



ASDA's Legislative Grassroots Network

2011-2012 Handbook

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I. Organization of the ASDA Legislative Grassroots Network

What is the ASDA LGN?

The ASDA Legislative Grassroots Network (LGN) is made of students from each dental school who are dedicated to increasing the understanding and involvement in the legislative process, both locally and nationally. The LGN informs legislators about how proposed legislation will affect dental students, dentists, patients and the practice of dentistry. The LGN provides students information on matters concerning dentistry and other health issues. Students who want information on dental legislative issues, or want to play a role in shaping the legislative decisions that will determine the future of dentistry, are encouraged to join the ASDA Legislative Grassroots Network.

How is the LGN organized?

The LGN includes the following individuals:

- Chair
- Vice chair
- Regional legislative coordinators (3)
- Board of trustees member
- ASDA central office staff member
- Legislative liaisons – at local chapters

The chair is responsible for the activities of the Legislative Grassroots Network. The chair serves as a member of the ADA Council on Government Affairs and is responsible for keeping current on national student issues.

The vice chair serves as ASDA's representative to the American Dental Political Action Committee (ADPAC). He/she represents ASDA on ADPAC's board of directors.

The regional legislative coordinators (RLCs) play a key role in training, motivating and following up with the legislative liaisons to their assigned chapters. The RLCs may assist chapters in planning legislative activities as requested.

Legislative liaisons (LLs) play the most important role, as they are responsible for the legislative activities and awareness at their schools. They work with their local and state dental societies and other members of the network to stay informed on important issues and report back to the RLCs.

Who is monitoring legislative issues affecting dentistry?

The American Dental Association (ADA) Division of Government Affairs and the American Dental Education Association (ADEA) are located in Washington, D.C. They monitor and review national legislation and determine what impact bills will have on the dental profession. The ADA Department of State Government Affairs, located in Chicago, perform similar duties for state legislative issues. These offices serve as resources on legislative issues related to dentistry. Each state and local dental society have staff dedicated to working with government officials on legislative issues. These individuals can be a great resource to chapter leaders.

What is the LGN's role in organized dentistry?

The LGN teaches students effective ways to communicate with members of Congress, how to organize successful e-mail campaigns, as well as motivate dental students to get involved in advocacy on local, state, and national levels. The collective voice of many students has a greater impact on legislative decisions than one student's voice. Through the LGN, dental students can influence and shape legislation important to the future of dentistry.

Increased legislative awareness will help students realize the importance of becoming involved. Dental students who become involved in legislative activities while in school will be prepared for a lifelong commitment to enhancing the profession through legislation and awareness.

Important Contact Information

ASDA Central Office

211 E. Chicago Avenue
Suite 700
Chicago, IL 60611
Phone: 800-621-8099, ext. 2795 or 312-440-2795
Website: www.ASDAnet.org

ASDA LGN Staff Liaison

Meghan Keelean, CMP, meeting planner
E-mail: Meghan@ASDAnet.org
Phone: 312-440-2845

American Dental Association

Washington Office & ADPAC

1111 14th Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20005
Phone: 202-898-2424
Website: www.ADA.org/advocacy

American Dental Association

Department of State Government Affairs

211 E. Chicago Avenue
5th Floor
Chicago, IL 60611
Phone: 800-621-8099 ext. 2525
Website: www.ADA.org
E-mail: govtpol@ADA.org

American Dental Education Association

1400 K Street, NW
Suite 1100
Washington, D.C. 20005
Phone: 202-289-7201
Website: www.ADEA.org

II. Positions and Responsibilities

Overview

The chair, vice chair and RLCs are appointed by the ASDA board of trustees to serve one-year terms. Full position descriptions are available on www.ASDAnet.org. These national LGN members meet several times per year to plan National Dental Student Lobby Day, complete work from the board of trustees and House of Delegates and address the priorities of ASDA's strategic plan. They also work together to develop new resources for chapters related to advocacy and legislative activities. Check the National Leadership Directory at www.ASDAnet.org for current contact information.

Chair

The chair serves ASDA by monitoring and reporting on national legislation important to dental students and the profession. The chair is responsible for directing the activities of the ASDA LGN. The chair serves as a representative for ASDA on the ADA Council on Government Affairs. As such, the chair represents ASDA at the council's meetings.

The chair submits written reports to the board of trustees concerning current activities, suggestions and reports of participation in any ADA or other meeting. The chair makes recommendations for new or changing policies, as well as for new initiatives in which ASDA should become involved.

Vice Chair

The vice chair is a part of the American Dental Political Action Committee (ADPAC) board of directors. He or she represents ASDA at ADPAC meetings to report on the legislative interests of ASDA and to learn about ADPAC's initiatives. The vice chair is in charge of conducting ADPAC membership drives at national ASDA meetings and assisting RLCs with ADPAC drives at ASDA Regional Meetings as necessary. Additional responsibilities may be assigned by ADPAC.

Regional Legislative Coordinator

There are three regional legislative coordinators (RLCs) who work under the direction of the chair. The RLCs are appointed to serve ASDA districts 1-3 (Eastern), 4-7 (Central) and 8-11 (Western). RLCs serve as resources for legislative liaisons (LLs) by providing information about activities and initiatives. The RLCs also help the LLs

in contacting legislators and see that legislative activities are carried out effectively. The RLCs are a resource for LLs to contact about how to plan legislative activities and to connect LLs with each other for collaborative efforts. The RLCs need to be up to date on chapter activities and pertinent legislation in the states of their region. The RLCs track chapter legislative activities reported by the LLs in quarterly updates. The RLCs are in charge of conducting ADPAC membership drives at their regional meetings.

Legislative Liaisons

Legislative liaisons (LLs) serve as the LGN representative at each ASDA chapter. The chapter should appoint a student to serve as LL who is interested in advocacy and the legislative process, as well as in motivating members to get involved. If there is no LL, the second delegate should assume those responsibilities. LLs work under the direction of their RLC. LLs are responsible for ASDA legislative activities at their school. They help students express their political concerns by providing guidelines for e-mail campaigns, organizing chapter advocacy events and initiating other activities to involve students in the legislative process.

