

Making the Legislative Process Work for Missouri's Gifted Students



7/28/2011

The Gifted Association of Missouri

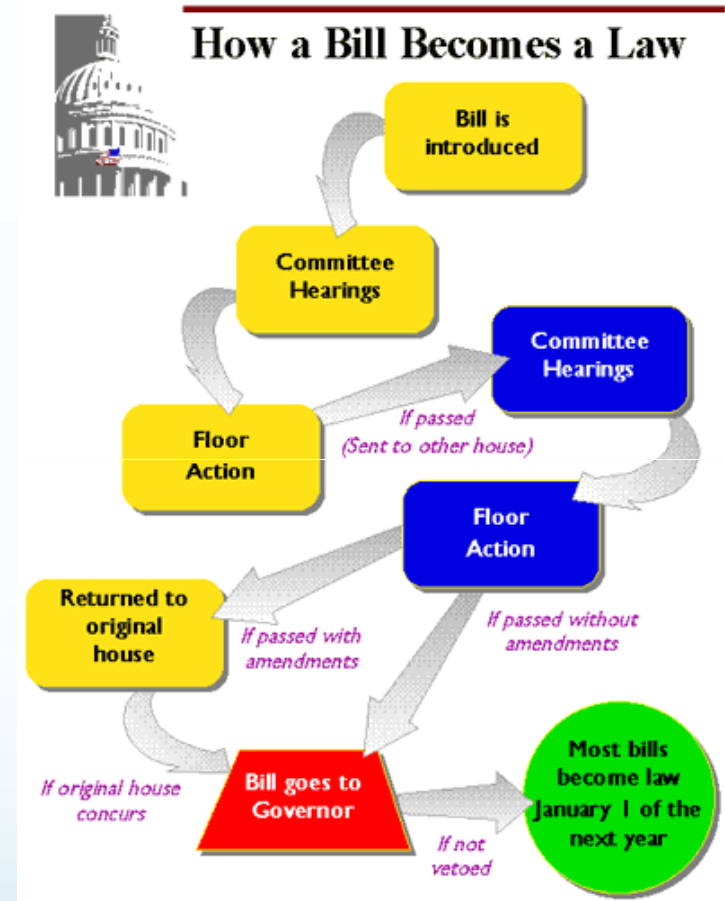
GAM has actively supported the needs of high-ability and high-potential learners in Missouri since 1980. We provide teacher training, curriculum development, parent support, regional seminars and workshops, scholarships, student competitions, and awards. Further, GAM conducts an annual state conference for all Missouri stakeholders in gifted education. In addition, GAM employs a legislative consultant to fight for gifted students at the state level and through the legislative process.

Why GAM Needs to be Involved in the Legislative Process

- Everything you advocate for can be lost in the legislature by one vote
- Creating a more friendly environment
- Fight for and protect the gifted students in the state of Missouri.

How a Bill Becomes a Law

- Introduced in the House or Senate or both
- Bill gets a hearing (proponents and opponents)
- Bill voted on in committee
- If Passed bill moves to legislative calendar
- Bill debated on floor
- Bill passes out of body and moves to other body
- Bill passes out of other body
- Bill goes to conference committee
- Same bill passed in both bodies
- Bill goes to governor for signature or veto
- If veto then potential override
- If signed, you have a new law



<http://www.ci.arcadia.ca.us/home/index.asp?page=1135>

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Make-up of Missouri Legislature

- 163 House of Representative Members
 - As of 2011, 103 Republicans, 58 Democrats, 2 vacancies
 - It takes 82 votes to pass a bill in the House
- 34 Senate Members
 - As of 2011, 26 Republicans, 8 Democrats
 - It takes 18 votes to pass a bill in the Senate

As of 2011, the House and Senate are Majority Republican and the Executive Office of Governor is Democrat.

Successful Legislators are:

- Legislator
- Fundraiser
- Sales Representative
- Campaigner
- Lobbyist
- Listener

How Do We Shape This Legislative Process? Through Lobbying



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Lobbying is Not a Bad Word

- It's your First Amendment right
- Your Representatives want to hear from you
- You have a right and duty to stand up for or against issues that effect you and all of the gifted students in Missouri.



How to Effectively Lobby

- Be informed
- Be polite
- Reference the specific legislation by proper title (HB 761)
- Make it personal and talk about how this issue affects you
- Have a specific “ask”, know what you are asking them to support
- Follow up and remain in contact

Do Your Homework

- Voting constituents from home are head and shoulders above other groups
- Check your legislator's website
- What awards have they received
- What bills have they introduced
- What committees do they serve on

**ASK “WHAT DO WE HAVE TO DO TO PASS
OUR LEGISLATION AND TO WIN?”**

When to Lobby

- Before a Committee Hearing
- Before the vote
- While Legislation is being drafted



Avoid Lobbying When Inappropriate

- In a restaurant
- At church
- At a Senator's child's little league game
- USE COMMON SENSE

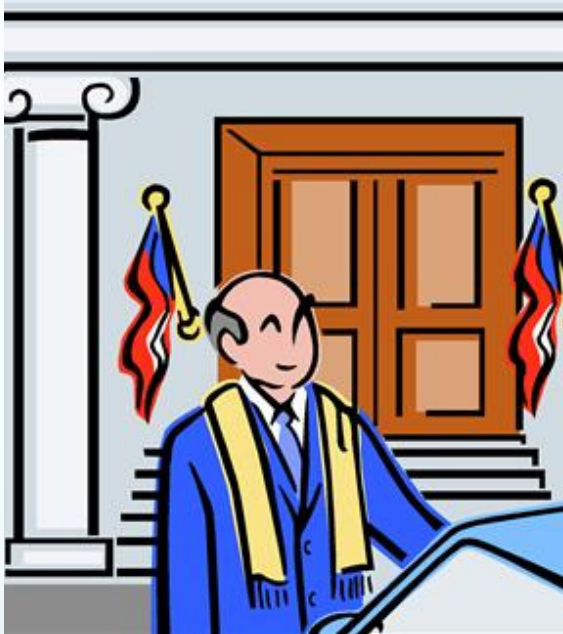
Remember You are the Expert

- Members and staff do not have time to understand every issue and detail
- You know what is happening with gifted kids in your classroom, school, or home
- They rely on constituents and others to help educate them
- They want to hear your input and experience

Practice Makes Perfect

- Before lobbying make sure you know your issue
- Have notes for the key points you want to hit
- Know your facts
- If you don't know the answer to a question, tell them you don't know and you will get the info and get it back to them. Never make up an answer

How to Make Contact



- Write a LETTER
- Make a CALL
- Schedule a MEETING

All Communications Should Be:

- Clear
- Concise
- Consistent



Face to Face is Best

- Do your homework
- Find their schedule (website, facebook, twitter)
- Introduce yourself
- Meet your legislator in their home district during the off session
- Offer to serve as a resource for education, specifically gifted education
- Present business card or contact information
- Follow-up note

Maintain a Relationship

- Once you have contact with a legislator stay in contact with them
- Send thank you notes
- Give them credit where credit is due

Your Efforts Make a Difference

- We need your voice
- We need your persistence
- We need your advocacy

The Gifted Students of Missouri Need You



Resources for Further Information

- Visit the GAM website at:
www.mogam.org
- Contact Kyna Iman, GAM's Legislative Consultant at:
kynaiman@earthlink.net
- Contact Dr. Robin Lady, GAM's Legislative/Public Issues Representative at:
robinelainelady@yahoo.com
- Contact Becky Smith, GAM's President at:
bsmith498@spsmail.org

If we don't stand
up for the gifted
students of
Missouri,
Who Will?

