

NATIONAL  
DOMESTIC  
VIOLENCE  
HOTLINE



# Advocacy Toolkit

FOR SURVIVORS AND PREVENTION SERVICES

[www.hotline.org](http://www.hotline.org)

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# What is Advocacy?

**Advocacy is organized activism in support of an idea or cause.**

Advocacy consists of constituents contacting their elected officials about issues that are important to them and establishing relationships with these legislators. These relationships are key to expressing what is most helpful in public policy and funding decisions. By establishing relationships and creating champions for your issue and organization, you encourage public officials to make a commitment to you and to the survivors you serve.

It is easy to feel overwhelmed by the legislative process, which can be, at times, both complex and impersonal. Most people do not know who their elected representatives are and have not engaged in direct advocacy of any kind, let alone federal advocacy directed at their senators and representatives in Congress. However, as a constituent and a voter, your voice is important and powerful at all levels of government.

Elected officials must consider their constituents' needs, after all we are the ones who elected them to Congress. This is one of the many reasons why members of Congress are very responsive to learning about the policy-related priorities of individuals who live and work in their district. While they may not always agree with a constituent's point of view, the information and data shared by the people they represent is very important.



## WHY ENGAGE IN ADVOCACY?

**Advocacy is not a one-time activity; it is about building a trusted relationship with elected officials, administrators, and their staff over time.**

Ideally you want to establish yourself and your organization as a resource to members of Congress and their staff for timely and accurate information.

Effective advocacy is rooted in mutual respect and trust. Even if you and a member of Congress disagree, you want them to trust your facts and your sources; ultimately this is the best foundation for educating policymakers and advocating for survivors.

**The right of citizens to petition their government is basic to our democratic way of life.**

# Establishing a Relationship with an Elected Official

If you have not met members of your Congressional delegation, you should designate your first meeting as a get-acquainted occasion. Some opportunities include:

- **Town Hall Meetings** - Attend a town hall meeting held by your elected officials and introduce yourself as a local constituent and program service provider and/or advocate for survivors.
- **Civic Activities** - Public or official functions in which you are involved—such as a ribbon-cutting ceremony, an open house, or an award ceremony—are great ways to get acquainted with your elected officials by inviting them to attend.
- **Program Tours** - Hosting an informal site visit allows elected officials to see firsthand how you provide services and support for survivors. It also allows elected officials to meet program staff and survivors (as appropriate).
- **Meet-and-Greet Receptions** - Hosting an open house or meet-and-greet reception is a good way for groups of constituents to meet and chat with lawmakers one-on-one.
- **Congressional Visits** - Contact your lawmaker’s Washington, D.C., or district office to schedule a personal meeting. Visiting your elected official or their staff in his or her home office is an excellent, yet often overlooked, opportunity to establish a relationship.



# Conducting a Meeting with an Elected Official

One of the best ways to engage your members of Congress is to request a meeting with their office. A one-on-one meeting is extremely effective, especially when combined with other actions like signing a petition, sending a letter, or making a phone call, and there are many advantages to holding your meeting in the local office, not Washington, DC.

Through the meeting, you can inform your lawmakers or their staff about the impact of your program on survivors and the unmet needs in your local and state-wide communities. By educating them about the impact, you can encourage your representatives to become champions of programs serving survivors. It is always a good idea to present meaningful data along with stories from those you serve to demonstrate impact.

Most importantly, meeting with elected officials helps to build an ongoing relationship with the office. Your visit is not the only opportunity you have to talk to your members of Congress and staff. This is just the start of a relationship, and it will be up to you to further develop and strengthen it. You want them to view you as a valuable expert and resource on issues related to gender-based violence for the elected office and his/her staff.

## While they are in Washington, DC, members of Congress have staff working in their district offices.

- **Good to have on your side.** District offices have staff dedicated to helping constituents navigate federal programs. Sometimes they are also connected to state and local government agencies and can help with issues at or between these levels. District staff is the member's "eyes and ears" back home.
- **Good to know.** Members often have special district aides that they trust to develop strong relationships with community leaders and constituents. They also represent the member by attending events and visiting programs while Congress is in session in Washington, DC. District aides can be very strategic allies because they are often well-connected in the community and have the members' ear.
- **Good to contact.** Writing or calling the district office can have a different effect than visiting the DC office. Usually, the district office reports to the DC office about what issues or legislative priorities they are hearing about from constituents. Often calls and meetings with the district office can have more of an impact than calls and meetings about the same issue with the DC office. Also, district staff often have more time to conduct.