Legislative liaison responsibilities include:

1. Attend the ASDA Annual Session.
2. Attend National Dental Student Lobby Day.
3. Attend ASDA Regional Meeting. This is a great opportunity to network and learn from other LLs and communicate with your RLC.
4. Organize legislative events and activities at your dental school. See Section 3 of this handbook for ideas and instructions.
5. LLs submit reports to their RLC about chapter activities. Regular communication with the RLC is required. Strong relationships between LLs and RLCs will make the network more effective and will help members relay a consistent message to legislators.
6. Contribute to chapter awareness about legislative activities at the local, state and national level.
7. Access legislative newsletters online on a regular basis. Staying up to date on current legislative issues is essential. Watch your e-mail for these updates and share with your chapter through newsletters, websites, e-mail, etc.:
 - ASDA Legislative Ledger (www.ASDAnet.org – Communications – E-newsletters)
 - ADA State Legislative Report (www.ADA.org – Advocacy)
 - ADEA Washington Update (www.ADEA.org – Policy and Advocacy)

- You can sign up to receive action alerts at www.capwiz.com/dental/home
8. Develop a relationship with the legislative department and staff of the state and/or local dental society, as it may help you develop relationships with legislators.
 9. Subscribe to local and state dental society newsletters. This information is essential to build political awareness.
 10. Attend at least one local and/or state dental society meeting (preferably a legislative meeting) each semester.
 11. Conduct e-mail campaigns under the supervision of your RLC and chair of the LGN.
 12. Use your resources, school government, ASDA leadership and other methods to find better ways to educate, inform and motivate classmates about advocacy.
 13. Advise your RLC and members of the LGN when there is legislation in your community or state affecting the dental profession, especially if it requires action from ASDA.
 14. Train the incoming LL when your term has expired and notify your RLC of the leadership change.

The strength and continuity of the LGN depends entirely on the commitment of the LLs at each school. LLs are resources for their chapters and must be effective in motivating students to participate.

III. Political Activities at Your Chapters

ADPAC Lunch & Learn

1. Contact Allison Greenwald at the ADPAC office in Washington, D.C. at 202-898-2424 for information on scheduling your ADPAC Lunch & Learn. The vice chair can also assist you.
2. Set a date for the event and pick a location. Lunch hour during the week at a centrally located space on campus is the best option to get the most attendees.
3. Invite a speaker to talk about ADPAC, what they do, and why it is important to contribute. Suggestions for speakers include an ADPAC board member, an ADPAC Action Team Leader, a representative from the local or state dental society, or another dental policy leader that could motivate students to get involved.
4. With prior approval, ADPAC will reimburse up to **\$250 for food at the lunch & learn** per school per year. Keep the receipts and use the reimbursement form found at www.ASDAnet.org under the Leadership tab. Click on ADPAC from the Legislative Grassroots Network section.
5. You may use the ADPAC presentation template available at www.ASDAnet.org.
6. Publicize the event to your chapter and your school.
7. You may want to hold an ADPAC drive in conjunction with the lunch & learn. This tends to be highly effective.

ADPAC Drive

1. You will be asking for ADPAC contributions. This can happen at a one-day event, or as part of advocacy week at your school. It helps to introduce members to ADPAC before asking for money. Schedule the date and time to have the presentation. Plan ahead as scheduling could take weeks or months. Here are some suggestions:
 - a. You may use the ADPAC presentation template available at www.ASDAnet.org. Feel free to modify to fit your chapter.
 - b. Invite the ADPAC district director to speak about legislative issues (contact the vice chair for ADPAC contact information or go to www.ADA.org/advocacy, click on ADPAC and then click on Board of Directors for contact information).
 - c. Invite someone from your state dental society or state dental PAC such as the president, executive director, or legislative staff to address specific issues in your state.

2. Contact Allison Greenwald (greenwalda@ADA.org) the ADPAC office to request drive materials (pins, sign-up forms and brochures) at least three weeks prior to your ADPAC drive so the materials arrive in time.
3. Reserve a meeting room, laptop, projector and screen for the presentation.
4. This is an ADPAC drive in which you will ask for contributions. Student ADPAC membership is \$5.00 and Capital Club is \$50.00. ADPAC accepts checks (made out to ADPAC), credit cards (Visa or MasterCard) and cash.
 - a. Enrolling students without their consent is illegal (e.g. the class cannot sponsor ADPAC memberships).
 - b. Every student must complete the sign-up form in its entirety.
 - c. Company or business funds are not accepted. Only personal funds are accepted. A student cannot pay with a corporate credit card or a corporate check.
5. After the drive is complete, send a summary to your RLC.
6. Contact the vice chair of the LGN if you require assistance.
7. Due to campaign finance regulations, money collected for ADPAC drives must be submitted to the ADPAC office within 30 days of receipt. Send the sign-up sheets (keep a copy for yourself) and a check (personal or local ASDA chapter) with money corresponding to the number of memberships to:

ADPAC, c/o Allison Greenwald
1111 14th St, NW
Suite 1100
Washington, D.C. 20005

Remember that your ADPAC drive doesn't end after the presentation. Pass around sign-up sheets in each dental class. Set up a table in a visible area in your dental school and sign up students over the lunch hour. Help ASDA spread the word about advocacy and meet its goal of 25 percent of ASDA members as ADPAC student members each year!

Meet and Greet

A meet and greet is an informal event in which your ASDA chapter and local dental community get a chance to interact with lawmakers. Generally, these events last an hour and light refreshments are served.

1. Contact your RLC, your ADPAC Action Team Leader (ATL) and your state and local dental societies. Inform them that you want to organize a meet and greet and want their help and participation. To find your ADPAC ATL, contact Allison Greenwald at the ADPAC office at greenwalda@ADA.org.
 - a. The ATL is an ADA member who has a relationship with your representative in Congress.
 - b. State dental societies often have members with good relationships with state legislators.
2. Contact the legislator's office for his or her availability.
 - a. If you want to invite a member of Congress, the ATL should be the first person to contact the member's office. When Congress is in session, legislators spend most of their time in Washington, D.C. Allow at least two months for scheduling to ensure the member is in his/her district for the meet and greet.
 - b. State legislators spend most of their time in their home district and are more available. Still allow ample time for scheduling.
3. Schedule the date and time. This is a process that may take months, so plan ahead.
4. Find a location for the meet and greet:
 - a. On-campus—some school administrators may not approve an event involving a legislator on campus, so check with your dean for permission.
 - b. Off-campus—an ASDA or ADA member's house or a local restaurant/bar are good locations.
5. Invite everyone—all ADA members and dental students from the area should be invited. If needed, your RLC may be able to assist with getting contact lists.
6. A meet and greet is an excellent opportunity to do an ADPAC drive.

Partner with State Dental Societies

Developing a relationship with your state dental society can be beneficial for many reasons. First, having a strong relationship with your state or local dental society allows you to team up for various activities such as state lobby day, legislative lunch and learns and meet and greets. Second, dental societies are typically open to students getting involved as you are the future of the profession. Member dentists like to see students interested in organized dentistry. Third, it helps to have support from other dental organizations when planning and executing ASDA advocacy events. So, whether it's joining forces for a state lobby day or giving dental students the opportunity to join a legislative council, this interaction with dentists is not only eye-opening but exciting.

