



*Connecting People to Policy*

**OVERVIEW OF THE LEGISLATIVE PROCESS, TIPS FOR  
TESTIFYING AND ADVOCATING FOR LEGISLATION**

**SEPTEMBER 15, 2022**

# OVERVIEW

- Legislative Structure
- The Legislative Counsel Bureau
- The Legislative Process
- Tips for Testifying Before Legislative Committees
- Tips for Advocating Your Issues
- Resources for Tracking Legislation

# LEGISLATIVE STRUCTURE

## Senate

21 Members, 4-Year Terms

## Assembly

42 Members, 2-Year Terms

## Regular Legislative Sessions–Biennial

- Regular sessions held in odd-numbered years
- Sessions begin on the first Monday in February
- Limited to 120-calendar days
- The 82<sup>nd</sup> Legislative Session starts February 6, 2023

## Legislative Interim

- 20 months between sessions



# THE LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL BUREAU (LCB)

- The LCB is the nonpartisan, central staff for the Nevada Legislature
- No paid political staff is employed by the Bureau
- Lobbying by LCB staff is prohibited
  - No campaign or political activities
  - Cannot display items that advocate for candidate or partisan activity

## THE LCB: *Purpose of Design*

- To discourage interference and limit political pressure
- To give staff independence that helps ensure lawmakers get unbiased information
- In some states, each house (even each party within the houses) has its own staff. Nevada's LCB staff works for both houses and all members
- Ensure consistency in staffing from one session to the next

# THE LCB: *Today*

- Approximately 285 permanent staff
- Additional temporary staff is hired for sessions only
- Consists of 5 divisions:
  - Administrative
  - Audit
  - Fiscal Analysis
  - Legal
  - Research

## THE LCB: *Administrative Division*

- Includes Accounting, Broadcast and Production Services, Buildings and Grounds Maintenance, Information Technology Services, and the Legislative Police
- Responsible for a broad range of activities that ensure the legislators and the Assembly, Senate, and LCB staff have what they need to do their jobs
- This Division is key to providing public access to our online/virtual meetings and ensuring access to our online resources

## THE LCB: *Audit Division*

- Conducts audits of Executive and Judicial Branch agencies with the primary focus of improving government by ensuring the agencies audited are complying with state laws and using proper accounting methods
- Provides agencies with advice on improving their business practices
- Occasionally conducts special audits of local governments



## THE LCB: *Fiscal Analysis Division*

- Analyzes the governor's proposed budget and requests for transfers of funding and for emergency funding during the interim
- Compiles fiscal notes on legislation for the Legislature's consideration
- Provides staff services and revenue projections for the state's Economic Forum, an independent body responsible for determining the amount of revenue available for expenditure each biennium
- Provides primary committee staff services to the “money” and revenue committees during the legislative session and the interim

## THE LCB: *Legal Division*

- Drafts all bills, resolutions, and amendments during session
- Publishes the *Statutes of Nevada* and codifies and publishes the *Nevada Revised Statutes*
- Drafts regulations for most state agencies during the interim
- Provides legal opinions to legislators and committees
- Represents the Legislative Branch in court when necessary and serves as attorney for the LCB
- Operates the Legislative Gift Shop and the State Printing Office

## THE LCB: *Research Division*

- Provides policy analysis and prepares reports and publications on topics of interest to legislators and the public
- Houses the Research Library, an excellent source of information for legislative documents and research materials
- Contains a Constituent Services Unit that assists legislators with questions and requests from the voters in their districts
- Provides primary committee staff support to nearly all policy committees during the session and throughout the interim

# LEGISLATIVE PROCESS

## HOW A BILL BECOMES A LAW

1. Initial Steps by the Author  
Idea, Bill Draft Request (BDR)
2. Action in the House of Origin  
Introduction, Refer to Committee  
Public Hearing, Recommendation  
Read Bill 3 Times
3. Action in the Second House  
Same as House of Origin
4. Resolution of Differences  
Conference Committee
5. Role of the Governor  
Sign, Not Sign, Veto

# LEGISLATIVE PROCESS

## COMMITTEE HEARINGS – COMMON COMMITTEE ACTIONS

- Do Pass
- Amend and Do Pass
- Do Adopt
- Rerefer (with or without recommendation)
- Indefinitely Postpone (IP)
- No Action

