaii State Legislature Archives](#)

The Hawaii State Legislature Archives includes Legislative session documents back through 1999(Bills, Acts, Vetoed Bills, and Bill Status).

## Idaho

[Idaho Current Legislation](#)

Current status, history, and full text of House and Senate bills

[Search Idaho Current Legislation](#)

Search interface for current Idaho legislation.

## Illinois

[Search or Browse Current Illinois Bills](#)

Search for bills by number or keyword or browse list of bills passed by the Illinois House and Senate.

## Indiana

[Indiana Current Legislation](#)

Complete information for Senate and House Bills with search interface

## Iowa

[Iowa Legislative Information System](#)

Two options for access bill and amendment information.

\*Or you scan through the indices. Links are also provided to archives back to 1996.

## Kansas

[Kansas Current Legislation](#)

Find the Full Text of Bills by keyword search or by bill number for current session.

## Kentucky

[Kentucky Current Bill Information](#)

Gateway page for obtaining current bill status information.

[Kentucky Legislation & Legislative Archive](#)

In addition to bill text, data from the Kentucky Legislative Record, which includes bill and amendment summaries, and bill actions, is available for sessions back to 1986.

**Louisiana**

[Louisiana Current Legislation](#)

Search current Louisiana legislation.

[Search Louisiana Archived Bills](#)

Search archived bills by key word or by number.

**Maine**

[Maine Legislative Session Information](#)

Use this page to access current session Maine bills:

- \*Directory of Bills by LD Number
- \*Bill Status Search
- \*Bill Text Search

[Maine Legislature Information from Past Legislative Sessions](#)

Use this page to find bills and other documents for the 119th session.

**Maryland**

[Maryland Session Information](#)

Use this page to link to numerous session information links. Bill links include Bill Information and Status, Bill Indexes, and Bill Profiles.

**Massachusetts**

[Search bills in the current session](#)

Search bills under consideration in the current session by keyword, number, type and other criteria.

[Search session laws for the current session](#)

Search session laws for the current session by keyword.

**Michigan**

[Search for Michigan Bills](#)

Search for current Bills:  
\*by Category  
\*by Detailed Category  
\*by Sponsor

**Minnesota**

[Minnesota Archived Bills](#)

From this page search the full text of bills and bill status for 1999-2000. Also, link to archives back to 1993-1994 session.

[Minnesota House Bills and Search Bill Status](#)

Multi-function search page allows you to retrieve House bills by bill number, keyword, authors, topics, committees, action, or by statute citations.

[Minnesota Senate Bills and Search Bill Status](#)

Multi-function search page allows you to retrieve Senate bills by bill number, keyword, authors, topics, committees, action, or by statute citations.

**Mississippi**

[Mississippi Legislative Information Systems Bill Status System](#)

Global Text Search for current session bills for both House and Senate.

**Missouri**

[House and Senate Joint Bill Tracking Keyword Search](#)

You may search for bills by keyword for current and previous sessions back to 1997

**Montana**

[Search the Current Montana Session Bill Text](#)

Search current session bill text by entering key words. For previous session bills, go to the legislature's home page.

**Nebraska**

[Nebraska Legislative Bills](#)

Nebraska Bill Finder: Use the forms below to view an introduced bill or resolution and its related documents. Search by bill number or by key word

**Nevada**

[Nevada Legislative Session Information](#)

Current and archived legislative session information back to 1993.

[Search Nevada Bill Text](#)

Search current Nevada bills by key word. For previous session bills, go to the legislature's home page.

**New Hampshire**

[New Hampshire Bill Status](#)

General Court Bill Status allows you to query on words in the title, bill number and other status information. Previous session bills are also

available here.

## **New Jersey**

[New Jersey Current and Archived Bills](#)

Search current session and archived bills from this page.

[New Jersey Free Bill Subscription Service](#)

New Jersey has a bill subscription service via Email which is free and can track selected bills through all legislative proceedings, including when a bill is placed on agenda for committee or session, and its resulting action.

## **New Mexico**

[New Mexico Bill Finder](#)

This page provides links to archived New Mexico bills back to 1996 and provides a search engine to find current session bills by the following:

- \*Bill Number and the Legislation Type
- \*Keyword(s)
- \*Sponsor of Bill
- \*Subject
- \*Locator Reports
- \*Capital Outlay

## **New York**

[Search New York State Bills](#)

You can search for current New York State bills by bill number or by keyword.

## **North Carolina**

[North Carolina Bill Text Search](#)

Search North Carolina current and archived bills from 1985-present. Bills can be searched by entering year and bill number or by a general bill inquiry.