State Lobby Day

1. Call the state dental society to ask if they have a state lobby day.
2. If they do, ask if students can participate. If not, start your own state lobby day with your chapter. If you are in a state with multiple dental schools, contact the other chapter(s) to collaborate.
3. Research when your state legislature is in session so you can find an ideal time to lobby. Confirm dates with a student from each class to ensure there are no exams on the day you are considering. Planning can take months. Allow plenty of time to market the event, as well as get students signed up and ensure the school and/or state dental society's support.
4. Talk to your school administration. Ask your dean for his or her support. Often there are educational or financial issues facing the school that would be perfect lobby day issues.
5. Once you have chosen a date, call your state government to find out if that is an ideal time to meet with both senators and representatives.
6. Contact your state dental society for their support and assistance. Ask for their help identifying dental-related issues pending in the legislature.
7. Invite the legislative staff of your state society to speak to attendees. The staff can provide information and training on how to contact a legislator for an appointment, what to say during your appointment and talk about key issues in dentistry.
8. If you are in a state with multiple dental schools, contact the other schools to find a central location near the legislators' offices for a training session before appointments. Reserve space for the training session before students register.
9. Sign students up. Create a registration form with home address (preferable if dental school is in their home state) as well as school address if they are from out of state.
10. Start to schedule appointments with legislators early. On each state government website, you can type in the address of the student to find out who represents that district.
11. Organize the training session to learn about the issues, answer questions and practice speaking with legislators about the issues by holding mock appointments.
12. Coordinate transportation to the legislative offices. If they are in your hometown, it may be as easy as public transportation. Your school may have vehicles you can rent for the day. Otherwise, check local transportation companies for buses.
13. Organize a packet for lobbying. Include a map to the capitol, tips for appointments, key issue handouts to leave with legislators, list of offices, talking points and thank you notes.

14. Remember that state society policies do not always coincide with ASDA policies. If you are using ASDA's name for the event, make sure the issues you are lobbying are in line with ASDA policies and guidelines. Contact your RLC or district trustee if you have questions.

National Dental Student Lobby Day in Washington, D.C.

National Dental Student Lobby Day is a joint event with the American Dental Education Association (ADEA). All issues lobbied at the event are approved by ASDA and ADEA.

1. Inform your administration that you would like to participate. Know how much time out of school the meeting requires. Often, our lobbying efforts promote school efforts also.
2. Fundraise. Ask for help from your administration or state and local dental societies. Costs tend to be around \$75 for the registration fee and \$240 per night for a hotel room (conference is two nights), plus transportation (car/airfare).
3. Stay informed. Read the legislative updates so you know what's going on in D.C. and some potential issues.
4. Register for the meeting and reserve the hotel rooms by the deadline. Registration forms and travel info will be available on www.ASDAnet.org and are sent to chapter delegates. The hotel is not flexible with the reservation deadline.
5. Make appointments. Visit the appointments page on ASDA's website to view appointments already made by other chapters. To avoid overlap, ASDA policy is priority for appointments goes to students at the dental school in the legislator's state.

In states with more than one dental school, the RLC will help the LLs coordinate appointments to avoid double-booking. For students who wish to meet with a legislator in a state other than the one in which they attend dental school:

- a. If the state has a dental school, the priority goes to the dental school in that state. The student can attend an appointment set up by the dental school. The student cannot initiate their own appointment. Contact the RLC to get in touch with the LL at the school or check the appointments page for information.
- b. If the state has no dental school, the student is encouraged to make an appointment with that legislator but also ask the LLs from neighboring states. Check the appointments website for possible overlap.

6. Contact your legislator. The best methods are e-mail or telephone. You should contact them four to six weeks before Lobby Day. Go to www.house.gov or www.senate.gov for contact information. Congressional websites may have different instructions for requesting an appointment. Check your member's website. Congressional offices are busy, so if you don't get a response right away, don't be discouraged. Try again or try a different method of communication. When writing an e-mail, try to keep it brief.

Begin with:

The Honorable (Full Name)

United States House of Representatives/United States Senate

(Building and Number)

Washington, D.C. 20515

In the e-mail, be brief and courteous. Here is a sample:

I am writing on behalf of dental students at _____(school). We are participating in National Dental Student Lobby Day in Washington, D.C. on _____(date). I am interested in setting an appointment with you to discuss a few issues important to dental students and the dental profession. I am requesting 15-30 minutes of your time. Please advise if you are available to meet with us on _____(date). If you are unavailable, would a member of your legislative staff be able to speak with us? I appreciate your time and look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Name

School and Graduation Year

7. Study the issues. Talking points will be available about one week before the meeting. Research the legislators you plan to meet, the committees on which they sit and their stance on the issues. The key to successful lobbying in Washington is a strong grasp of the issues. You are not expected to be an expert – you are a dental student. The Congressional staff recognizes that, but the more you know, the better prepared you will be. Visit www.ASDAnet.org for information about the issues and the meeting.
8. Confirm your appointment. Call the office to confirm the appointment one or two days before. Be prepared to have flexibility with your schedule because Washington often operates on a last minute basis.

9. Remember, when you are attending National Dental Student Lobby Day, you are lobbying on behalf of ASDA and ADEA. In order to avoid confusion, stick to the approved issues and talking points. If your personal views differ, you are free to meet with your legislator on a different day separate from National Dental Student Lobby Day. Present the issues with a personal touch. For example, if one of the issues is Student Loan Interest Deduction, speak to the fact that you are graduating dental school with upwards of \$170,000 in student loan debt and the interest deduction is important to you.
10. Follow up with a thank you note. Use this note to answer questions asked during the appointment and reinforce ASDA's position on the issues.

E-mail Campaign

Traditional letter-writing campaigns to legislators have now taken the form of e-mail campaigns. The ADA has put a very effective system in place, accessible to everyone at www.ADA.org → Advocacy → Legislative Action Center (www.capwiz.com/dental/home)

1. Enter your zip code to find your district's legislator.
2. Choose which legislators to whom you will be writing (Senate/House or both).
3. For specific issues that require immediate action, a form letter is provided. Add a personal note about how the issue affects you.
4. Fill out sender information.
5. Send your letter and forward the link to other classmates/faculty/friends/family to write their legislators.
6. You may receive an action alert e-mail from a member of the LGN or sign up for action e-list yourself by going to www.capwiz.com/dental. You can write your legislator any time. Action alerts are sent out when a vote is pending on an issue related to dentistry and your action is needed in a timely fashion.

IV. Political Action Committees (PACs) and ADPAC Frequently Asked Questions

What is a PAC (specifically, ADPAC)?

Individuals can participate in the legislative process by contributing to a political action committee (PAC). PACs collect funds from individuals or corporations who have similar interests to help elect candidates with interests common to the PAC. Laws limit the amount individuals and groups may contribute to campaigns. However, organizations are permitted to establish PACs to solicit voluntary contributions to contribute to preferred candidates. PACs help local, state and federal candidates fund their campaigns.

The American Dental Political Action Committee (ADPAC) is a separate and autonomous organization not affiliated with a political party. Through ADPAC, dentists and dental students have an opportunity to support candidates who understand the specific interests of the profession.

The best way to ensure that dentists are active in the legislative process is to provide dental students with information and opportunities to participate. As an LL, you play an important role in increasing the political effectiveness of dental students at your chapter.

