

LEGISLATIVE FAQS

MOMS *for*
★ **LIBERTY** ★



WHAT SHOULD WE LOOK FOR IN A LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE MEMBER OR CHAIR?

It is most important to have someone who is teachable. It is unlikely that you will have expert lobbyists or former legislators to fill all seats on your committee. It is crucial to look for individuals who are humble enough to admit when they don't know something, and curious enough to lead the learning that will be required.

Other good characteristics include:

- Logical
- Able to look at all sides of an issue
- Patient
- Levelheaded

People of any background can be successful on a legislative committee, but the following are particularly well-suited to assist:

- Lawyers or paralegals
- Current or former legislative staff
- Former School Board members
- Former Legislators
- Former Superintendents
- Former BOE members
- Teachers/Administrators
- Involved spouses of legislators
- Those with political connections or experience
- Experience with legislative review

HOW DO WE EVALUATE THE BILLS?

To assist you in evaluating bills we have compiled a list of questions to ask about legislation. You can find the document on the Chapter Chair Portal. A major benefit of your legislative committee is talking over questions and concerns with members of a variety of viewpoints.

HOW DO WE MAKE SENSE OF THE BILLS?

Bill language is often complicated and confusing. Never be afraid to ask the author or sponsor for clarification, usually their staff will be able to assist. It can also help to watch committee hearings about the bill as the legislators themselves will ask many of the same questions you have. Learning some common legal terminology may aid in understanding. A good resource is: <https://www.uscourts.gov/glossary>.

HOW DO WE READ ALL THE BILLS?

Hundreds of bills are likely to be proposed during legislative session. It is impossible to read through all of them. Searching bills by keyword or sorting them based on the committees they are assigned to can help you whittle down where your attention needs to be focused. When you have a list of relevant bills, divide and conquer. Assign each Committee member bills that interest them, or over which they have special knowledge. Each committee member is then able to report back on their bills.

WHAT TOOLS ARE AVAILABLE TO ASSIST US?

The websites of many state legislatures have systems that allow you to track bills automatically and receive notifications. There are also a variety of lobbying tools that can assist or enhance this process. Reach out to National about procuring one for your state. Please provide suggested vendors. These tools have a number of premium features that do things like search news about your bills, provide a database of staff contact information, and more.

WHAT IS LEGISLATIVE SESSION?

Session is the timeframe in which the legislature is convened for the purpose of making laws.