

# **Voices Against Hunger**

## An Anti-Hunger Advocacy Guide



Building Community  
Making Change Happen

**ATLANTA COMMUNITY FOOD BANK**  
Sponsored by  
**Mazon: A Jewish Response to Hunger**

# Atlanta Community Food Bank

## Background Information

***The mission of the Atlanta Community Food Bank is to fight hunger by engaging, educating and empowering our community.***

The Atlanta Community Food Bank is a network of people working together to fight hunger and build a better community. A member of the national America's Second Harvest Food Bank Network, the Atlanta Community Food Bank began serving the community in 1979. In 2001 the Food Bank distributed 15 million pounds of food to nearly 700 non-profit agencies assisting hungry people in metro Atlanta and 29 other north Georgia counties. These agencies provided 711,500 meals, and groceries to an additional 64,710 individuals, during an average **month** in 2001.

The ACFB has several programs besides its basic food distribution:

**Atlanta's Table** collects prepared and perishable food from hotels, restaurants, caterers and other food service operators. The food is transported directly to non-profit community kitchens, night shelters and residential programs for immediate use.

**The Hunger Walk** has been held for the past 15 years. The Walk provides a fundraising opportunity as well as a forum for recognition and discussion of hunger in our community. The Hunger Walk funds benefit more than 40 local, national and international hunger relief organizations. Hunger Walk '02 raised over \$214,000 for organizations fighting hunger in Georgia.

**Hunger 101** was developed to serve as the principal education component of the Food Bank. Currently, materials are available for classes of young children, adolescents, or adults. All classes have interactive aspects, which focus on identifying populations at-risk for hunger, the causes and effects of hunger and strategies to address hunger. All Hunger 101 students are introduced to the idea of **community building** and are invited to join the corps of volunteers that are essential to the Food Bank's success.

Other projects include **Kids In Need, Product Rescue Center** and our **Community Garden Initiative**. Please contact us if you would like more information about the Atlanta Community Food Bank, what we do or how you can get involved!

# APPROACHING ADVOCACY

***“You can blame people who knock things over in the dark, or you can begin to light candles. You’re only at fault if you know about the problem and do nothing.”*** Paul Hawken, *The Sun*, April 2002

A few years ago, a good friend of the Food Bank, who worked for our Governor, told us that we were crazy. “You have such potential for doing profoundly good work-but through public policy, not just food distribution.” He saw the eight Georgia food banks and our combined 1200 nonprofit member agencies as an audience with no voice.

When we thought about this discussion, we realized the extent of our potential influence on the public decisions that impacted the lives of low-income Georgians as well as the work of nonprofit, anti-hunger organizations. Twelve hundred member agencies throughout our state-all interested in making sure low-income people get fed-represented thousands of voters. Voters we knew; voters we spoke with regularly and voters who trusted us enough to listen to our opinions. We worked on a campaign to increase the number of schools in the state that served breakfast to their students. The Governor’s Office got so many of our post cards, they called to let us know they “got the message.” Our bill passed and today, five years later, nearly 95% of low-income, school age children in our state can eat a hot breakfast at school and start the day ready to learn. The experience was not only successful but empowering- folks asked us, “what do we do next?”

One of our next steps is this Advocacy Guide. Our hope is that as a larger community of like-minded citizens we can better channel and connect our energies, knowledge and passions to ease the burdens of providing good works and to increase the scope of our collective vision. By building a sense of community among those interested in our mission, we serve those in need as well as ourselves. We decided to develop this Advocacy Resource Guide to provide information and inspiration, activities and advice.

Designed as part of our Hunger 101 curricula, this Guide can be used by other food banks, other non-profit agencies supporting communities, teachers, faith groups, and individuals seeking an introduction to fighting hunger on the policy level. We draw from a host of knowledgeable individuals and organizations in the preparation of this advocacy guide. We share some of our own stories and experiences.

People living without sufficient income do not have regular access to the most basic human needs. Non-profit agencies, churches and charities do not have enough money or personnel to feed, house and clothe the growing number of Americans needing help to meet their daily needs. **33 Million Americans are food insecure in this country; 13 million of them are children.** \* This number will continue to grow unless we take the initiative to change public policies that impact support for children, the elderly, the homeless and working poor in this nation.