What does ADPAC do?

The purpose of ADPAC is to elect congressional candidates of all political affiliations who understand the importance of dentistry and are committed to improving the nation's oral health. ADPAC supports members and potential members of Congress who favor such legislative issues as improving access to care, increasing student loan interest deductions and expanding community dental health programs. Across the country, grassroots dentists work to establish and maintain meaningful relationships with their members of Congress. Combining resources via ADPAC gives dental students the chance to have an impact on political forces affecting their professional lives. ADPAC also provides educational opportunities for dentists who are interested in running for public office at local, state and national levels.

Why is it important to become an ADPAC member as a dental student?

What is happening on Capitol Hill today will affect how you practice dentistry in the future. Legislation can affect where we practice, who compensates us, what materials we use, and how we practice. In the words of Dr. Jeff Parrish, former chair of the ADPAC board, "Our political involvement is as critical as any continuing

education we might take.” Joining ADPAC shows you know how important advocacy is to the future of our profession. This is the best investment we could possibly make in our future and ourselves.

What is the difference between hard and soft dollars?

Hard dollars are from individual, personal, private accounts or cash. Soft dollars are from dentists’ accounts set up for their incorporated practices. Thus, students give hard dollars and those funds are used to support various candidates’ campaign committees.

Where does my ADPAC money go? Who decides who is a "dental friendly" lawmaker?

If you contribute hard dollars, it is primarily given to candidates' campaign committees. ADPAC keeps a list of where the contributions go and you can contact your ADPAC board member to access that information. Lawmakers are labeled “dental friendly” based on positive reviews and feedback from both dentists in their local areas and ADA staff that have personal experience with them.

Why do we need a PAC?

We need a PAC because, for good or for ill, campaigns are generally funded by PAC money and individual donations. Every group of any political significance has a PAC. It does not buy us votes or even access, but it increases our chances of making our case in front of a member of Congress.

Is any money given to specific parties?

ADPAC will give to the Republican National Committee or Democratic National Committee, but it's not a significant amount compared to the overall amount.

Is it possible for ADPAC to do recurring payments from credit cards or is there a way for students to pay for all four years at once?

No, ADPAC does not do recurring payments on credit cards. Students must sign up voluntarily each year.

V. Contacting and Communicating With Legislators

As a bill progresses towards a law, there are many opportunities for it to change. Generally, the further a bill moves along the legislative process, the less likely it is to change. Follow the outline below to make your communications most effective.

Federal Level

It is important to get involved in the discussion when a new bill is introduced and referred to the appropriate committee. The committee needs to understand the importance of the bill for it to get the committee's approval and make it to the floor for a vote. Communicating with the committee members helps ensure the committee reviews the bill and approves it to go to the House or Senate floor for debate and voting. If the e-mail campaign is effective, hearings will be scheduled so that possible outcomes of the bill can be discussed.

Another critical time to contact legislators is during the bill's deliberations. The legislator must know your views so that he/she can consider your opinions in his or her testimony in front of the committee or Congress. Your legislator can make a difference during the floor debate. If you provide the facts and views of students, he or she may be able to introduce favorable amendments to the bill.

State Level

It is important to know the source of the legislation in order to be effective at the state level. You may contact the sponsor or express the views of your chapter through an e-mail campaign directed to the sponsor. Keep in mind that the sponsor may not have anticipated an adverse reaction or may be unaware of alternative solutions.

When a bill is sent to the standing committee, public hearings are held to discuss the impact and outcome of the bill. This is a good time to get in touch with the legislator to offer constructive criticism or to suggest alternative solutions. The governor has the power to veto part or the entire bill. Expressing your views with supporting facts to the governor may help make a difference.

Locating Members of Congress

To locate your representatives from both the House and Senate go to www.house.gov and www.senate.gov for contact information. Each member has a website which may include instructions for contacting the member and setting up a meeting.

Meeting with Members of Congress

You may meet personally with your lawmaker and his or her staff to discuss a specific issue or to introduce yourself as a politically active dental student who lives or goes to school in the district. Remember, as an ASDA member, you must be clear whether you are representing your own views or ASDA's views. You are required to contact ASDA if you wish to express the association's position on any issue. You may express your own personal views on any issue at any time.

Below are some tips for meeting with members of Congress:

1. To request a meeting with your lawmaker, write him/her an e-mail with the requested time, date and purpose for your visit. List the bill number of the bill you would like to discuss if applicable. Estimate how much time you would like and be flexible.
2. If your lawmaker is not available, take the opportunity to meet with another staff person. Typically in a congressional office, staff is assigned to study and report on the status of certain issues and bills related to a specific topic, such as healthcare.
3. Focus on one issue only. Provide a one-page summary of the issue bulleting your key points (on appropriate letterhead). Be sure to include your name, address and phone number at the top of your summary.
4. Know the facts about the issue prior to the meeting. While you don't need to be an expert on the topic, you must be prepared to discuss how an issue affects you, your school and your profession.
5. Be concise and well organized. You will likely have only 15-20 minutes for the meeting.
6. Communication is a two-way street. Don't lecture. Give the lawmaker or staff time to respond.
7. Be understanding. Don't expect the legislator to make a commitment to a position before all the facts are known. Do your best to present your side favorably. Be polite. Don't impugn the legislator's integrity or motives.

8. If you don't know the answer to a question, offer to respond later. Then, follow up with a reply in a timely manner. This is a great opportunity to initiate a second contact with the lawmaker or staff.
9. Follow up with a thank you e-mail. Repeat the key points that were discussed. Respond to questions and include information that was requested during the appointment.
10. All visits should be reported to your RLC.

Writing Members of Congress

The most efficient way to communicate with members of Congress is e-mail. The use of traditional mail has decreased because screening for toxic substances delays mail up to 3 weeks. Below are some tips for writing an e-mail that is as clear, accurate and effective as possible.

1. Be concise and address only one issue in each e-mail.
2. If your e-mail pertains to a specific piece of legislation, identify it accordingly.
3. If you are a constituent, say so.
4. If you know your legislator, even vaguely, include this fact in the first paragraph. For example "I really enjoyed your speech at the town hall meeting last week." This may help your e-mail stand out from the hundreds that legislators receive each week.
5. State your reason for writing in the first paragraph. If you know how your legislator stands on an issue, acknowledge this position.
6. Be courteous and direct. Use examples to support your position. Explain how the issue affects you, your patients and the community. Your personal experience is the best supporting evidence.
7. Be constructive. If you oppose something, offer a positive alternative. The legislator is looking for solutions.
8. Don't indicate whether or not you voted for the lawmaker and never threaten to withhold a vote in the future based on the outcome of the issue. Don't remind the legislator that you are a taxpayer.
9. After the vote on the bill, regardless of the outcome, send a thank you note for considering your position. A word of appreciation can help future communications.
10. Be sure the e-mail is addressed correctly. E-mails should be formatted as a formal letter would. Refer to the elected official as "The Honorable."

