

ASHP 
**GRASSROOTS
ADVOCACY**

NETWORK

TOOLKIT



ASHP ADVOCACY...

Because Your Patients Need You!

Table of Contents

Welcome	3
ASHP Tools for Getting Involved	4
Action Alerts	
ASHP PAC	
Building a Relationship with Your Legislator	6
Making Introductions	
Making an Office Visit	
Participating in Town Hall Meetings	
Hosting a Site Visit	
Speaking Up.....	10
Writing a Letter to the Editor	
Writing an Opinion Piece (Op-Ed)	
Media Interviews	
Using Social Media	
Political Campaigns.....	13
Volunteering on a Campaign	
Making Campaign Donations	
Running for Office	
Appendix: Legislation 101	16
Glossary	18
Bibliography.....	19
Contact Us	20

Welcome

Welcome to the ASHP Grassroots Network! You are part of a growing number of hospital and health-system practitioners who are engaged in advocacy activities on behalf of the profession and the patients they serve. Your involvement is critical as ASHP works to ensure that patients have access to the expertise of pharmacists.

ASHP advocacy is a strategic partnership. The staff at headquarters provides ASHP policy information to Congress so that health care legislation reflects the issues that matter most to you and your patients. As a pharmacist and a constituent, you have tremendous influence with your member of Congress and can be a valuable resource. You are able to give a “real world” perspective on how legislation will affect your patients, your practice site, and your community.

This toolkit is designed to help you make an impact on public policy affecting the profession. It will serve as your guide through the halls of Congress so that you understand how the legislative process works and how you can influence it on behalf of your patients.

Thank you for your enthusiastic efforts as an advocate on behalf of hospital and health-system pharmacy.

“The first duty of an American citizen is that he shall work in politics”

— *Theodore Roosevelt*

ASHP Tools to Get Involved

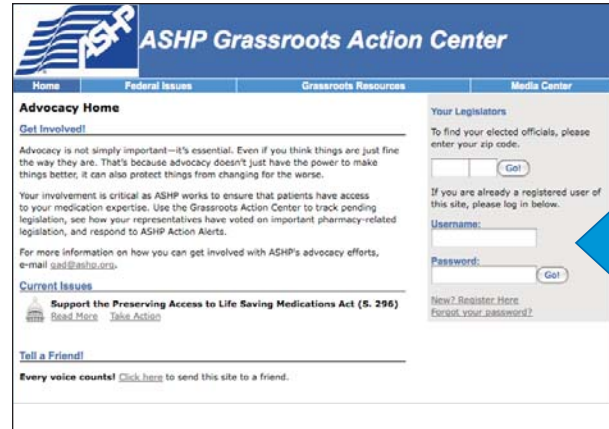
Action Alerts

When a bill is introduced that impacts hospital and health-system pharmacy, ASHP will send you an Action Alert and the background information you need to send an effective, powerful communication to your members of Congress.

Getting Started



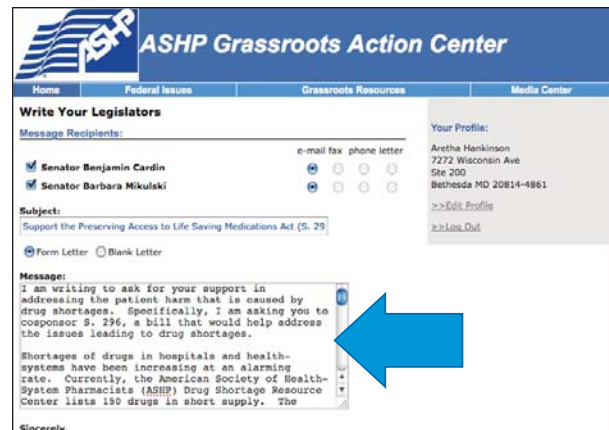
1. Go to [Grassroots Advocacy Center](#).



2. Login with your 8 character member id and password. Use the "Forget Your Password" prompt if you don't remember your login information



3. Find the legislation under "Current Issues" and Select "Take Action."



4. Personalize the e-mail that ASHP provides

ASHP Political Action Committee

The ASHP Political Action Committee (ASHP-PAC) is the voice of ASHP members in the electoral process.

ASHP member donations provide funds for the ASHP-PAC to support candidates who champion your issues on Capitol Hill. Your contribution:

- Helps elect policymakers who understand the vital roles pharmacists play in caring for patients.
- Stresses the importance of thoughtful policy about the issues that affect your patients and your practice site.
- Allows you to participate in the political process by pooling your resources with other ASHP members to help make a difference in the process.

