

AAPD 2011 Congressional Lobby Day



Basic Knowledge, aka “Congress 101”, for the
Pediatric Dentistry Advocate on Capitol Hill



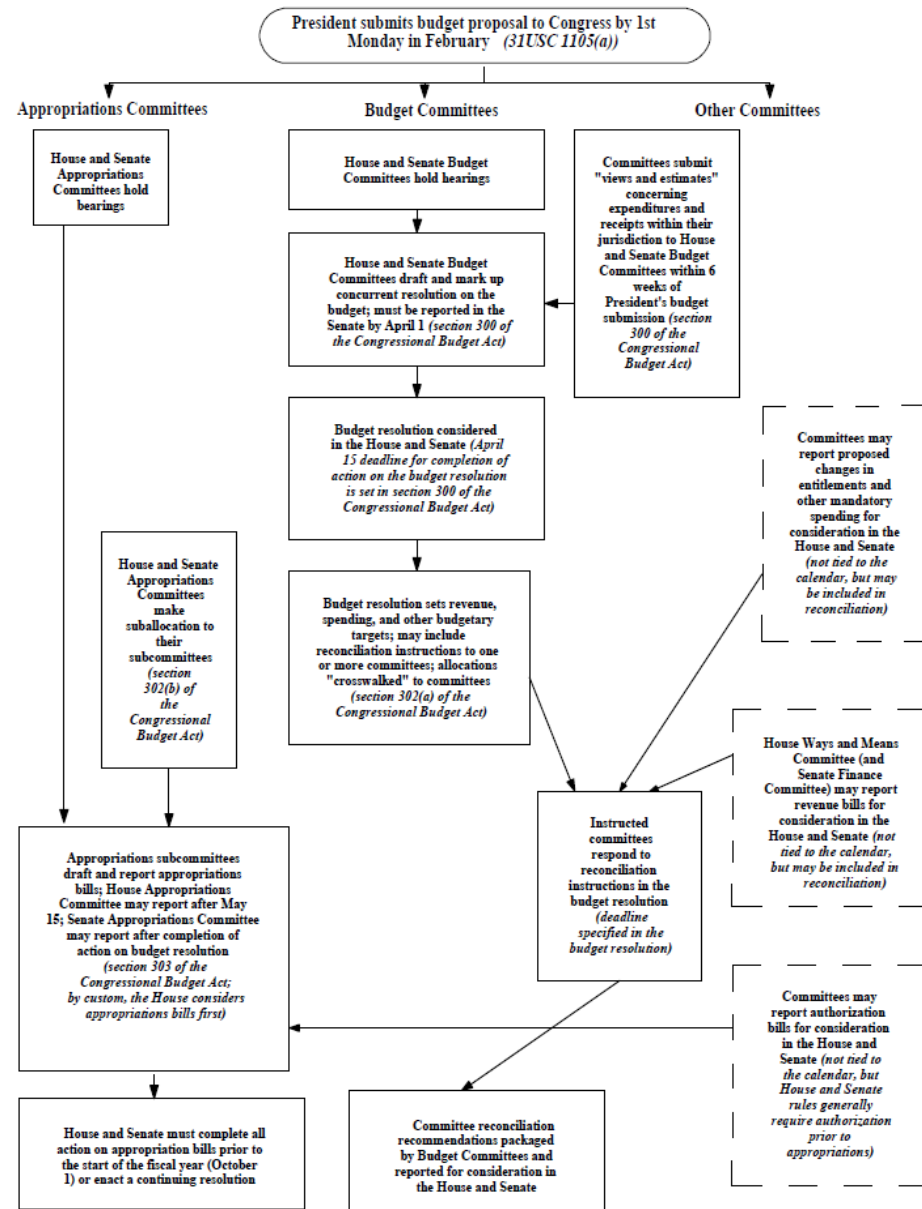
Key Acronyms

- HRSA (Health Resources and Services Administration)
- CMS (Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services)
- D-HHS (Dept. of Health and Human Services)
- IOM (Institute of Medicine)
- OHS (Office of Head Start)
- PPACA or ACA (Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act- health care reform law)



The Budget Process (on paper at least)