Every one of us has the right and, we would argue, the responsibility, to actively participate in this political process, to voice concern, support policies that work well, propose new ideas, even to draft new legislation. Too few of us do. Policies-whether locally implemented or federally- are put into effect by elected lawmakers who are often significantly removed from the issues which affect those living in poverty. Informed wisdom regarding low wages, the crisis in housing or health care, lack of affordable childcare (to name a few) is deeply appreciated by decision makers overwhelmed with opportunity and responsibility.

The resources and tools in this advocacy guide can help to put us on the road toward becoming effective advocates.

*\*Bread for the World, 2002*

# WHY SHOULD WE GET INVOLVED?

The people most vulnerable to hunger in this country have very little voice in government. If you are living on little to no income you probably have less time, trust, access, transportation and money to promote candidates who might be more connected to the issues affecting you. This is why other voices are needed. When voices and energies come together change can happen.

***“It is important to note that many of the legislative victories of recent years- civil rights for people with disabilities, child care for working parents, health care for low-income families, more community-based services for the mentally ill, fairer budgets and tax systems, child welfare services and nursing home reforms, and many, many more- are a direct result of advocacy.”***

***Nancy Amidei- OMB WATCH***

**Charity is not enough.** The need is too great, budgets are too small and a family whose income can't cover housing costs is going to continually need food support and will very often have little time to access it. Good works are necessary. But they do little to change the systems that keep people poor and hungry. Yet, charitable organizations are rich in human resources and have such potential to improve laws and lives. They often have access and/or are tuned to the pulse of poor communities and can help give voice to the issues. Many charitable organizations do not see this as part of their mission or aren't aware of the potential they have to enact change.

***“ Lending a hand at a food drive will help satisfy someone's hunger today, but won't solve the problem over the long term. As a people we also have a collective responsibility to the needs of the vulnerable through government action.”***

*Deborah Leff, Former President and CEO of Second Harvest.*

**There are so many ways to be an anti-hunger advocate.** It might be that you are a writer, a talker, an excellent fundraiser, an educator, an organizer or it might be that you are a connector of people and ideas. You can write or call policy makers, you can educate your community on the issues, and/or you can stuff envelopes for a candidate you know supports the policies that fight hunger and poverty. You get to choose. We just encourage that you find what works for you and – do it!

# WHAT DOES ADVOCACY MEAN?

**ADVOCACY** is the act of pleading or arguing in favor of something; One who argues for a cause; A supporter; a defender; One who pleads on another's behalf.

*The American Heritage College Dictionary, Third Edition, 1997*

**ADVOCACY** is the pursuit of influencing outcomes-including public policy and resource allocation decisions within political, economic, and social systems and institutions- that directly affect people's lives.

**ADVOCACY** consists of organized efforts and actions based on the reality of "what is." These organized actions seek to highlight critical issues that have been ignored and submerged, to influence public attitudes, and to enact and implement laws and public policies so that vision of "what should be" in a just, decent society become a reality. Human rights-political, economic and social is an overreaching framework for these visions. Advocacy organizations draw their strength from and are accountable to people- their members, constituents, and /or members of affected groups.

**ADVOCACY** has purposeful results: to enable social justice advocates to gain access and choice in the decision making of relevant institutions; thereby changing the institutions themselves; and to bring clear improvements in people's lives.

*Excerpted from Volume I: Reflections on Advocacy by David Cohen, Co Director, Advocacy Institute from the forthcoming Advocacy Learning Initiative by Oxfam America and the Advocacy Institute.*

# DEVELOP A STRATEGY

Not very long ago, a rally was held at the Georgia State Capitol. People who held placards, which declared, "End Poverty Now!" lined the front steps to the building. Others marched through the halls outside the legislative chambers, chanting, "End Poverty Now!" They gathered in the second floor rotunda around a bank of microphones and told the press their purpose for the day was to get the state's decision-makers to end poverty in Georgia.

Near the end of the press conference, a state senator, who had been listening intently, raised his hand and asked the group's spokesperson, "OK, I'll bite, what specific bills or budget items do you think will end poverty in Georgia? What's your strategy?"

For the first time in hours, the group was silent. They had an audience and a legislator interested in their issue, but they had no answer. They had not come prepared to introduce specific ideas, legislation or budget items. The state senator suggested they go home and spend time working out their legislative and budgetary strategies. He encouraged them to come up with some ideas that would achieve their goal – and that he could support legislatively.

This story illustrates a central point about political advocacy. Knowing that something is wrong or unjust is not enough. Proposing focused methods to address a problem as well as having a timeline and a coalition of supporters are central to having a successful, meaningful campaign.