The ASHP-PAC is non-partisan and supports Democratic and Republican candidates that support our issues. Our contributions tend to support members on committees that primarily address health care issues (House Energy and Commerce, House Ways and Means, Senate Finance and Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions).

The maximum contribution to the PAC allowed by law is \$5,000 per year. There is no minimum contribution amount. Contributions are not deductible as charitable contributions for federal income tax purpose. The PAC can only accept personal funds—corporate funds are prohibited.

Are You Registered?

“The most important political office is that of the private citizen.”

— Supreme Court Justice Louis D. Brandeis

Registered pharmacists should also be registered voters. The most effective way to show your support for candidates that champion the issues that are important to you is with your vote on Election Day. Check out the voter registration requirements in your state at [Project Vote Smart](#).

Building a Relationship with Legislators

Your position as a practitioner and a constituent has tremendous influence with legislators. That means your input and expertise is not only welcome, it is essential.

Making Introductions

- Introduce yourself to your Representative and Senators in an e-mail and ask to meet with them either at their Washington D.C. or local district office. You can also [invite them to visit your practice site](#).
- ASHP's government affairs staff and the government affairs department at your institution can be valuable resources. Ask for their help in preparing your outreach to legislators' offices.
- Go to [ASHP's Grassroots Advocacy Center](#) to find out who represents your district and state. Here you can also find a link to their website, which will provide contact information for their state offices.
- Send an e-mail to the DC office and copy the head of the district office, the legislator's scheduler and the staff member responsible for health issues.
- Your e-mail should:
 - Identify yourself as constituent and a pharmacist who would like to serve as a resource on health care issues.
 - Give a brief background on the role of pharmacists in hospitals and health systems and the specific pharmacy services your institution provides.

Office Visits

When you visit your legislator's Capitol Hill or district office be sure to:

- **Expect a meeting that's "short and sweet":** Fifteen minutes is the normal length of a meeting with legislators and/or staff. Make sure that the person you are meeting with has a clear understanding of what you do in your practice. Explain your individual professional role (practice setting, job title, etc.) to help summarize the role of a health-system pharmacist.
- **Be prompt and patient.** When it is time to meet with your legislator be punctual and patient. It is not uncommon for him or her to be late, or to have a meeting interrupted, due to the legislator's crowded schedule. If interruptions do occur, be flexible, and if the opportunity presents itself, continue your meeting with a Member's staff.
- **Be Political.** Legislators want to represent the best interests of their district or state. Wherever possible, share stories about how an issue impacts your patients and your practice site. Remember that all politics is local.
- **Keep the tone of the meeting positive.** You may encounter some Members or their staff who disagree with your views. Although they may challenge you, try not to be defensive,

“If you would persuade, you must appeal to interest rather than intellect.”

— Benjamin Franklin

and never argue. Always be respectful of “the other side,” and be willing to agree to disagree. Reinforce that your number-one concern is patient care.

- **Offer to find the answers for issues you are not familiar with.** It is perfectly understandable to not know the answer to a question that you may be asked. If ASHP staff can assist you in providing an answer, please contact us.
- **Offer to serve as a resource on health-related issues.** Offer your business card so that the person(s) you are meeting with can reach you with any questions they may have. If the staff person has not already offered their card, be sure to ask for one. This makes follow-up communication much easier.
- **Report the outcome to ASHP.** Be sure to let ASHP’s Government Affairs staff know how your meeting went and any information that you gleaned. This will help us in our follow up with the legislator’s office.

Writing to Your Member of Congress

Members of Congress prefer to hear from their constituents via email sent using their official website. Be sure to include your return **physical** address (your street address) and your return **email** address. Senators only accept emails from residents who live in their state. Representatives only accept emails from residents who live in their district.

Participating in Town Hall Meetings

Legislators use town hall meetings to hear from the people that they represent. Take advantage of this opportunity to get to know your legislators and to educate them about the issues that affect your practice.

