

# Legislative Involvement



## First steps?

- Know your legislative district.
- Meet your legislators.
- Attend political gatherings.
- VOTE!

## Why bother?

- We live in a state that allows its citizens to have input on every bill that comes before our legislature.
- We have a responsibility to elect officials who represent views consistent with good public policy for the state. We have a duty to follow legislation that harms or helps North Dakota families.
- We can make a difference, but it requires involvement.

## How to prepare?

Is there some subject you have been following for many years? For example: homeschooling, agriculture related issues, fiscal responsibility, pro-life concerns, gambling expansion, government growth, gun-control issues, higher education, landlord problems, etc. Are you asking your legislator to introduce a bill? Know how the subject affects you and others.

## Ways to be involved?

In N.D. you can be involved at every level of a bill becoming law. Testifying is one way; contacting your elected officials is another. Following the live floor hearings, reading the bills of concern to you, writing letters to the editor, and sharing with your friends and family are all ways to be a part of the process. And of course there is social media. Plus you may choose to testify at committee hearings on a bill of particular importance to you.

## How do I prepare to testify?

- Know your subject.
- Read the bill. All the bill. You may need to read other bills with similar content.
- Contact your legislators.
- Write your testimony; join with others who plan to appear before the committee.
- Know when the hearings are and always be on time.
- Be brief. Have copies for the committee. Do not be redundant. If you say you are not going to read your lengthy written testimony, DON'T. Hit the highlights.
- Expect some interaction with the committee members.
- Remember the bill will be heard in committee in both houses. You may testify at both hearings.
- Whether you like it or not, being teachy, preachy, does not work. Be real. Be humble.
- Your dress matters. Choose business casual. Duck Dynasty look-alikes on gun bills do not help.

## What should I do after the hearing?

All committee action is public so you may stay and listen to debate and the vote. Generally several days later you can follow your bill to the floor for its debate and vote after coming out of committee. Contact your legislators before the vote and voice your wishes.

**Remember:** Most legislators really do want to hear from their constituents. Ask most and they will tell you they prefer to hear from ordinary concerned citizens rather than from polished lobbyists.

**For legislative information go to:**

**[www.legis.nd.gov](http://www.legis.nd.gov)**

To sign up for the *Legislative WATCH* (weekly during the session) send your email addy to [billbiby@msn.com](mailto:billbiby@msn.com). If you receive the NDHSA newsletter, *The Eclectic Report*, you are already on the list. The *LW* will begin publication the first week in January 2019.