Address the e-mail and salutation as follows:

- To members of the U.S. House of Representatives:

The Honorable (full name)_____
United States House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Representative _____:

- To members of the U.S. Senate:

The Honorable (full name)_____
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator _____:

- To members of the state Senate:

The Honorable _____
Member of the Senate
State Capitol

Dear Senator _____:

- To members of the state House of Representatives or assembly:

The Honorable _____
Member of the House of Representatives
State Capitol

Dear Representative _____:

- When writing to the chair of a committee, it is proper to address as: Dear Mr. Chairman or Madam Chairwoman. When writing to the speaker of the House, it is proper to address him/her as: Dear Mr./Ms. Speaker.

Handling the Legislator's Response

Legislators' responses often fall into the following categories:

Noncommittal—sounds appreciative and warm, but lacks a clear statement of position or does not discuss the issue, e.g. "I will monitor the situation closely."

Agreement—usually wholehearted and enthusiastic.

Disagreement—usually carefully constructed and respectful.

Your follow up response is what gets attention. It shows that you are serious about the issue and that you will continue to monitor the legislator's actions. When writing a follow up e-mail, use the guidelines and try to cite local newspaper coverage or other responses that support your point of view.

If you receive a disagreement response from the legislator you may choose to express gratitude for "being forthright in stating your position." You may also ask some questions to weaken their position, such as "Are you aware of...?", "Whom did you consult...?", or, "Can you provide supporting evidence for that point?"

If you receive an agreeable response, write an e-mail reinforcing the position. This could also be a starting point from which you can ask the legislator to take action that supports your shared position, whether it be public speaking, contacting the appropriate committee or something else. Letting the legislator know that you are spreading the word of his or her support of the position will be appreciated.

Communicating By Phone

This method of communication is important when your lawmaker is expected to vote on an issue soon. Many of the strategies outlined in the section on e-mail-writing also apply to telephone calls. Always address the legislator as "Senator", "Representative", or "Congressman"; or "Mr.", "Mrs.", or "Ms."

Most likely, a congressional staff member or aide will take your call. Ask to speak to the aide who handles your particular issue. After identifying yourself, tell the aide that you would like to leave a brief message, such as "Please tell Senator/Representative (Name) that I support/oppose (name of bill – H.R. ____ or S. ____)."

You may request a written response to your phone call.

Be candid. The lawmaker recognizes your self-interest and you need not apologize for it. Be honest. Tell him or her what you think and why. Be brief and to the point. Your time with the lawmaker or aide is limited and you must make the most of it.

Congressional Staff Roles

To be most effective in communicating with members of Congress, it is helpful to know the titles and functions of key staff. Offices may differ so use this as a guide.

Chief of Staff or Administrative Assistant

The administrative assistant or chief of staff is the person in charge of overall office operations including work assignments and staff supervision. This person reports directly to the member of Congress. He/she usually has overall responsibility for evaluating the outcome of various legislative proposals and constituent requests.

Legislative Director, Senior Legislative Assistant or Legislative Coordinator

The legislative director is the person who monitors the legislative schedule and makes recommendations regarding the pros and cons of particular issues. In some congressional offices there are several legislative assistants and responsibilities are assigned to staff with expertise in specific areas. For example, depending on the responsibilities of the member, an office may include a different legislative assistant for health issues, environmental matters, taxes, etc.

Press Secretary or Communications Director

The press secretary's responsibility is to build and maintain open and effective lines of communication between the member, his/her constituency and the general public. The press secretary is expected to know the benefits, demands and special requirements of media, and how to most effectively promote the member's views or position on specific issues.

Appointment Secretary, Personal Secretary or Scheduler

The appointment secretary is responsible for allocating a member's time among the many demands that arise from congressional responsibilities, staff requirements and constituent requests. The appointment secretary

may be responsible for making necessary travel arrangements, arranging speaking dates, visits to the district, etc.

Caseworker

The caseworker is assigned to help with constituent requests by preparing replies for the member's signature. The caseworker's responsibilities may include helping resolve problems constituents present related to federal agencies such as Social Security and Medicare. There are often several caseworkers in a congressional office.

Other Staff Titles

Other titles used in a congressional office may include: executive assistant, legislative correspondent, executive secretary, office manager and receptionist.

VI. Internet Resources

For up-to-date legislative news and information, visit the following websites:

Dental Organizations

American Student Dental Association – www.ASDAnet.org

Look for current Legislative Grassroots Network news and information as well as the links to government agencies and other dental organizations.

American Dental Association – www.ADA.org

Check out the Advocacy page for updates and alerts.

American Dental Education Association – www.ADEA.org

Get information about recent happenings in the News section.

Federal Government

U.S. House of Representatives—www.house.gov

U.S. Senate—www.senate.gov

White House—www.whitehouse.gov

National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research—www.nidcr.nih.gov

U.S. Department of Education—www.ed.gov

State Government

State Net—www.statenet.com

State Net monitors all pending bills and regulations in the 50 states and Congress.

Reference

THOMAS—thomas.loc.gov

You'll find up-to-the-minute news on congressional bills and legislative acts.

VII. The Federal Legislative Process

Many pieces of legislation have the potential to significantly impact the profession and practice of dentistry. It is important to understand how policy is formed and approved. Most measures that become public law are introduced as bills. Thousands of bills are introduced during each session of Congress, but few are ever enacted into law. Legislators must deal with hundreds of different issues and decide how to vote in order to represent the best interests of their constituents and the country.

Subcommittee and Committee Activity

This is the level at which law is formulated and balanced with public comment. Public comment must occur before the bill goes to the floor of Congress if any modification is to be made to the proposed law. Once a health or dental-related bill reaches the floor of the House or Senate, it is rarely modified.

The LGN's Role in the Legislative Process

Lawmakers receive information on new legislative proposals from many sources. The media, trade and professional associations, public interest groups and labor unions frequently lobby Congress and serve as key sources of information for legislators. Members of Congress find it hard to ignore the views of these organizations, which collectively represent the views of many of their constituents. Through means such as e-mail campaigns and lobby days, ASDA's LGN can communicate the views of dental students to legislators so that these can be considered when legislation is being developed on a particular issue.

Sources of Bills

Knowing the source of proposed legislation can reveal a lot about its purpose and outcome. A member of the House, the Senate or both can introduce a bill. Members of Congress are the most obvious source of bills. In addition, corporations, labor and management groups, as well as consumer groups may participate in writing a bill. The most prominent promoter of legislative ideas is the president of the United States, who defines a legislative program yearly in the State of the Union and budget addresses. Congressional committees can also write their own bills.

Assignment of Bills to Committee

After a bill is introduced, the speaker of the House of Representatives or president of the Senate refers it to the proper committee. Each committee has jurisdictional responsibility for several general areas and divides itself into subcommittees for more specific issues within those areas.