- **Check the calendar.** Legislators schedule town hall meetings and other events on weekends, during district work periods, or when Congress is in recess. Subscribe to your legislators’ electronic newsletters or watch the local newspapers to find out when an event is scheduled.
- **Be prepared.** You probably won’t have a lot of time to present your issue, so have a concise statement ready to share during the question and answer session or with a staff member in attendance.
- **Get personal.** Tell a story from your practice to illustrate your point. Be sure to comply with your hospital’s procedures for complying with HIPPA before sharing details about a patient.
- **Bring backup.** Recruit friends and colleagues to attend the event with you. Everyone should be prepared to speak on the issue if necessary. Hearing similar stories from different people identifies the issue as important to the legislator and their staff.
- **Have handouts.** Provide the legislator with a fact sheet or brochure about your institution and department, as well as handouts about health-system pharmacy.
- **Be generous.** Offer yourself as a resource. Give the legislator or staffer your business card, noting that you would be happy to provide additional information.
- **Circle back.** Follow up after the town hall meeting to reintroduce yourself and your issue. Request a meeting with the legislator or staff person to discuss it in greater detail.

Hosting a Site Visit for Legislators

Hosting a site visit for your legislators will provide them with an up-close look at the contributions that you make to safe and effective patient care.

- Make sure that the leadership at your practice site is open to hosting a legislator. Schedule a meeting with your administrator to discuss the goals of the activity and outline the benefits it will have on the hospital.
- Recruit other pharmacy staff to work on a planning committee. Identify the “take away” message and draft a preliminary agenda for the visit.
- Include the legislator’s staff members in the invitation. Educating staff members is very important, as they often have a great deal of influence on their boss’ thoughts about issues.
- The tour should last approximately 30-45 minutes and emphasize high-level patient care services that warrant compensation, such as primary and ambulatory care, critical care, chemotherapy, or medication therapy management.
- Ensure the legislator will have several opportunities to meet constituents, including patients. You can do this by conducting a walk-through of the facility or asking a legislator to attend an event happening at your organization. Be sure to follow your hospital’s procedures for complying with HIPPA.
- Check with the legislator’s office for permission to invite local media to the visit. If media will be invited, plan to work carefully with your public relations office and legislator’s press secretary.
- Provide the legislator with a fact sheet or brochure about your institution and department, as well as handouts about health-system pharmacy.
- Send a follow-up letter shortly after the visit to thank the legislator and staff for taking the time to meet with you. Be sure to enclose any materials or information they requested and include copies of photos, press releases or media clips from the visit.
- Submit a story to the hospital newsletter about the visit.
- Report back to ASHP and your state affiliate.

The Role of Congressional Staff

Developing a relationship with congressional staffers is essential to influencing legislators’ views on your issues. Staff often shape their bosses’ thoughts on the issues, so meeting with an aide may be more beneficial than a meeting with the legislator. Be sure to include staff when you invite your legislator to visit your practice site and seek them out during town hall meetings.

Sample Site Visit E-mail

Your Name
Hospital Name
Address
City, State, Zip

Date

*The Honorable (full name)
(Room #) (Name) Office Building
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510*

Send the invitation to the legislator's Washington, DC or state capitol and their local district office.

Dear Senator (Legislator Name)

I would like to invite you and your staff to participate in a tour of the pharmacy services at Your Hospital Name on March 10, 2010, during National Patient Safety Awareness Week.

State purpose for letter.

Identify yourself as a constituent.

As a constituent and a pharmacist, it's important to me that my neighbors and my patients are able to receive safe and effective care at the hospitals in our community. A tour of our facility would highlight for you the ways that pharmacists who practice in hospitals and health systems help to improve patient outcomes and reduce costs.

Pharmacists' services in hospitals and health systems are more clinically focused than those generally found at a local drug or grocery store. The patients that I see are often very sick and require complex medication therapy. I work closely with doctors and nurses to ensure that patients receive the safest, most effective medicines to treat their conditions.

Give background on the role of pharmacists. Describe specific services offered at your practice site.

Pharmacists in hospitals also are increasingly taking on more direct patient care responsibilities, like monitoring patient responses to their medicines, preventing undesired drug interactions, and ensuring that patients taking multiple medications do not receive overlapping, duplicative, or contraindicated therapies.

I would welcome the opportunity to begin an ongoing dialogue with your office about health care and medication-use issues with this tour. I will follow up with your office to discuss the details of arranging the tour.

Offer to serve as a resource on health care issues.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,
Your Name
Title,
Hospital Name
City, State

SPEAKING UP

Legislators and their staffs stay in touch with what's important to the people that they represent by reading the newspapers "back home." Serving as an expert resource or commenting on the media's coverage of health care and medication-use issues is an effective way to educate your representatives about the role you play in patient care.

Letter to the Editor

Letters to the editor can react to unbalanced news or feature stories, negative editorials or op-eds or unfavorable letters from other readers. They can also be used to compliment favorable stories or opinion pieces.