## HOW TO SCHEDULE THE VISIT

- **To schedule a meeting, call the district office and ask to speak with the scheduler.** To get information on how to identify and contact the district office, go to [www.senate.gov](http://www.senate.gov) or [www.house.gov](http://www.house.gov) and find your members' personal websites. Or you can contact their DC office through the Capitol switchboard at (202) 224-3121. Once you have this information, let the scheduler know you are a constituent, and you would like to meet in the district office with the member of Congress or the appropriate staff person to discuss issues related to providing services and support for victims of domestic violence.
- **Selecting a date for your in-district congressional office meeting:** When seeking a meeting, try to contact the local office at least two weeks before your preferred meeting date. If it is important that you meet with the lawmaker, you should seek an appointment during a congressional recess or on a Monday or Friday, when the legislator is most likely to be home (to search for congressional recess dates, refer to the Senate Legislative Calendar or the House Legislative Calendar). Offering several days or a span of time when you would be available to meet is highly recommended. If you cannot secure a meeting with the lawmaker, you should consider seeking an appointment with their District or State Director, both senior members of the congressional office staff. Developing a relationship with the District or State Director can really benefit your organization in the long term.
- **The Scheduler will know if the member of Congress is available or which staff member you should meet with based on your request.** Do not be surprised if the scheduler requests an email addressed to him/her that includes a general description of your organization, states the purpose of the meeting, the proposed dates and times, and the individuals who will attend (note any constituents from the member's district). Make sure to include your contact information so that the scheduler can respond. Be patient but also persistent in getting the meeting scheduled - you may have to follow-up with the office more than once.

### PREPARING FOR THE MEETING

- One of the most important things you can do to prepare for advocacy meetings is to know who you are meeting with and where that member of Congress stands on the issues important to you and your organization. Review background information about your members of Congress and see if they have taken any positions on issues that are most relevant to you and/or your program. Visiting your members' websites ([www.senate.gov](http://www.senate.gov) or [www.house.gov](http://www.house.gov)) is a great resource to find out where your elected official stands on issues of concern.
- Decide who should attend the meeting and can help demonstrate why more resources and/or a particular policy are necessary to support survivors and prevent domestic violence in your area: District office meetings are strongest

when the congressional office can see multiple community members, representing different organizations or perspectives, speaking about the impact of programs and the needs of survivors. As you plan for your district office meeting, think about inviting other program staff, community partners, a board member, a survivor (if appropriate), or other local validators from your area to participate in your meeting.

- Decide which materials to bring. Congressional staff often refer to materials given to them in meetings. We recommend you create a folder with the following documents to share with the elected official and/or staff at the start of your meeting:
  - » Information on your organization, including programmatic impact and unmet need. A one-pager that includes your mission and vision, services and overview of any recent meaningful data.
  - » Any recent impact or annual report
  - » Summary of resources available for survivors in your community and/or state
  - » Relevant local news articles that discuss the needs of survivors and how these needs are being met.

## THE MEETING

- **You might end up meeting with staff instead of the elected official, even if you are scheduled to meet with the member, because of unforeseen schedule changes.** Similarly, you may end up meeting with a different staffer than expected. This is okay, the elected official leans on their staff for valuable information and advice, so treat it just as you would if the elected official was in the room.
  - » Staff that you meet with may be early in their career or new with this particular congressional office. That does not mean they aren't knowledgeable or that they are the wrong person to meet with.
  - » A meeting with the member or a staffer is usually brief and lasts between 15 and 30 minutes depending on their schedule, how familiar they are with your organization, and how aligned they are with your policies and your request.
- **Be prepared with a meeting agenda.** While the meeting structure may vary based on whether the member of Congress is present or how much time has been allotted for the meeting, it's important to go into the meeting with a plan. Here's a recommended way to think about how the meeting can flow:
  - » Open by thanking the person with whom you are meeting for the appointment and the congress person's work [include a tailored thank-you based on the member's record on issues related to domestic violence if possible]. Distribute your materials to share about your program and the needs of survivors in your community and state.
  - » If multiple people are participating in the meeting, designate a meeting "captain" who will facilitate the flow of conversation and a note-taker who will record any questions asked by a member (or their staff) and any required follow-up.
  - » Introduce the group. Each participant should briefly introduce themselves, including name; the name and location of their program or role; and a brief description of services provided.