Committee Action

Congressional committees have a lot of power in the legislative process. They process and investigate the submitted bills and investigate the need for new legislation. After a bill is referred to a committee, the chairman refers it to a subcommittee. The members of the subcommittee decide if the bill is worth consideration and, if so, in what manner. Committees rely heavily on hearings and invite public officials, business representatives, private citizens, experts and other interested groups to offer their opinion. After reviewing a bill, the committee may vote to report the legislation favorably to the House or Senate, and explain their justification for doing so. If the committee fails to report the bill, it dies. Most bills are blocked at this stage.

Scheduling

The House Rules Committee determines how much time will be allowed for debate of specific bills and whether amendments will be permitted. This voting takes place before the bill can be considered on the House floor. Most often, denial of the rule for the House action by the Rules Committee will halt further action on the bill. The Senate does not use a Rules Committee. Instead, the Senate Majority Leader determines if and when a bill comes to the floor for debate.

Floor Action

The House and Senate utilize two principal types of votes: voice and roll call. Voice vote is for routine and non-controversial matters. Roll call, or recorded vote, is used for more substantive issues. Most votes are decided by a simple majority vote.

Second Chamber Action

When the first chamber passes a bill, it sends it to the presiding officer of the other chamber for action.

Conference

Conference committees consist of members from both the House and Senate who work to reach a compromise on a specific bill. The members analyze the bill in full detail and vote on its amendments. If conflicts are resolved, a conference report is issued. If not, the bill dies in conference.

Final Floor Action

This step is merely a formality since at this point legislators can no longer offer amendments. However, it is necessary for both the House and the Senate to pass the final bill with all revisions.

Executive Action

After adoption by the House and Senate, the bill is sent to the president who has ten days to sign or veto it. If signed, the bill becomes law that same day. However, the date of enforcement of the law may differ from the date it is approved. If the bill is vetoed, it goes back to Congress, which has an opportunity to override the veto.

Congressional Override

When a vetoed bill goes back to Congress, the two chambers have an opportunity to decide whether the law should be enacted without presidential approval. To do this, two-thirds of members in both chambers must vote in favor of the decision to override the president's veto.

Congressional Power Centers

Two major power structures, political party leaders and committee leaders, have primary influence on the legislative process. Committee chairmen derive their power from control over bills referred to their committees, and may determine whether or not bills will ever be considered. They can delay, block or expedite action with few restrictions. Committee chairmen can also select who will participate in the floor debate on the bills. Increasingly, there are informal sources of power arising within the Congressional decision-making process. These are groups or caucuses of members sharing the same views on an issue, such as the Congressional Black Caucus. They serve as information and control centers on certain issues and can become powerful blocks on bills they deem important. Today, hundreds of these groups introduce amendments and conduct issue campaigns independent of any party organization.

VIII. The State Legislative Process

State legislatures can have a significant impact on the dental profession since many state laws determine how dentists practice. Although there are basic elements common to each state's legislative process, great variation exists from state to state. In order to influence the law-making body effectively, it is essential to understand the procedures and practices followed in each state.

Bills may originate from a state legislator, the executive branch, special interest group, professional or trade association or a respected constituent. Once drafted, the bill is referred to a standing committee. Some states appoint a committee to review all bills and make committee assignments. Before recommending a bill, a committee usually holds a series of public hearings and the bill is often amended. A subcommittee may also be appointed for this purpose. A committee can recommend, defeat or postpone a bill indefinitely. If the bill receives a favorable recommendation from the standing committee it moves for a floor vote. Most states allow amendments to a bill during the third reading.

The next step is the floor vote where the fate of the bill is decided. If passed, the bill is sent to the other chamber, if applicable, and similar steps are executed. A conference committee is named if two chambers pass different forms of the same bill. The conference committee issues a report that must be approved by both chambers. If a compromise is reached or the bill is passed, it is sent to the governor who can sign the bill into law, allow it to become law without signing it or veto the bill and return it to the legislature with an explanation for the veto. Some governors may exercise the line-item veto, which allows them to veto selected provisions of the bill while allowing the remaining provisions to become law.

IX. Glossary

Act

The term for a bill that has passed both houses of Congress and has been signed by the president or passed over his veto, thus becoming law.

Adjournment Sine Die

Adjournment without a day. Adjournment without definitely fixing a day for reconvening. Usually used to connote the final adjournment of a session of Congress.

Advisory Opinions (AOs)

Federal Election Commission responses to questions it has received relating to specific situations. These responses provide guidelines for PACs that may have similar questions.

Affiliated Committees

All authorized committees of the same candidate or all committees established, financed, maintained or controlled by the same corporation, labor organization, person or group.

Appropriations Bill

A bill that gives legal authority to spend or obligate money from the Treasury. It grants the actual money from the Treasury or grants the actual monies approved by authorization bills, but not necessarily the total permissible amount under the authorization bill.

Authorization Bill

Authorizes a program, specifies its general aim and conduct and puts a ceiling on monies that can be used to finance it, unless it is an open ended bill.

Bill Language

The substance of a bill. The law as written and approved.

Bills Introduced

In both the House and Senate, any number of members may introduce a bill or resolution. The first member listed is the sponsor of the bill, and all members' names following are the bill's cosponsors. Many bills are committee bills and are introduced under the name of the chairman of the committee or subcommittee as a formality. All appropriation bills fall into this category, as do many bills dealing with complicated, technical subjects. A committee frequently holds hearings on related bills, and may agree on one of them or on an entirely new bill.

Bills Referred

When introduced, a bill is referred to the committee that has jurisdiction over the subject matter of the bill. Bills are referred by the speaker in the House and the presiding officer in the Senate. Their decisions may be appealed.

Budget

The president sends Congress the budget January each year. It estimates government revenue and expenditures for the ensuing fiscal year and recommends appropriations in detail. The president's budget forms the basis for congressional hearings and legislation on the year's appropriations.

Candidate Committee

A political committee established by a candidate for the primary purpose of raising funds to support the candidate's campaign.

Caucus

Any group or meeting organized to further a special interest or cause. In US politics, a meeting of party members within a legislative body to select leaders and determine strategy.

Challenger

An incumbent candidate's opponent.

Chamber

Meeting place for the total membership of either the House or the Senate, as distinguished from the respective committee rooms.

Clean Bill

After a committee has finished revisions of a bill, the changes and what is left of the original bill may be assembled into a new measure and introduced as a clean bill. The new measure, which carries a new number, is then sent to the floor for consideration.

Clerk of the House

Chief administrative officer of the House of Representatives with duties corresponding to those of the secretary of the Senate.

Closed Rule

Prohibits amendments not approved by the committee bringing the bill to the floor. A modified closed rule permits only amendments approved by the Rules Committee. An open rule permits any amendment. Closed rules are uncommon.