Helpful Tips:

- Write your letter as a direct response to recent coverage of a topic/issue in the publication and respond quickly. Make reference to the article or op-ed that you are responding to in your letter.
- Make one simple point or address one basic issue. The publication may shorten your letter to fit its format so the most important points should be in the first paragraph or two. Keep the letter concise (typically 150 to 200 words).
- Include whom the letter is from and how to reach the spokesperson for verification. Include your full name, title, organization name and contact information.
- Research the letters to the editor policy and guidelines for the publication you are targeting by visiting the newspapers website.
- A quick and easy way to respond to media coverage is to comment on the online version of a story on the newspaper's website.

Op-Eds

Op-ed means "opposite the editorial page" or "opinions and editorials." The op-ed page contains two types of opinion pieces—columns and op-eds. Journalists write columns, but consumers not employed by the newspaper write op-eds. The editorial page editor decides whether to print the piece based on how interesting, timely, important or offbeat it is. Space on the op-ed page is very competitive, so it may be more difficult to get your op-ed piece accepted than a letter to the editor.

Helpful Tips:

- Draft an article that is provocative and argues one point of view, not all sides of an argument.
- Make sure the op-ed is written clearly and simply for a general audience.
- Lead with your conclusion. Convince your reader to care and agree then follow with your supporting argument.
- Check with the newspaper about the word limit. Op-eds are usually 600 to 1,000 words.

- Include a brief biography at the end that supports the reasons you are a credible voice for the issue.
- Send a short note to either the editorial page or opinion page editor asking for consideration of the opinion piece and to contact you either if it is scheduled for publication or if any additional information is needed.

If you're thinking about writing a letter to the editor or an op-ed, you can contact ASHP's Public Relations department at 301-664-8799 or via e-mail at publicinfo@ashp.org for more information.

Media Interviews

Your institution's public relations department can be a valuable resource in identifying opportunities for you to share your medication expertise during media interviews.

Helpful Tips:

- Set up a meeting with your hospital's public relations department and offer to be an "expert resource" to answer media questions on medication-related issues.
- Remind the PR staff to suggest your availability on appropriate issues even if the reporter did not think to ask to speak to a pharmacist.
- Be proactive by monitoring the regional and national news and giving the PR staff talking points on what you could say to the media to address medication issues in the community.

Social Media

Facebook and Twitter aren't just great ways to stay in touch with friends from pharmacy school, they're also effective tools for sharing your thoughts with your legislators

Helpful Tips:

- Check your representatives' website to see if they maintain a presence on social media.
- When posting or tweeting, be polite and respectful.
- Use your communication as an opportunity to educate them about your issue and present yourself as a resource on health care issues.

SAMPLE LETTER TO THE EDITOR



October 8, 2009

In his article, “The Fatal Consequences of Counterfeit Drugs” (October 2009), Andrew Marshall paints a frightening picture of the human toll taken by drug counterfeiters. It is important for the U.S. Congress to keep this cautionary tale in mind as they debate drug importation legislation. Any such legislation must include the funds and authority for the U.S. Food and Drug Administration to rigorously defend against counterfeit medications, which are quite common in some parts of the world.

Some counterfeits, which have appeared in the U.S., are so well-designed that they escape notice by even the most astute health-care professionals and patients.

Lynnae Mahaney, M.B.A., FASHP
President, American Society of Health-System Pharmacists

Political Campaigns

As your involvement in advocacy on behalf of the profession grows, you may be inspired to become more deeply involved in the civic life of your community.

Volunteering on a Campaign

Volunteering during a candidate's election or reelection campaign can be an effective way to advocate for the profession. It is also excellent preparation if you are interested in running for office.

Getting Started:

- Ideally the candidate that you support will match your views on a variety of issues. You can identify potential candidates to support through involvement in your local political party or community groups.
- Be sure that you are able to make a time commitment to the campaign. Prepare to devote several hours a week.
- Contact the campaign's volunteer coordinator to express an interest in working on the campaign. Be sure to emphasize your health care expertise and offer yourself as a resource.
- Don't be discouraged if your expertise isn't utilized right away. A candidate's closest advisors are often long-time friends and confidantes. You can build credibility by working diligently where you are needed and taking advantage of opportunities to contribute a perspective that others may have missed.

“A politician thinks of the next election — a statesman of the next generation.”