- **Framing the conversation.** Your story is the most important message you can share with a member of Congress as well as their staff. Personalize the issue by talking about the needs in your state or community and the people you serve.
  - » By sharing the needs in your community and the difficulties you face meeting those needs, you paint a picture of the critical need that relates directly to the member's constituents.
  - » Don't be shy about talking about the impact of federal funding on your community.
  - » See suggested talking points later in this toolkit.

## CONCLUDING THE MEETING

- **End on a positive note.** Even if you have not found anything you agree on, you can agree to keep talking. Even if you aren't getting the response/support you had envisioned staying positive and keeping the door open for ongoing conversation is important. You never know when the issue will be re-framed and find that all of a sudden, the two of you agree again.
- **And remember:**
  - » Ask if there are any questions.
  - » If you have been asked a question you do not know the answer to, reiterate that you will follow-up with an answer.
  - » For online meetings, consider pasting links to resources and supporting materials in the chat or sending them in a follow up email.
  - » Remind the member and staff that you want to act as a resource for their office on this issue and are happy to provide additional information.
  - » Invite the member or their staff to attend an upcoming event or to tour your program.
- **Ask the elected official or staff to take a photo with you,** so you can share your appreciation on social media. *Please note that if it is close to an election for this member you may want to refrain from public posting so as not to be seen as influencing or endorsing their candidacy, something 501c3 organization cannot do.*
- **Follow up your meeting with a thank you note:** Regardless of how the meeting goes, you should always follow up by thanking the member and/or staffer for his/her time and reiterating the points you discussed in the meeting – including any specific requests that were made by you or commitments made by the office. Also answer any questions that were left unanswered and provide any materials that were requested. These notes can be sent by email or through “snail mail.”





# Suggested Talking Points about Importance of Federal Funding

Remember - by sharing the needs in your community and the difficulties you face meeting those needs, you paint a picture of the critical need for funding that relates directly to the member's constituents.

## FEDERAL FUNDING IS IMPORTANT.

- Survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, dating violence and stalking have urgent, ongoing housing, legal, economic, health, safety, and other human needs.
- Survivors of color and immigrant survivors face additional threats and barriers to accessing resources.
- We must continue to improve our responses to address and prevent the crisis of violence in many communities.
- Gender-based violence prevention is vital, yet federal funds dedicated to prevention are inadequate.

## THE NEED IS GREAT.

- The National Network to End Domestic Violence's (NNEDV) 18th Annual Domestic Violence Counts Report found that on a single day in 2023, 76,975 victims of domestic violence received services; however, on that same day, 13,335 requests for services went unmet due to a lack of funding. [nnedv.org/about-us/dv-counts-census/](https://nnedv.org/about-us/dv-counts-census/)
- According to a 2022 survey by the National Alliance to End Sexual Violence (NAESV), 70% of programs experienced an increased demand for services last year. [endsexualviolence.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/infographic\\_white\\_FINAL\\_brother1816.pdf](https://endsexualviolence.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/infographic_white_FINAL_brother1816.pdf)

## MAKE THE CASE.

- Tailor talking points to your specific program and the needs of your community, your state, and your program. For example:
  - » How many survivors have you served?
  - » Do you have a waiting list, and if so, how long is it?
  - » Have you experienced an increase in the number of people requesting services; and if so, what does that increase look like?
  - » What portions of your state have access to prevention? Are you able to meet the demand for prevention? What prevention successes are you seeing?

**Federal funding plays an important role in helping fill the gap and meet local needs. Increased funding is needed to meet survivors' urgent needs. Here are some examples of critical legislation that uses federal dollars to fund programs serving survivors.**



### Family Violence Prevention and Services Act Program

- FVPSA supports life-saving services throughout the country through grants to states, tribal governments, and territories, as well as to the National Domestic Violence Hotline.
- FVPSA, administered by the Department of Health and Human Services, is the only federal funding source dedicated to providing support to domestic violence shelters and programs. Funds keep the lights on, and the doors open at emergency shelters.
- FVPSA provides core funding to support more than 1,600 local public, private, nonprofit and faith-based organizations and programs in their response to the urgent needs of over 1.3 million domestic violence victims and their children.

