



How A Need Becomes a Federal Law

Journey through the federal legislative process and learn how ASHA works for and with audiologists and speech-language pathologists—and where in the process advocacy makes the difference. asha.org/advocacy

Legend

- ASHA Advocacy Action
- ASHA Member Action
- ASHA Government Affairs and Public Policy Board Action

IS IDENTIFY AN ISSUE OR NEED

Members and ASHA identify an issue.

- **ASHA members** provide input on issues specific to the professions via the Public Policy Agenda (PPA) survey, feedback, and more.
- **ASHA Government Affairs and Public Policy Board** develops the PPA using this feedback.
- **ASHA Advocacy staff** use the priorities within the PPA to determine how to meaningfully advance and achieve them.

DETERMINE WHETHER LEGISLATION IS NEEDED

Sometimes existing legislation can resolve the issue—as long as it's enacted by Congress and implemented appropriately by federal regulatory agencies.

- **If legislation already exists that can resolve an issue, ASHA staff and members work with Congress to enact that legislation. Case closed!**

SOCIALIZE THE ISSUE

Increase lawmaker and public awareness of the issue/need.

- **Member support is crucial here in spreading the word!**

DEAD END

If representatives do not support the issue, they can choose not to introduce your bill.

HOUSE

SENATE

TO THE HOUSE AND/OR SENATE

**In an ideal situation (represented below), legislation is introduced in both the House and Senate at the same time.*

INTRODUCTION IN THE HOUSE

A member (or members) of the House introduces the bill. The bill is then referred to the appropriate committee(s) for review.

INTRODUCTION IN THE SENATE

Two things can happen here:
a) The House passes a bill and it moves on to the Senate
b) A member (or members) of the Senate introduces a bill

Once introduced, the bill is assigned to the appropriate committee for review.

HOUSE COMMITTEE WORK SENATE COMMITTEE WORK

The committee meets and may decide to assign the bill to a subcommittee.



Possible delays: The committee could assign the bill to a subcommittee, prolonging the process.

HOUSE COMMITTEE HEARINGS SENATE COMMITTEE HEARINGS

The committee holds public hearings and collects information from the public to inform its decision making.

- **ASHA Advocacy** submits comment letters and testimony on behalf of the Association and encourages ASHA members to write to representatives who serve on the committee.



DEAD END

The committee could decide to not consider the bill.

HOUSE COMMITTEE WORK SENATE COMMITTEE WORK

Committee members debate and amend (mark up) the bill.

HOUSE COMMITTEE VOTE SENATE COMMITTEE VOTE

Committee members vote on the bill to move it forward.



DEAD END

The committee could vote against reporting the bill to the full chamber. **The bill could die here.**

HOUSE COMMITTEE SENDS TO HOUSE SENATE COMMITTEE SENDS TO SENATE

The committee(s) approves the bill, then forwards it to each respective chamber—where it **COULD** be considered [could being the operative word].

DEAD END

Just because a committee reports the bill doesn't mean that the House/Senate has to actually add it to the floor calendar. **The bill could die here.**

HOUSE ADDS BILL TO CALENDAR SENATE ADDS BILL TO CALENDAR

This is a prime opportunity for ASHA members to contact their representatives to support the bill **BEFORE** the debate/vote.

HOUSE DEBATE & AMEND SENATE DEBATE & AMEND

Representatives debate and amend the bill.



Possible delays: The House could send the bill back to committee.

DEAD END

The House or Senate could vote against the bill. **The bill could die here.**

SENATE PASSES OR SENDS BACK TO THE HOUSE

- a) If the bill originated in the House and wasn't altered in the Senate, then it goes to the president to sign.
- b) If the bill originated in the House but the Senate subsequently amended it, then it must go back to the House for approval. They must both agree on one version.
- c) If the bill originated in the Senate and there isn't similar legislation in the House, it goes to the House.

HOUSE PASSES OR AMENDS

If the bill goes to the House, then representatives could...

- a) Review, vote, and pass it to go to the President -OR-
- b) Request a conference committee

GOES TO PRESIDENT

The president has **10 days** to approve or veto the final bill.



PRESIDENT SIGNS BILL

The president signs off on the bill.

BECOMES A LAW!

REGULATORY PROCESS

A whole other "whale" of advocacy!

EB

IMPLEMENTATION

The executive branch takes over to determine implementation.



Proposed legislation may not always end up being its own bill or act. It might be absorbed into another piece of legislation.



This entire process can take years—even decades—to proceed.



Many factors influence how a member of Congress views legislation—and those factors aren't always "fair." This is why gathering bipartisan support is essential to getting legislation passed.



Continued joint advocacy work throughout the process is absolutely essential in order to successfully pass legislation. It is your legislator's job to represent you, their constituent. ASHA Advocacy staff cannot do this alone. To ensure that change happens, **ASHA members must get involved and make their voices heard!**