– James Freeman Clarke

What to Expect

There is a lot of work to be done during a campaign. Campaign volunteers can be found:

- Hosting campaign or fundraising events, like meet & greets or house parties
- Participating in get out the vote efforts on election day
- Researching issues
- Distributing campaign materials, including literature or lawn signs
- Participating in phone banks to encourage support for the candidate
- Campaigning with the candidate
- Helping with office work at campaign headquarters

Making Campaign Donations

Making a financial contribution to a specific candidate is a way to support a campaign without making a significant time commitment.

- Federal laws cap contributions to individual candidates at \$2,500 per election.

- You can contribute up to \$5,000 per calendar year to political action committees. (Don't forget to support the ASHP-PAC!)
- Any funds used to support your volunteer efforts, like room rental or invitations for a campaign event may also be subject to campaign finance laws.

Running for Office

The essential ingredients of a successful political campaign can be distilled into the 3 M's of running for office: money, message, and manpower.

Money

Money is a necessary – but, not a sufficient – ingredient for a winning campaign. Money will allow you to purchase those things that are vital to campaign success: research, polling, advertising, and strong field operation.

Your donors will range from low-dollar contributors like retirees or students to business leaders and philanthropists who are able to give larger sums. They may be inspired to give because of your position on a specific issue or for ideological or pragmatic reasons.

The most important ingredient of a winning campaign requires no money at all. It is a candidate who is willing to work harder than his or her opponent. Being the hardest-working candidate in the race is the true competitive advantage that will put you over the top.

Message

A candidate's campaign message is developed and communicated through research, polling, and advertising.

- **Research** will help you find prospective campaign messages. The first place to look is an incumbent candidate's voting record so that you can test key votes during your polling. You will also conduct background research (property-tax payment records, income-tax payment records, lawsuits, etc.) on both yourself and your opponent. Background research is especially important if none of the candidates has held elective office.
- **Polling** will help you test your messages to see which ones resonate with voters. Public polls are conducted by well-known organizations such as Gallup, Harris, and Pew or by news organizations. Your campaign will need to conduct private or internal polling to determine your biggest weaknesses and strengths as well as those of your opponent.
- **Advertising** will help you communicate your message. All of the data that is gathered during the polling process will be incorporated into your campaign messaging and advertising. If a specific item in your polling shows that a large number of respondents are "much more likely" to vote for you, you will want to use this message in your campaign advertising. A key rule of campaigning is: "He who defines first, defines last." Your goal is to proactively define the parameters of the debate before your opponent does.

Manpower

The purpose of a field operation is to make sure the activist base makes it to the polls on Election Day. Often referred to as “door-knocking” or “canvassing,” the success of any campaign in getting out the vote (GOTV) on Election Day depends on a strong field program.

The typical tug of war within a campaign on how to spend limited money is between those arguing for more paid media (mail, radio, and TV advertisements) and those arguing for a stronger field operation. Research has shown that the more personal a tactic is, the more effective it is. Door-to-door canvassing of voters – often marked by a handshake and a conversation – is much more personalized than direct mail or a television advertisement.

If you are interested in running for public office, contact Karen Noonan at (301) 664-8687 or knoonan@ashp.org for more detailed assistance.

Trailblazers: The Pharmacist-Legislator

Is it realistic to think of pharmacists as political candidates? Not only have pharmacists run for office, many have been successful. The road to office for many legislators begins in the statehouse. Here are three examples of pharmacist-legislators.

- **Speaker Robert Nutting (Maine)** Speaker Nutting received a BS Pharm from the Massachusetts College of Pharmacy in Boston in 1970. He has worked in both retail and hospital practice settings. From 1972 to 2003, he owned and operated True’s Pharmacy in Oakland, Maine. He has served as President of the Maine Pharmacy Association. He is currently a pharmacist for Wal-Mart.
- **Senator Leticia Van de Putte (Texas)** Senator Van de Putte was a state representative in the Texas House from 1990 to 1999. She has been a state senator since 1999. She served as president of the National Conference of State Legislators (NCSL) – the professional association for state legislators – from 2006 to 2007. Senator Van de Putte has been a pharmacist for over 31 years. She received her BS Pharm in 1979.
- **Vice President Hubert H. Humphrey, Jr (Minnesota)** Before he became a senator, vice-president, and presidential candidate, Hubert H. Humphrey, Jr., was a pharmacist – just like his father. He worked in his family’s drug store in South Dakota. Humphrey’s father paved the way for combining pharmacy with public service – he was the town pharmacist, town council member, and mayor. Humphrey earned a pharmacist’s license from the Capitol College of Pharmacy in Denver, Colorado.