Figure 1. The Congressional Budget Process: Timetable for Annual Action

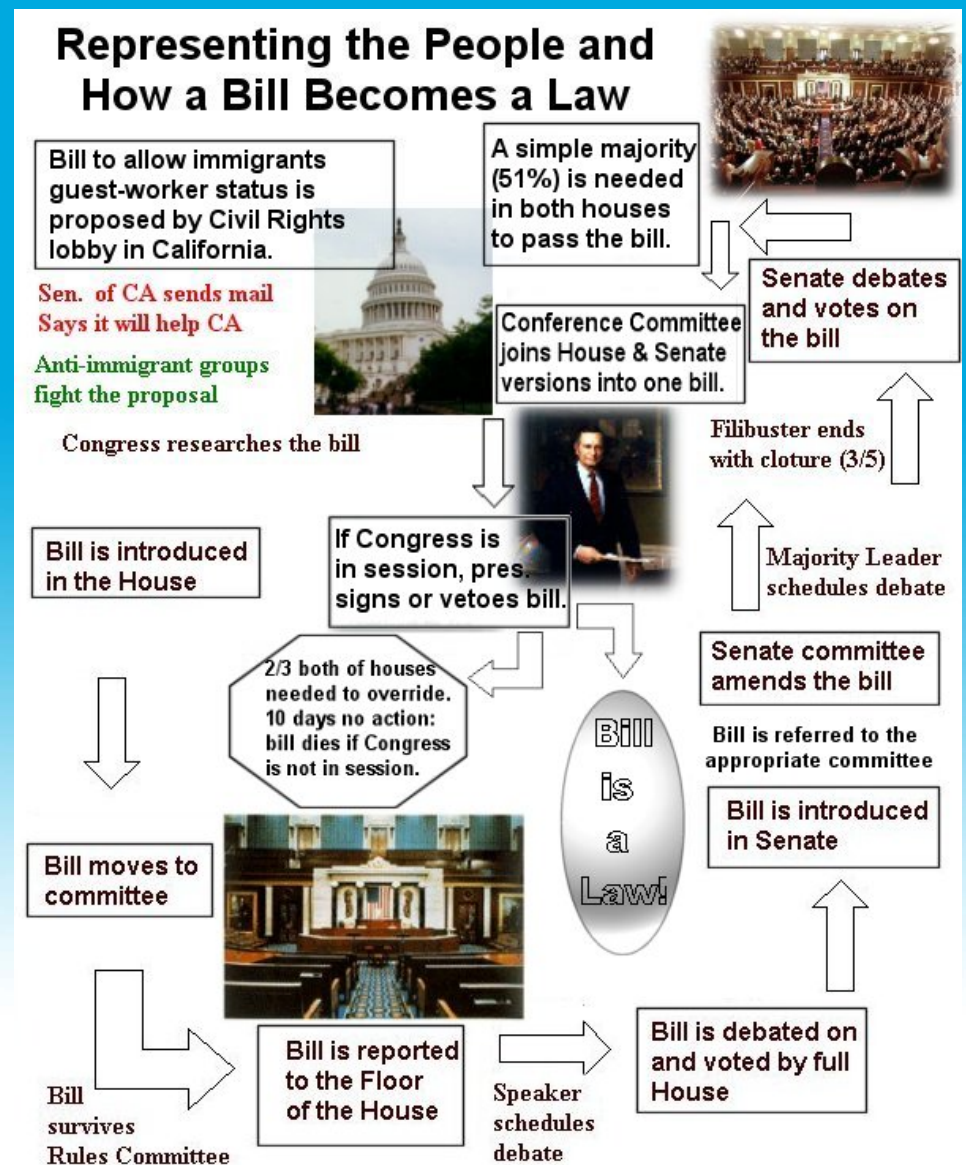


What is a mark-up?

- After hearings are completed, the committee or subcommittee usually will consider the bill in a session that is popularly known as the "markup" session. The views of both sides are studied in detail and at the conclusion of deliberation a vote is taken to determine the action. For example, a subcommittee may decide to report the bill favorably to the full committee, with or without amendment, or unfavorably, or without recommendation. The subcommittee may also suggest that the committee "table" it or postpone action indefinitely. Each member has one vote. Members usually offer a number of amendments in mark-up.



How is a bill passed



Key health-related committees:

Senate:

Appropriations Committee- Subcommittee on
Labor-Health and Human Services-Education

Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions
Committee- Subcommittee on Children,
Youth, and Families

Finance Committee- Subcommittee on Health
Care



Key health-related committees:

House:

Appropriations Committee- Subcommittee
on Labor-Health and Human Services-
Education

Energy and Commerce Committee-
Subcommittee on Health

Ways and Means- Subcommittee on
Health



How are committee appointments made?

Senate:

Since the Senate is a continuous body, it is able to begin its organization before the start of a new Congress. Party conferences often convene before the start of each new Congress to elect leaders and determine committee assignments. Each party conference appoints a "committee on committees" to prepare a roster of members it wishes named to a party's specifically allotted committee seats. The percentage of a party's representation within the Senate determines the percentage of seats it will gain on each committee, although exact numbers are subject to negotiation between party floor leaders. Committee assignments are then approved by the Senate through resolutions, typically passed by unanimous consent at the beginning of each Congress.



How are committee appointments made?