### Violence Against Women Act (VAWA)

- The Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) creates and supports comprehensive, cost-effective responses to domestic violence, sexual assault, dating violence and stalking.
- VAWA was the first federal legislation

acknowledging domestic violence and sexual assault as crimes and provided federal resources to encourage community-coordinated responses to combating violence against women.

- Last reauthorized in 2022, VAWA provides survivors, the thousands of local programs that serve them, and communities with much-needed resources for housing, legal assistance, alternatives to criminal responses, and prevention programming. It also includes new economic justice provisions and bolsters access for survivors of all genders by strengthening non-discrimination laws and creating an LGBTQ services program. The law also restores tribal jurisdiction, allowing tribes to hold non-Native perpetrators accountable, improves existing housing protections and increases access to emergency and short-term housing, and creates dedicated investments in culturally specific service providers to ensure survivors of color are supported.

### **Victims of Crime Act (VOCA)**

- The Crime Victims Fund (CVF) was created by Congress in 1984 to provide grants to state and local programs that assist victims of crime. The CVF has been generated entirely by fines and penalties from federal prosecutions and non-prosecution and deferred prosecution agreements—not taxpayer revenues—and is the most essential and flexible source of funding for crime victim services across the nation.
- VOCA grants fund victim services for millions of survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, trafficking, child sexual abuse, drunk driving, and other crimes annually. Domestic violence programs, rape crisis centers and child advocacy centers rely on VOCA funds to provide direct services like crisis intervention, shelter, housing, counseling, and court accompaniment to victims of domestic violence and sexual assault.
- Over 6,000 projects, including almost all domestic violence programs and rape crisis centers, rely on VOCA assistance grants to provide critical direct services for over 6.5 million victims a year.
- Many states are facing catastrophic cuts to VOCA assistance grants. States need a steady stream of funding that can be relied on consistently. Cuts and large fluctuations in the cap do not benefit survivors or victim services providers.



# Do's and Dont's for a Successful Meeting

Meeting in-person with lawmakers is the most effective means of advocacy. Here are some tips for a successful meeting:

## DO'S

- Have a “message” and stick to it.
- **Speak from your area of expertise and share personal stories.** Storytelling puts real-life faces with facts and data. Be efficient with the time, positive and transparent. Also mention if you are a constituent.
- **Make a specific request.** The purpose of your meeting is to gain support for your issue. Legislators expect you to make requests. It is important to make the request specific and direct, preferably tied to current legislative activity.
- **Be responsive.** Leave time for the Member and/or staff to respond and to ask you questions.
- **Build relationships with staff.** Staff can be very influential in getting your requests honored by your elected officials. You should make every effort to establish relationships with staff and encourage them to use you as a resource in your area of expertise.
- **End meeting with a “thank you.”** You may even begin with a “thank you” too, letting them know you are paying attention to their record of support and appreciate any past efforts.

## DO NOT

- **Argue or make veiled threats or bring politics into the meeting.** Avoid being argumentative. Even if the member of Congress and/or staffer disagree with your perspective. Be patient and listen to what they have to say; respectfully pushing back is fine if it is constructive and fact-based.
- **Guess an answer to a question.** If you don't know the answer to a question, that's okay. Don't guess! Say you'll followup and ensure that you do.
- **Don't go off message.**

While it's always good to be personal and try to make connections, successful legislative meetings are always narrow in scope. Stick to a few main points of support for your issue and make a specific request for action.

## TEMPLATE: MEETING REQUEST

Dear [scheduler's name],

My name is [name], and I am a constituent of Representative/Senator [name]; I am contacting you to request a meeting with the member on [insert suggested date] on behalf of the [insert organization].

My colleagues and I are interested in setting up a virtual/in person meeting with the member about the importance of funding supportive services for survivors of domestic violence, and gender-based violence prevention in our community. These services have historically been underfunded, resulting in waiting lists, including [insert community/program specific information]. It is important to note that, after being kept in isolation due to the pandemic, many survivors are just now coming forward seeking services, and losing access now will further set back their healing.

The federal government plays a critical role in supporting survivors of gender-based violence through programs including the Family Violence Prevention and Services Act, the Violence Against Women Act, and the Victims of Crime Act. As direct service providers, we are eager to meet with Representative/Senator [name] and share what we are seeing in the community and the consequence of failing to fund these necessary and life-saving services.