Legislation 101

An idea for legislation can come from the president, an interested group, or even John or Jane Q. Citizen, but a bill must be introduced by a member of Congress. Here is the path a bill takes to become a law.

Introduction and Sponsorship

Legislation is introduced and sponsored by one or more members of Congress. The bill's number indicates whether it originated in the House of Representatives or the Senate.

Committee Referral and Printing

The legislation is referred to a standing committee and printed by the Government Printing Office.

Committee and Subcommittee action – or inaction

This is a key stage in the outcome of a bill. A bill can take two possible routes— either consideration by the committee as a whole or referral to a subcommittee. If it is referred, the subcommittee can ask for studies, hearings, or oral and written testimony. Based on the results of its information gathering, the subcommittee can either mark up the bill or vote not to report the bill to the full committee, which kills the bill.

When the committee receives the subcommittee's report, the full committee can vote immediately on the subcommittee's amendments or repeat the data-gathering process. Then, the committee will order a bill reported, which is simply a vote on its recommendation to the entire chamber. If the committee fails to take any action, the bill is dead.

Written Report

The committee staff prepares a written report describing the final committee version of the bill, which includes the legislation's purpose and scope, affect on current law, and the positions of dissenting committee members.

Voting

The bill is passed or defeated by the members voting. If the bill is passed, it moves to the other chamber. If the second chamber approves the bill as received it will either go to the conference committee or to the president for signature. If the bill is rejected, the process is over.

Concurrence and Conference Committees

If the second chamber makes minor changes to the legislation, the bill will go back to the chamber of origin for a concurrence vote. If the amendments are major, a conference committee is formed to reconcile the two versions of the bill because the bill must pass each chamber in the same, final version. A successful conference committee results in a "conference report" – which includes recommended changes that must be approved by both chambers. An unsuccessful conference committee means the bill dies.

After passage by both chambers

The final step is for the bill to be sent to the executive branch – where the President can either sign the bill into law or veto the bill.

If Congress is in session and the President hasn't signed or vetoed the bill, it automatically becomes law. If Congress has adjourned its second session and the President hasn't acted on the bill, the result is a pocket veto and the legislation dies.

Congressional Override of Presidential Veto

Congress can override a vetoed bill. This requires a supermajority of a two-thirds vote.

What's in a Name?

There are 4 kinds of legislation:

- **Bill:** A legislative proposal that can affect the general public or a specific individual. Each bill is assigned a bill number that indicates whether it originated in the House or Senate.
- **Simple resolutions:** Do not have the force of law and simply express the sense of the chamber where it is introduced or passed.
- **Concurrent resolutions:** Do not have the force of law and express the sense of both chambers. Often used to set adjournment dates or annual budgets.
- **Joint resolutions:** Treated like a bill unless it proposes an amendment to the Constitution. To adopt a congressional amendment, there must be a 2/3 majority of those present and voting in both the House and the Senate and ratification of three-fourths of the states.

Glossary

Act A bill that has been enacted into law.

Amendment A proposal that would change the initial form of a bill.

Authorization A law creating a program that includes information on how the program will be funded.

Bill A proposed law

Budget Resolution Federal budget guidelines, established by the House and Senate. It is not approved by the President

Conference Committee A House and Senate appointed committee whose purpose is to resolve differences between House and Senate-passed versions of the same legislation

Co-sponsor A person, in addition to the initial sponsor, who agrees to introduce legislation.

Hearing Committee or subcommittee meetings held to gather information on proposed legislation, and to allow witnesses to present testimony.

Majority Leader The leader of the majority party in the House and Senate

Mark-up Following hearings, committee or subcommittee members review proposed legislation to determine what amendments are necessary. The chairman's draft a starting proposal, is called the "chairman's mark".

Minority Leader Leader of the minority party in the House or Senate

Point of Order An objection by a legislator that the pending proceeding is in violation of the chamber rules. The presiding officer accepts or rejects the objection, subject to appeal by the full House or Senate.

Report A committee's record of their actions and views on a particular bill

Speaker of The House Presiding officer of the House, and follows the Vice-President in the line for succession to the presidency

Standing Committees Composed of Members of Congress from both political parties, study and review matters relating to legislative proposals and produce bills. It is in committees that bills are drafted and redrafted, information from interested parties is gathered, and the merits of particular policy positions are debated and negotiated.

Whip In each chamber and for each party, the legislator who serves as an internal lobbyist to persuade legislators to support the party position.

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Contact Us

Questions? Comments? ASHP's government affairs staff is ready to help you with your advocacy outreach.

Karen Noonan

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