# LEGISLATIVE PROCESS

## RESOLUTION OF HOUSE DIFFERENCES (IF NECESSARY)

- If the bill has no amendments in the second house, it goes to the Governor
- If the bill is amended by second house:
  - Does the first house “Concur” with the second house’s amendment? If so, the bill goes to the Governor.
  - If the first house does not concur (does not agree with) the second house amendment, does the second house “Recede” its amendment? If so, the bill goes to the Governor
  - If the second house does not recede, the bill is assigned to a conference committee

# LEGISLATIVE PROCESS

## ROLE OF THE GOVERNOR

- Sign the bill
- Within 5 days if Legislature in session (excluding the day of receipt and Sundays)
- Within 10 days if Legislature has adjourned (excluding the day of receipt and Sundays)
- Veto the bill
- Not sign the bill within the period allowed (effectively allowing the bill to go into law without his signature)

# LEGISLATIVE PROCESS

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## Committee chair schedules bills:

- Agendas are posted
- All meetings are public
- Most meetings are videoconferenced from Carson City to Las Vegas and the public is encouraged to participate

## Sponsor's responsibilities include:

- Presenting the bill (sometimes with the help of interested constituents or bill proponents)
- Identifying and notifying speakers
- Keeping the committee chair informed
- Follow the bill

# COMMITTEE HEARINGS

- Same process in Senate and Assembly



## PROVIDING TESTIMONY TO THE LEGISLATURE: *Preparation*

- Understand the process
  - Be flexible on the presentation length
  - Be strategic with your goals
  - Be aware of the rules and what the chair wants
- Check the schedule and be at the right place at the right time
  - Watch a committee meeting ahead of time
  - Check media for breaking news
  - PRACTICE
  - Remember the legislative meetings are now conducted both in person and virtually

# PROVIDING TESTIMONY TO THE LEGISLATURE: *The Presentation*

- Dress professionally
- First 30 seconds are very important
- Know how to greet the chair and audience
- Summarize, be accurate but not too technical
- Avoid jargon
- Use handouts sparingly
- Use PowerPoint presentations selectively
- Remember: YOU are the expert
- Be flexible – sometimes agenda items are taken out of order
- Make eye contact

## PROVIDING TESTIMONY TO THE LEGISLATURE: *Questions*

- Try to anticipate
- “I don’t know” is often the correct answer
- Think before answering
- Go through the chair when responding (the chair may then permit you to respond directly to the committee member)

IMPORTANT – Triple check your facts and figures and be prepared to explain the source of your data. Remember, what you say will become part of the public record.

# ADVOCATING YOUR ISSUES

## Do:

- Choose a legislator(s) who you think will support your position
- Explain the positive aspects and benefits of your suggested legislation
- Explain what the opposition might be
- Prepare the legislator

# ADVOCATING YOUR ISSUES

## Do:

- Be calm, controlled, and prepared
- Think your position through and weigh all sides of the issue
- Present your position in a non-threatening and professional manner

# ADVOCATING YOUR ISSUES

## **Do Not:**

- Make demands or threaten legislators
- Disrupt the meeting
- Use civil disobedience
- Lecture or talk down to legislators
- Be disrespectful toward members of the public or staff

# WAYS TO STAY INFORMED AND INVOLVED

- Sign up for Bill Tracking
- Search the bill draft request (BDR) list (limited information until introduction)
- Listen to or watch current or passed hearings online
- Check website for updates: [www.leg.state.nv.us](http://www.leg.state.nv.us)
- Track legislative documents using “NELIS”
- Get to know legislators and legislative staff

# WAYS TO STAY INFORMED AND INVOLVED

- Attend hearings or floor sessions
- Sign up to be a presenter at a hearing
- Submit comments to the committee in writing
- Talk to the legislators



# BILL TRACKING

## [Nevada Electronic Legislative Information System \(NELIS\)](#)

Information always available:

Bills – Reports – Bill Actions and Status

## Personalized Legislative Tracking (PLT)

- Subscription to BDRs, Bills, and Budgets (Up to 10 bills for free)
- Notifications of Hearings and Status (*not a free option*)
- Various Subscription Levels

Email: [publications@lcb.state.nv.us](mailto:publications@lcb.state.nv.us)

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