I can be reached at [number] or [email] to schedule a meeting; I look forward to hearing from you.

Best,

[Insert Name]

## TEMPLATE: THANK YOU EMAIL

Dear Representative/Senator [name],

Thank you for taking the time to meet with me and my colleagues/staff of the [program] on [date] to discuss the importance of funding supportive services for survivors of gender-based violence in [city/state] and across the country.

Federal funding plays a vital role in ensuring that survivors of domestic violence in [community/state] can meet the needs of your constituents seeking supportive services and prevention programs. While the national conversation about gender-based violence has opened many people's eyes to both the prevalence of domestic violence and its impact on survivors, it has also drawn attention to the growing gap between the demand for, and availability of, services and prevention programs in our state.

By fully funding programs including FVPSA, VAWA, and VOCA, you help to ensure that no survivor is turned away. You also make [community name] safer for us all.

As we discussed during our meeting...[summarize any commitment made by the member; answer any question asked during the meeting that you did not have an answer for at the time; and/or reference any materials you offered to send as follow-up].

Lastly, we would like to invite you to visit our program when you are next back home. We would be happy to help schedule and facilitate a tour so that you and your staff can see first-hand the importance of the services you make possible through federal funding.

Thank you for your consideration. We look forward to continuing to work with you and your office to ensure we are meeting the needs of the residents of [state/district].

Best,

[Insert Name]



# Overview Of Congress

Article I, Section 1, of the United States Constitution, provides that: All legislative powers herein granted shall be vested in a Congress of the United States, which shall consist of a Senate and House of Representatives.

## CONGRESS IN BRIEF

- A Congress lasts two years and is divided into two sessions, each a year in length. Each session starts in January of an odd numbered year (after the November election in an even numbered year).
- Congress is made up of two Houses: The Senate and the House of Representatives.

## THE SENATE

- The Senate is composed of 100 members, two from each state regardless of population or area.
- Senators serve six-year terms, and one-third of the Senate is elected every second year. Senators are split into three classes – I, II, and III. Class I Senators are up for re-

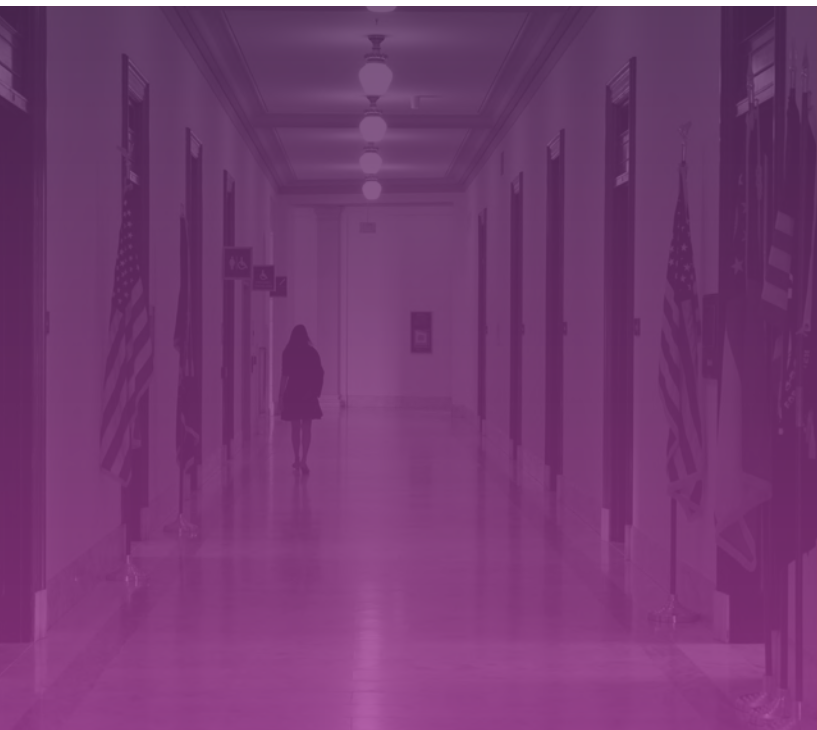
election in 2024; Class II Senators are up for re-election in 2026; and Class III Senators are up for re-election in 2028.