## **North Dakota**

[Search North Dakota Bills by Keyword](#)

Use the search interface on the left of the page to search for current bills

## **Ohio**

[Search for Ohio Legislative Information](#)

Gateway search page allows the following for current and past sessions back to 1997:

- \*Find Bills by Bill Number
- \*Find Bills by Primary Sponsor

\*Find Bills, Analyses & Fiscal Notes by Keyword

## Oklahoma

[Oklahoma Text Search and Retrieval System](#)

Use this page to either search all measures from the current session, or to search for measures from previous years.

## Oregon

[Oregon Bill Archives](#)

Use this gateway page to search for current or archived Oregon bills and related information from each legislative session.

[Search Oregon Bills and Laws](#)

This page allows users to either search Oregon bills or laws, or staff measures summaries or all of them.

## Pennsylvania

[Search the Text of Pennsylvania Bills and Resolutions](#)

Current and past session information, including bill search and tracking reports.

## Puerto Rico

[Puerto Rico Bills](#)

available in Spanish only

## Rhode Island

[Rhode Island General Assembly Current and Archived Session Information](#)

Use this gateway page to access current and archived bill information as well as other session information.

## South Carolina

[Search South Carolina Bills and Resolutions](#)

Search South Carolina Bills and Resolutions by any of the following:

- \*Bill, Act or Rat Number
- \*Sponsor
- \*Committee
- \*Action
- \*Index
- \*Subject
- \*Status Activity
- \*Introductions
- \*Full Text

## South Dakota

[South Dakota Current Session Bill Menu](#)

This Bill Menu page from the South Dakota Legislature contains links to:

- \*Quick Find
- \*Text Search
- \*Full List
- \*Custom List
- \*Bill Status Report
- \*Fiscal Notes
- \*Subject Index

[South Dakota Legislature Past Session Information](#)

Search past session and past bill information back to 1997.

**Tennessee**

[Search Tennessee Bills](#)

Search Tennessee Bills either by bill number, or by keyword

[Tennessee General Assembly Archive](#)

Use this page to access bills back to the 1999 session.

**Texas**

[Search Texas Bills](#)

Search Texas bills back to 1995, using either a Concept Text Search or Advanced Text Search

**Utah**

[Utah State Legislature Bill Search-Current and Archived](#)

Search Utah bills by sponsor or by subject for current or past sessions to 1997

**Vermont**

[Vermont Legislative Bill Tracking System](#)

Use the page to search for current bills and resolutions by sponsor or keyword. Also, use this page to link to past sessions back to 1987.

**Virgin Islands**

[Search Current Legislation for the Virgin Islands](#)

Search Virgin Islands bills by Bill Number, Subject or Sponsor.

**Virginia**

[Search Current Session Virginia Bills and Resolutions](#)

Search current Virginia bills and resolutions by key words or phrase.

[Virginia Legislative Tracking System](#)

The Legislative Information System provides real-

time access to General Assembly legislative activities. The status and legislative history for each bill and resolution are available as well as on-line tools to monitor and track one or multiple bills.

## Washington

[Search Washington Bills](#)

This multi-database search screen allows users to choose to search Washington bills, code, register and constitution.

[Washington State Bill Information](#)

Washington State Bill Information page provides access to legislative bill information, bill tracking, and the ability to do textual searches for current and archived bill information back to 1998.

[Washington State Current Legislation Listing](#)

Directory listing of current legislation in the 2005-2006 session.

## West Virginia

[West Virginia Legislature's Bill Status](#)

Use this page to search bills from 1993 to 2005.

## Wisconsin

[Search Wisconsin Legislature Infobases](#)

This page allows users to search Wisconsin legislative information from 1995 to the current session.

[Wisconsin Text and Histories of Legislative Proposals](#)

Use this page to search the text and histories of legislative proposals back to 1995. Search either by:

- \*Proposal number
- \*Folio Search of Bill Histories,
- \*Searchable Text of Bills and Resolutions -- using a word or phrase.
- \*Searchable Text of Acts -- using a word or phrase

## Wyoming

[Current Wyoming Bills](#)

This page allows you to select links for information pertaining to current bills. Page also includes search option(s) to search for Wyoming bills and statutes.

[Wyoming Prior Legislative Sessions](#)

Use this page to link to prior session information

back to 1998.

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<sup>i</sup> Many thanks to Citizens for Midwifery for material adapted from their web site. Click [here](#) to go there for a lot of other great information and contact to others in your community who are interested in birth issues. Also, thanks to Patchworks Productions 2001.

<sup>ii</sup> Taken from the National Council of State Legislators website.