Cloture

The process by which a filibuster can be ended in the Senate, other than by unanimous consent. A motion for cloture can apply to any measure before the Senate, including a proposal to change the chamber's rules. It requires the signature of 16 senators for introduction and the votes of three-fifths of the entire Senate (60 if there are no vacancies). To end a filibuster against a proposal to amend the Standing Rules of the Senate a two-thirds vote of senators present and voting is required. It is put to a roll-call vote one hour after the Senate meets on the second day following introduction of the motion. If voted, cloture limits each senator to one hour of debate. A proposal must come to a final vote after 100 hours of debate.

Committee

A subdivision of the House or Senate that prepares legislation for action by the parent chamber, or makes investigations as directed by the parent chamber. Most standing committees are divided into subcommittees, which study legislation, hold hearings and report their recommendations to the full committee. Only the full committee can report legislation for action by the House or Senate.

Concurrent Resolution

A concurrent resolution, designated H Con Res or S Con Res, must be adopted by both houses but does not require the signature of the president and does not have the force of law. Concurrent resolutions are used to make or amend rules applicable to both houses or to express the sentiment of the two houses. A concurrent resolution, for example, is used to fix the time for adjournment of a Congress. It also might be used, for example, to convey the congratulations of Congress to another country on the anniversary of its independence.

Conference

A meeting between the representatives of the House and Senate to reconcile differences between the two houses over provisions of a bill. Members of the conference committee are appointed by the speaker and the president of the Senate and are called managers for their respective chambers. A majority of the managers for each house must reach agreement on the provisions of the bill before it can be sent up for floor action in the form of a conference report. There it cannot be amended and if not approved by both chambers, the bill may go back to conference under certain situations, or a new conference may be convened. Elaborate rules govern the conduct of the conferences. All bills that are passed by the House and Senate in slightly different form need not be sent to conference. Either chamber may concur in the other's amendments.

Congressional Record

The daily, printed account of proceedings in both House and Senate chambers. Highlights of legislative and committee action are embodied in a digest section of the record. Members may edit and revise remarks made on the floor during debate, so that quotations reported by the press are not always found in the record.

Congressional Terms of Office

These begin on Jan. 3 of the year following a general election and run two years for representatives and six years for senators.

Connected PACs

Political action committees that are formed by sponsoring organizations such as corporations, labor unions, trade and professional associations, cooperatives and corporations without stock. The sponsoring organization may pay the administrative and fundraising costs out of general treasury money.

Continuing Resolution

When a fiscal year begins and Congress has not yet enacted all the regular appropriation bills for that year, it passes a joint resolution continuing appropriations for government agencies at rates generally based on their previous year's appropriations.

Contribution

Anything of value given to or provided on behalf of a candidate or political committee to influence a federal election.

Enacting Clause

Each bill starts "Be enacted that..." A successful motion to strike the enacting clause kills the measure.

Engrossed Bill

The final copy of a bill as passed by one chamber, with the text as amended by floor action and certified by the clerk of the House or the secretary of the Senate.

Enrolled Bill

The final copy of a bill that has been passed in identical forms by both chambers. It is certified by an officer of the house of origin (House clerk or Senate secretary) and then sent on for signatures of the House speaker, the Senate president and the president. An enrolled bill is printed on parchment.

Expenditures

The actual spending of money as distinguished from the appropriation of it. Expenditures are made by the disbursing officers of the administration. Appropriations are made only by Congress. The two are rarely identical in any fiscal year. Expenditures may represent money appropriated one, two or more years previously.

FEC

The Federal Election Commission, the agency that administers the laws governing our federal election process.

FECA

The Federal Election Campaign Act, the primary body of law governing the federal election process.

Filibuster

A time-delaying tactic used by a minority in an effort to prevent a vote on a bill that probably would pass if brought to vote. The most common method is to take advantage of the Senate's rules permitting unlimited debate, but other forms of parliamentary maneuvering may be used. The stricter rules in the House make filibusters more difficult, but they are attempted from time to time through various delaying tactics arising from loopholes in House rules.

Fiscal Year

Financial operations of the government are carried out in a 12 month fiscal year, beginning on Oct. 1 and ending on Sept. 30. The fiscal year carries the date of the calendar year in which it ends.

Floor Manager

A member, usually representing bill sponsors, who tries to steer the bill through debate and amendment to a final vote in the chamber. Floor managers are frequently chairmen or ranking members of the committee that reports the bill. Managers are responsible for apportioning the time granted to supporters of the bill for debating it. The minority leader or the ranking minority member of the committee often apportions time for the minority party's participation in the debate.

General Election

The final election to determine which candidate will be elected to office.

Hearing

Committee sessions for hearing witnesses. At hearings of legislation, witnesses usually include specialists, government officials and spokesmen for persons affected by the bills under study. Hearings related to special investigations bring forth a variety of witnesses. Committees sometimes use their subpoena power to summon reluctant witnesses. The public and press may attend open hearings, but are barred from closed or executive hearings. The committee announces its hearings, from one day to many weeks in advance, and may invite people to testify. Persons who request time to testify may be turned down by the committee, but most requests are honored. Both houses have rules against conducting committee hearings in secret, but the House's are much more stringent.

Hopper

A box on the House Clerk's desk where bills are deposited on introduction.

House

The House of Representatives, as distinct from the Senate, although each body is a house of Congress.

Incumbent

The person currently holding public office.

Independent Expenditures

Money spent to advocate the election or defeat of a candidate that is not made with the cooperation or prior consent of any candidate or candidate committee. There are no limits on the amount of money that can be spent in this fashion. Independent expenditures are most often made by non-connected PACs.

In-kind Contribution

Services, goods or property offered free or at less than the usual charge to a political committee.

Joint Committee

A committee composed of members of both the House and Senate. Usually a joint committee is investigative in nature, such as the Joint Economic Committee. Others have housekeeping duties such as the Joint Committee on Printing and on the Library of Congress.

Joint Resolution

A joint resolution, designated H J Res or S J Res, requires the approval of both houses and the signature of the president, just as a bill does, and has the force of law if approved. There is no real difference between a bill and a joint resolution. The latter is generally used in dealing with limited matters, such as a single appropriation for a specific purpose. Joint resolutions also are used to propose amendments to the Constitution. They do not require a presidential signature, but become part of the Constitution when three-fourths of the states have ratified them.

Lame Duck

A legislator who has announced his or her intent not to run for re-election or a legislative session held after a general election but before those elected have been sworn into office.

Law

An act of Congress that has been signed by the president or passed over his veto by Congress.

Legislative Day

The day extending from the time either house meets after an adjournment until the time it next adjourns. Because the House normally adjourns from day to day, legislative days and calendar days usually coincide. But in the Senate, a legislative day may extend over several calendar days.

Legislative Veto

A procedure permitting either the House or Senate, or both, to review proposed executive branch regulations or actions and block or modify those with which they disagree. The specifics of the procedure may vary, but Congress generally provides a legislative veto by including in a specific piece of legislation a provision that administrative rules or actions taken to implement the legislation are to go into effect at the end of a designated period of time unless blocked by either or both houses.

