

A Short Guide to How a Bill is Passed

The path of a bill through the legislature can be a complicated business. This is a very shorthand explanation.

- Bill is introduced by a legislator
- First reading in the house of origin (House or Senate); assigned to a committee for a hearing (Most effective time to lobby for or against the bill).
- Bill passes out of the committee to Second Reading in the house of origin, or fails to pass out of committee and is dead, at least temporarily. Nothing is ever *completely* dead!
- Bill is heard on the floor of the house of origin; bill can be amended. Moves to Third Reading.
- Third Reading is when the house of origin either passes the bill or it fails.
- A bill that has passed is sent to the other house of the legislature where the process is repeated all over again with a sponsor from that house.
- If the bill is passed in the exact same form as it was in the first house, it is sent to the governor for his signature and becomes law.
- If the bill is amended in the second house, it must return to the house of origin for agreement to the amendment(s). If they agree, it is sent to the governor. If the first house does not agree to the amendments, a conference committee can be formed to work out a compromise to which both houses must agree.
- Bills passed by both houses and sent to the governor are either signed by him and become law, or are vetoed or amendatorily vetoed, and sent back to the legislature where they may override a veto or agree to an amendatory veto.
- Please understand there are lots of ways to complicate this process, but in the end, every bill that becomes law must be passed by both houses of the legislature, and either signed by the governor or be allowed to become law without his signature after a prescribed number of days (sixty) on his desk.



GUIDE FOR A LEGISLATION CHAIRMAN

Welcome to your position in the PTA.
Being a legislation chairman is one of the most interesting and important positions in the association.

This booklet is intended to help you understand the basics of this chairmanship, and enable you to be an effective link between your membership, the Illinois PTA, and the legislative bodies that affect the education and lives of our children.

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Please remember help and information for you are as close as the Illinois PTA and your telephone, fax, and/or computer!

Legislation Chairman Job Description

Four Main Tasks of a Legislation Chairman

To Inform - your local, council, region, district (depending on which you are chairman for) as to what is going on. You will get this information from the State Legislation Chairman and the resources listed below.

To Motivate - your members to **take action** as you request, by writing letters on issues, calling and visiting legislators or by any other activities you and your PTA decide to do.

To Communicate to the Illinois PTA - your concerns or requests, by calling the legislation chairman and/or writing a resolution for convention, or calling the appropriate state PTA board member for assistance.

To Advocate - by visiting, writing and calling the appropriate legislative decision-maker; **local** - school board member, councilman or alderman; **state** - representative, senator or governor; **federal** - congressperson, senator or president. Again, you will receive most of the information you need from the state legislation chairman and from the resources listed here that are available to you.

Great Ideas for Activities

- **Sign up for the Illinois PTA Legislative Network, and be an active advocate in responding to requests for action.**
- **On the Network, watch for Calls to attend Rallies, Action Days in Springfield and Action Alerts.**
- **Plan on bringing a group to the Illinois PTA Annual Convention.**
- **Plan a *Take a Legislator to School* event in your school.**
- **Plan a Candidate Forum** in connection with elections for candidates for your school board, or state/federal positions.

Think up your own great ideas for getting your members involved!

Resources

Gather and keep the following resources in your files and you will be all set to be an effective legislation chairman.

1. A copy of the **Legislation Section** of the current **National PTA publications**, from your president.
2. All **legislation mailings from the Illinois PTA**. They will come directly to you **if you are a unit president or legislation chairman, and** if your name was submitted on the local unit registration form.
3. Read the *Illinois PTA Bulletin* and *Our Children* (National PTA Magazine).
4. A Copy of the following sections of the **Illinois PTA Helping Hands** - "School Days" - Lobbying the Legislature, Monitoring and Working with the Board of Education, (and Local School Councils in Chicago), and Take a Legislator to School.
5. A copy of the following sections of the **Illinois PTA Answer Book** - Chairmen, Legislation; Procedures, Candidate Forum; Policies, Nonpartisan Elections.
6. Take the **Illinois PTA - The PTA and the Law** course, which includes a section IV, Legislative Activities.

These resources, along with the Illinois PTA Legislation Platform and Explanation (Green Book) and Legislation Packets that you receive, will make you a ready and ABLE legislation chairman for your PTA!

Still looking for help? Contact the Illinois PTA Office at 800-877-9617 or ilpta@ameritech.net or visit the Illinois PTA website: www.illinoispta.org

Barb Quinn, Legislation Chair
847-985-9078 or bquinnpta@aol.com

Gretchen McDowell, State Legislation Consultant,
773-238-0885 or Gretmcdowell@aol.com

Sarah Williamson, Federal Legislation Consultant
309-579-2860 or s_williamson@mail.com

National PTA office of Governmental Relations

Phone: 202-289-6790 or Fax: 202-289-6791

NPTA E-mail: info@pta.org NPTA website - www.pta.org