- The Senator from each state with the longest tenure is referred to as the “Senior” Senator; the other, the “Junior” Senator.
- The two Senators from each state will never be up for re-election simultaneously; therefore, each state’s Senators are in different classes.
- The President of the Senate is the Vice President of the United States. Their primary role is to cast the deciding vote in the event of a tie (50-50) vote on legislation.
- Senators deal with all issues affecting our nation, and particularly those issues their constituents care about. However, Senators often play more integral roles on the issues that come before the Committees on which they sit.

For a complete list of Senators, links to individual Senators’ websites, and more, go to: [www.senate.gov](http://www.senate.gov).

## HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

- The House of Representatives is composed of 435 members, plus five non-voting delegates representing American Samoa; District of Columbia; Guam; Northern Mariana Islands; Virgin Islands; and one Resident Commissioner, elected every four years, representing Puerto Rico.
- All members and delegates are elected every two years (with the exception of the Resident Commissioner from Puerto Rico).



- The number of Representatives is determined by a state’s population. Therefore, more populated states such as California and New York have 52 and 26 Representatives respectively, while less populated states such as Wyoming and Alaska each have one at-large Representative, the minimum number allowed by the Constitution.
- Congressional districts are redrawn after every national census or every 10 years.

For a complete list of Representatives, links to individual Representatives’ websites, and more, go to [www.house.gov](http://www.house.gov). There is also a very useful FAQ at [www.clerk.house.gov](http://www.clerk.house.gov).



# How a Bill Becomes a Law<sup>1</sup>

To those who aren't familiar with federal policy, the drawing up of legislation and the creation of laws may seem complicated when, in fact, the process is relatively straightforward. Anyone may draft a bill; however, only members of Congress may introduce legislation, and by doing so become sponsor(s). There are four basic types of legislation: bills, joint resolutions, concurrent resolutions, and simple resolutions. The official legislative process begins when a bill or resolution is numbered (H.R. signifies a House bill and S. a Senate bill), referred to a committee, and printed by the Government Printing Office.

**Step 1.** Referral to Committee: Bills are usually referred to standing committees in the House or Senate according to carefully delineated rules of procedure.

**Step 2.** Committee Action: When a bill reaches a committee, it is placed on the committee's calendar. A bill can be referred to a subcommittee or considered by the committee as a whole. It is at this point that a bill is examined carefully and its chances for passage are determined. If the committee does not act on a bill, it is the equivalent of "killing" it.

**Step 3.** Subcommittee Review: Often, bills are referred to a subcommittee for study and hearings. Hearings provide the opportunity to put on the record the views of the executive branch, experts, other public officials, supporters and opponents. Testimony can be in person or submitted in writing.

**Step 4.** Mark Up: When the hearings are completed, the subcommittee may meet to "mark up" the bill, that is, to make changes and add amendments prior to recommending the bill to the full committee. If a subcommittee votes not to report legislation to the full committee, the bill "dies".

**Step 5.** Committee Action to Report a Bill: After receiving a subcommittee's report on a bill, the full committee can conduct further study and hearings, or it can vote on the subcommittee's recommendations and any proposed amendments. The full committee then votes on its recommendation to the House or Senate. This procedure is called "ordering a bill reported."

**Step 6.** Publication of a Written Report: After a committee votes to have a bill reported, the chairman instructs staff to prepare a report on the bill. This report describes the intent and scope of the legislation, impact on existing laws and programs, position of the executive branch, and views of dissenting members.

<sup>1</sup> Taken from Congress at Your Fingertips, edited by Capitol Advantage.

**Step 7. Scheduling Floor Action:** After a bill is reported back to the chamber where it originated, it is placed in chronological order on the calendar. In the House there are several different legislative calendars, and the Speaker and Majority Leader largely determine if, when and in what order bills come up. In the Senate there is only one legislative calendar that is controlled by the party in control and the Majority Leader.  
1 Taken from Congress at Your Fingertips, edited by Capitol Advantage.

**Step 8. Debate:** When a bill reaches the floor of the House or Senate, there are rules and procedures governing the debate. These rules determine the conditions and amount of time allocated for debate.

**Step 9. Voting:** After the debate and the approval of any amendments, the bill is passed or defeated by the members voting.