More on the Senate:

Most new members arrive at the Senate with a "wish list" of committee assignments. They recognize that appointment to committees with a special impact on the interests of their states and regions can promote their own legislative effectiveness. For Senate party leaders, the committee appointment process offers a means of promoting party discipline through the granting or withholding of desired assignments.



How are committee appointments made?

More on the Senate:

- **The Role of Seniority in Selection of Chairmen and Ranking Members**
 - Traditionally, the majority party member with the greatest seniority on a particular committee serves as its chairman. When the Republican party gained the majority in 1995, it altered its conference rules to allow Republicans on individual committees to vote by secret ballot for their committee's chairman, irrespective of that member's seniority. This adjustment was a logical consequence of the party's larger decision to place a six-year term limit on the service of its chairmen or, when in the minority, its ranking members.



How are committee appointments made?

More on the Senate: **Service**

- Senate committees are divided, according to relative importance, into three categories: Class A, Class B, and Class C. Senate Rule XXIV specifies that committee chairmen and members be appointed on the authority of a Senate Resolution, unless otherwise ordered. The rules also provide the following assignment limitations:
- A, B, C's. Each senator may serve on no more than two Class A committees and one Class B panel. There are no limits to service on Class C panels.



How are committee appointments made?

House procedures:

- Before Members are assigned to committees, each committee's size and the proportion of Republicans to Democrats must be decided by the party leaders. The total number of committee slots allotted to each party is approximately the same as the ratio between majority party and minority party members in the full Chamber.



How are committee appointments made?

- House Members are then assigned to committees in a three-step process. Each of the two principle parties in the House is responsible for the assigning its members to committees, and at the first stage, each party uses a committee on committees to make the initial recommendations for assignments.
- At the beginning of the new Congress, Members express preferences for assignment to the appropriate committee on committees. Most incumbents prefer to remain on the same committees so as not to forfeit expertise and committee seniority. These committees on committees then match preferences with committee slots, following certain guidelines designed in part to distribute assignments fairly.



How are committee appointments made?

- They then prepare and approve an assignment slate for each committee, and submit all slates to the appropriate full party conference for approval. Approval at this second stage often is granted easily, but the conferences have procedures for disapproving recommended Members and nominating others in their stead. Finally, at the third stage, each committee submits its slate to the pertinent full Chamber for approval, which is generally granted.



What is a “Ranking Member”?

Hint: it doesn’t stink

- This person is the counterpart of the Chair of the Committee, who is from the Majority party.
- Currently, Democrats chair Committees in the Senate and Republicans in the House; Republicans are Ranking Minority members in the Senate and Democrats are ranking in the House.



Typical titles and duties for staff

- **Chief of Staff**
 - The Chief of Staff reports directly to the member of Congress. He/she usually has overall responsibility for evaluating the political outcome of various legislative proposals and constituent requests. The Chief of Staff is usually the person in charge of overall office operations, including the assignment of work and the supervision of key staff.
- **Legislative Director, Senior Legislative Assistant, or Legislative Coordinator**
 - The Legislative Director is usually the staff 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 particular expertise in specific areas. For example, depending on the responsibilities and interests of the member, an office may include a different Legislative Assistant for health issues, environmental matters, taxes, etc.



Typical titles and duties for staff

- **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 both print and electronic 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 usually 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 also be responsible for making necessary travel arrangements, arranging speaking dates, visits to the district, etc.



Typical titles and duties for staff

- **Caseworker**
 - The Caseworker is the staff member usually assigned to help with constituent requests by preparing replies for the member's signature. The Caseworker's responsibilities may also include helping resolve problems constituents present in relation to federal agencies, e.g., Social Security and Medicare issues, veteran's benefits, passports, etc. There are often several Caseworkers in a congressional office.
- **Other titles used in a congressional office may include: Executive Assistant, Legislative Correspondent, Executive Secretary, Office Manager, and Receptionist.**



The steps for developing a (legal and platonic) relationship with a member of Congress

- Research the legislator's background
 - Are there local connections (school, church, civic, sports, etc.)?
 - AAPD can provide political biographies; there are also detailed Web sites for state legislatures and the U.S. Congress



The steps for developing a (legal and platonic) relationship with a member of Congress

- Offer to serve on a legislator's local committee
- Give a legislator an award
- Invite a legislator to speak at your group's meeting



When you get home

In order to be an effective advocate, it is very important to follow-up on any contacts made, regardless of the method of communication that is used. **For example, personal visits followed by letters/e-mails, enclosing/attaching any information that was requested during the meeting.** An invitation to your legislator and his/her staff to come and visit your office is also a good idea for a follow-up visit.



Having Member visit your office

- ADA has a nice step-by-step guide
- Write a letter directly to the legislator, fax it and mail it to local district office
- Can also do as part of a fund-raiser with support from the AAPD PAC



Questions?