Lobby

A group seeking to influence the passage, defeat, or modification of legislation. Originally the term referred to persons frequenting the lobbies or corridors of legislative chambers in order to speak to legislators. By some definitions, lobbying is limited to attempts at direct influence by personal interview and persuasion. Under other definitions, lobbying includes attempts at indirect influence, such as persuading members of a group to write or visit their representative or senators or attempting to create a climate of opinion favorable to a desired legislative action.

Majority Leader

Chief strategist and floor spokesman for the party in control in either chamber. He or she is elected by party colleagues and is virtually program director for that chamber, since he or she usually speaks for its majority.

Majority Whip

In effect, the assistant majority leader in the House or Senate. The job is to help marshal majority forces in support of party strategy and legislation.

Marking Up a Bill

Going through a measure, in committee or subcommittee, taking it section by section, revising language, penciling in new phrases, etc. If the bill is extensively revised, the new version may be introduced as a separate bill with a new number.

Maxing Out

Contributing the maximum amount permitted by law to a candidate's campaign.

Minority Leader

Floor leader for the minority party.

Minority Whip

Performs duties of whip for the minority party.

Motion

Request by a member for any one of a wide array of parliamentary actions. The member moves for a certain procedure, or the consideration of a measure or a vote, etc. The precedence of motions, and whether they are debatable, is set forth in the House and Senate manuals.

Multi-candidate Committee

A political committee with more than 50 contributors that has been registered with the FEC for at least six months and has made contributions to five or more candidates for federal office. Most corporate PACs are multi-candidate committees, which qualifies them to contribute up to \$5,000 per candidate per election.

Non-connected PACs

Political action committees that operate as independent entities without sponsoring organizations. These PACs may solicit any American citizen, but administrative and fundraising costs must be paid with the dollars raised.

Nonparty Committee

Any political committee that is a connected or non-connected PAC and not sponsored by a political party or a candidate.

Open Seat

An election contest with no incumbent candidate.

Override a Veto

If the president disapproves a bill and sends it back to Congress with objections, Congress may override the veto by two-thirds vote in each chamber. The Constitution requires a recorded vote. The question put to each house is, "Shall the bill pass, the objections of the president to the contrary notwithstanding?"

Party Committee

Any fundraising committee organized by local, state or national political parties.

Petition

A request or plea sent to one or both chambers from an organization or private citizens' group asking support of particular legislation or favorable consideration of a matter not yet receiving congressional attention. They are referred to appropriate committees and the committee decides to consider it or not.

Pocket Veto

The act of the president in withholding approval of a bill after Congress has adjourned. When Congress is in session, a bill becomes law without the president's signature if no action is taken upon it within 10 days, excluding Sundays, from the time the president receives it. But if Congress adjourns sine die within that 10-day period, the bill is killed without the president's formal veto because it is not signed.

Political Action Committees (PACs)

All non-candidate and non-party political committees, including those that have no sponsoring organization.

Political Committee

Candidate committees, state and local political party committees, organizations and associations and PACs can be defined as political committees.

President of the Senate

Presiding officer of the upper chamber, normally the vice president of the United States. In the vice president's absence, a president pro tempore (president for the time being) presides.

President Pro Tempore

The chief officer of the Senate in the absence of the vice president. He or she is elected by fellow senators. The recent practice has been to elect to the office the senator of the majority party with the longest continuous service.

Primary

An election to determine which candidate from a major political party will meet the opposing party's candidate in the general election.

Quorum

The number of members whose presence is necessary to conduct business. In the Senate and House, it is a majority of the membership. A quorum is 100 in the Committee of the Whole House. If a point of order is made that a quorum is not present, the only business in order is either a motion to adjourn or a motion to direct the sergeant-at-arms to request the attendance of absentees.

Recess

Distinguished from adjournment in that a recess does not end a legislative day and, therefore, does not interfere with unfinished business. The rules in each house set forth certain matters to be taken up and disposed of at the beginning of each legislative day. The House, which operates under much stricter rules than the Senate, usually adjourns from day to day. The Senate often recesses.

Reconciliation

A process requiring congressional committees to reduce funds for existing and new federal programs under their jurisdiction to meet overall spending and revenue levels established by budget resolution.

Report Language

Information that tells what Congress intended by the law and may spell out the direction certain agencies should follow. Often appears as a committee or conference report. These documents may or may not be presented with the bill and are not legally binding.

Resolution

A simple resolution, designated H Res or S Res, deals with matters entirely within the prerogatives of one house or the other. It requires neither passage by the other chamber nor approval by the president and does not have the force of law. Most resolutions deal with the rules of one house. They also are used to express the sentiments of a single house, as condolences to the family of a deceased member or to give advice on foreign policy or other executive business.

Restricted Class

Those individuals within an organization who may be solicited at any time for contributions to the organization's PAC and who may receive partisan communications from the organization.

Rule

The term has two specific congressional meanings. A rule may be a standing order governing the conduct of House or Senate business and listed in the chamber's bill of rules. The admission to the floor and voting procedures are examples of such rules. In the House, a rule also may be a decision made by its Rules Committee about the handling of a particular bill on the floor. The committee may determine under which standing rule a bill shall be considered, or it may provide a special rule in the form of a resolution. If the resolution is adopted by the House, the temporary rule becomes as valid as any standing rule, and lapses only after action has been completed on the measure to which it pertains.

Run-off Election

An election held when no candidate of a single political party receives a majority of the votes cast in a primary election.

Secretary of the Senate

Chief administrative officer of the Senate, responsible for direction of duties of Senate employees, education of pages, administration of oaths, receipt or registration of lobbyists and other activities necessary for the continuing operation of the Senate.

Select or Special Committee

A committee set up for a special purpose and, generally, for a limited time by resolution of either House or Senate. Most special committees are investigative in nature.

Separate Segregated Fund

A connected political committee established by a corporation, labor organization or incorporated membership organization to accept voluntary contributions that are used to support federal candidates. The term political action committee is the popular expression for a separate segregated fund.

Speaker

The presiding officer of the House of Representatives, elected by its members.

Special Election

An election held to fill a vacancy caused by the death or resignation of an incumbent.

Special Session

A session of Congress after it has adjourned sine die, completing its regular session. Special sessions are convened by the president of the United States under the constitutional powers of the executive office.

Standing Committees

Committees permanently authorized by the House and Senate rules.

Veto

Disapproval by the president of a bill or joint resolution, other than one proposing an amendment to the Constitution. When Congress is in session, the president must veto a bill within 10 days, excluding Sundays, after it has been received; otherwise, it becomes law with or without the president's signature. When the president vetoes a bill, it is returned to the house of its origin with a message stating the president's objections. The veto then becomes a question of high privilege. When Congress has adjourned, the president may pocket veto a bill by failing to sign it.