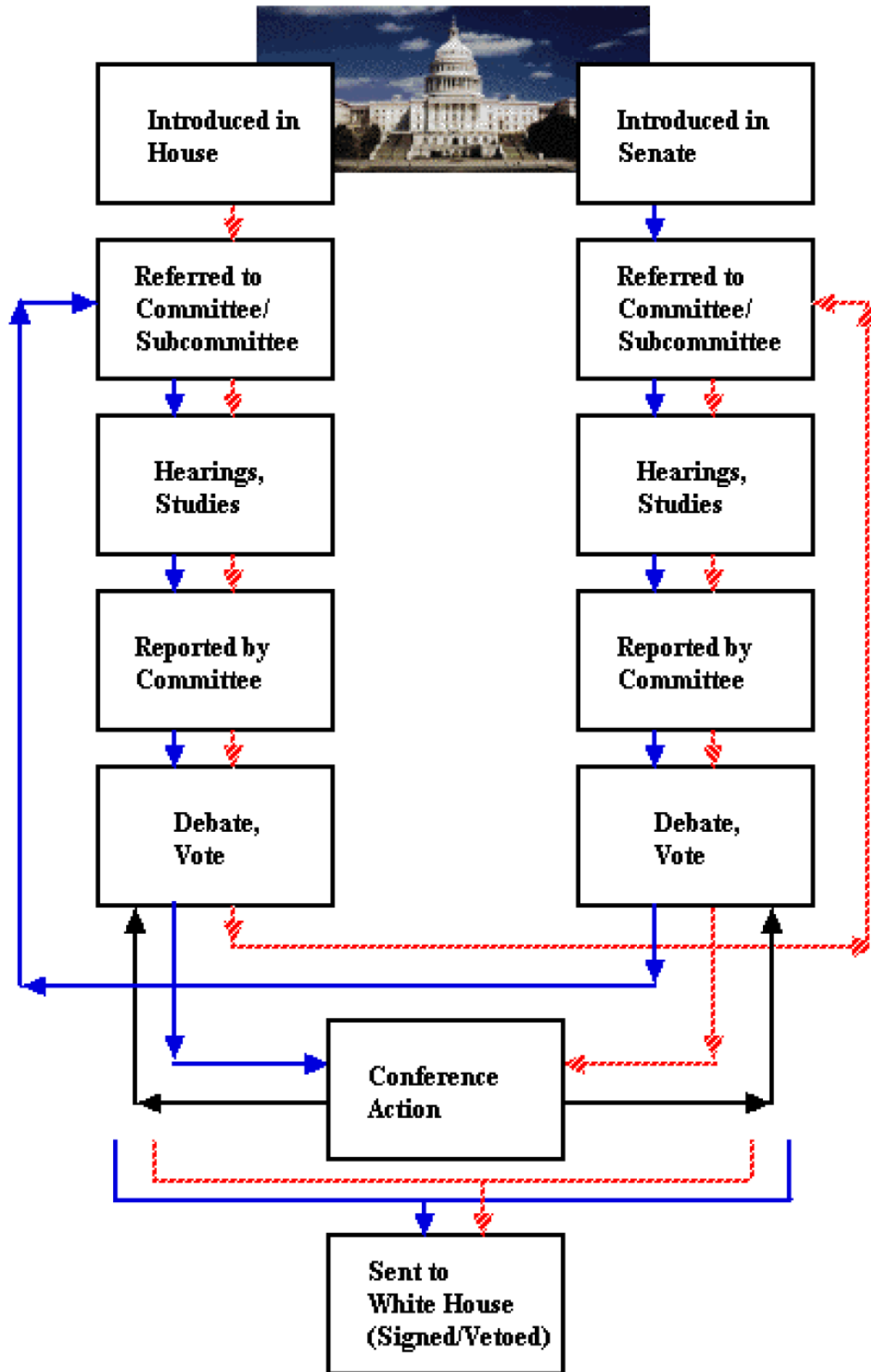
**Step 10. Referral to Other Chamber:** When a bill is passed by the House or the Senate, it is referred to the other chamber where it usually follows the same route through committee and floor action. This chamber may approve the bill as received, reject it, ignore it, or change it.

**Step 11. Conference Committee Action:** If only minor changes are made to a bill by the other chamber, it is common for the legislation to go back to the first chamber for concurrence. However, when actions of the other chamber significantly alter the bill, a conference committee of legislators from both chambers is formed to reconcile the differences. If the conferees are unable to reach agreement, the legislation dies. If agreement is reached, a conference report is prepared describing the committee members' recommendations for changes. Both the House and the Senate must approve the conference report.

**Step 12. Final Actions:** After a bill has been approved by the House and Senate in identical form, it is sent to the President. If the President approves of the legislation, he signs it, and it becomes law. Or, the President can take no action for ten days, while Congress is in session, and it automatically becomes law. If the President opposes the bill, he can veto it. A "pocket veto" occurs if the President takes no action and the Congress has adjourned its second session. As with a regular veto, a pocket veto kills the legislation.

**Step 13. Overriding a Veto:** If the President vetoes a bill, Congress may attempt to "override the veto." This requires a two-thirds roll call vote of the members who are present in sufficient numbers in both Houses for a quorum.

# HOW A BILL BECOMES A LAW



Source: [https://library.pitt.edu/subject\\_guides/govtpublications/tutorial/chart.html](https://library.pitt.edu/subject_guides/govtpublications/tutorial/chart.html)

# Web Resources

## **Congressional Budget Office**

Analyzes budget proposals and provides economic forecasts.

[www.cbo.gov](http://www.cbo.gov)

## **Government Printing Office**

The information provided on this site is the official, published version of products produced by the federal government.

[www.gpo.gov](http://www.gpo.gov)

## **House Appropriations Committee**

Grants money to fund government agencies and programs.

[www.appropriations.house.gov](http://www.appropriations.house.gov)

## **House Education and Workforce Committee**

Oversees issues related to providing quality education for all Americans and ensure the welfare of American workers. The Committee has jurisdiction over the Family Violence Prevention and Services Act.

[www.edworkforce.house.gov](http://www.edworkforce.house.gov)

## **Senate Appropriations Committee**

Grants money to fund government agencies and programs.

[www.appropriations.senate.gov](http://www.appropriations.senate.gov)

## **Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions (HELP) Committee**

Oversees issues relating to health, education, labor, or pensions. The Committee has jurisdiction over the Family Violence Prevention and Services Act.

[www.help.senate.gov](http://www.help.senate.gov)

## **The National Domestic Violence Hotline**

The National Domestic Violence Hotline (Hotline) was first authorized by the Violence Against Women Act of 1994 (P.L. 103-322) and is now authorized under the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Reauthorization Act of 2010 (P L. 111-320), as part of the Family Violence Prevention and Services Act (FVPSA). The Hotline operates a confidential 24-hour national, seven days a week, 365 days a year toll-free telephone and digital (chat and text) hotline services to provide information and assistance to adult and youth survivors of family violence, domestic violence, or dating violence; their family and household members; and others affected by the violence to build healthy, safe, and supportive communities.

[www.thehotline.org](http://www.thehotline.org)



## **THOMAS**

Established by the Library of Congress to provide access to information about Congress, the legislative process, and legislation.

[www.thomas.loc.gov](http://www.thomas.loc.gov)

## **U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Family Violence and Prevention Services (OFVPS)**

OFVPS, a newly established office within the Administration for Children and Families, administers the Family Violence Prevention and Services Act (FVPSA), which is the primary federal funding stream dedicated to supporting emergency shelters and related assistance for victims of domestic violence and their children.

[www.acf.hhs.gov/ofvps](http://www.acf.hhs.gov/ofvps)

## **U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Violence Against Women (OVW)**

OVW is a component of the U.S. Department of Justice. OVW implements the provisions of the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) and provides national leadership on the issues of domestic violence, sexual assault, dating violence, and stalking.

[www.justice.gov/ovw](http://www.justice.gov/ovw)

## **U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Victims of Crime (OVC)**

OVC is one of six Program Offices within the Office of Justice Programs at the U.S. Department of Justice. Established in 1988 through an amendment to the Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) of 1984, OVC is charged by Congress with administering the Crime Victims Fund (the Fund) which supports a broad array of programs and services that focus on helping victims in the immediate aftermath of crime.

[www.ovc.ojp.gov/](http://www.ovc.ojp.gov/)

## **U.S. House of Representatives**

Home page for Representatives of the 110th Congress.

[www.house.gov](http://www.house.gov)

## **U.S. Senate**

Home page for Senators of the 110th Congress.

[www.senate.gov](http://www.senate.gov)

## **White House**

Home Page Provides direct access to federal services, including applications for federal student aid.

[www.whitehouse.gov](http://www.whitehouse.gov)