## **Start with the basics:**

- What is the problem?
- Who is affected?

## **Then move to more strategic questions:**

- What resources are needed to impact the problem?
- Who has the power to influence and remedy the problem?
- Who are the natural allies? Strengths? Weaknesses?
- Who are the natural opponents? Strengths? Weaknesses?
- Is the issue timely?
- What is the public conversation about the problem?
- How is it viewed generally?
- Will change require new laws? Municipal? County? State? Federal?
- Which jurisdiction is appropriate?
- Will change require new administrative policies?
- What message will convince decision-makers to support your campaign?
- How long will the campaign need to be?



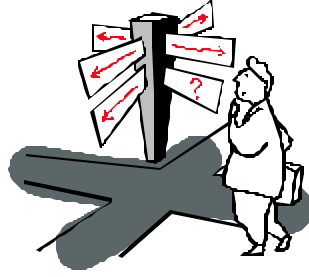
## WHAT IS THE PROBLEM?

Do you remember the tricks you learned in junior high school about picking a topic for a term paper? First, you thought of a BIG idea – baseball, for instance. Then, you made a list of major subtopics: World Series/National League/American League.

Next, you thought of smaller issues within the larger topic: World Series/National League/Atlanta Braves. Then you might focus on a certain players' position; pitchers, for example. Finally, you would narrow your focus to a specific time period: 2001 season.

At last, you were ready! Your term paper topic was: "How the Atlanta Braves lost the 2001 World Series." Your theme focused on how the pitchers of the winning New York Yankees compared with the pitching staff of the Braves. This was a much more specific and manageable topic than trying to tackle a topic as broad as "baseball" within the confines of a 10-page term paper due at the end of the week.

Narrowing down the focus of any advocacy campaign will look much the same. You need a manageable issue that is focused enough to achieve positive results within a specific period of time. "End Poverty Now!" might be a great rallying cry, but it's a very weak legislative advocacy message and not at all pragmatic. While poverty may be the overarching problem to many social issues, it is too broad and too complex to solve with any one – or two, or three – campaigns. A more achievable outcome for a campaign might be to seek a higher minimum wage or to support the development of housing designed for low-income households. Of course, the direction of your advocacy campaign will have to reflect the priorities and decisions of your supporters and allies.



## WHO IS AFFECTED?

For demonstration sake, let's say that you have become disturbed about the number of hungry children in your community. How do you translate the individual dilemma of each hungry child into a legislative agenda? Perhaps your next question should focus on what resources are available to solve this problem. Some simple research may discover that the number of low-income children in the state who are served school breakfast is only a small percentage of those who get a school lunch. Further research may find that Food Stamps are underutilized in your state or that only a small portion of eligible pregnant women or mothers of newborns are receiving WIC vouchers. Another avenue would be to research the nutrition education offered young people in school. Perhaps helping young adults learn how to make the most cost beneficial food choices will help them increase their own nutritional health as well as any future children they may have.

There is a multitude of reasons children in the United States suffer from hunger. Your job, as an advocate, is to connect to the solutions that have the resources necessary to accomplish your goal. If you are interested in legislative advocacy, you need to find a solution that is wide enough in scope to address your concern well but achievable within your state's legislative purview.

Using the example above, let's assume that you decided to focus your current efforts on increasing the number of schools that provide breakfast to its students. Funds are available from USDA for school meal costs – that's an essential resource. And the funds increase proportionately to serve schools that have high numbers of low-income students. Teachers, parents, and anti-hunger advocates are natural allies – none of them would want a child to face a school day without enough food to eat. Their potential support is another essential resource. And, the state has previously mandated that all schools provide lunch – another resource – precedent!

## WHO ARE THE NATURAL ALLIES?

The strategic issue to be addressed is increasing access to school breakfast for all children. Low-income children will be served under the broad umbrella of “all children” and by having the broad appeal one can garner support from a wide range of groups and individuals.

Now is the time to focus on building your coalition of allies. Generally, one lone voice isn't strong enough to be heard in the din of legislative activity. Letting others know about your concern and gathering their enthusiastic support is essential. Take the time to discern what other groups and individuals might be interested in the issue, as well. Using our example of increasing school breakfast participation, one might think about contacting local and state PTAs, teachers' organizations, school food service personnel, principals and superintendents. State or countywide organizations that provide services to families with children should be contacted as well. Anti-hunger advocates will be interested. Food companies that have contracts with school systems will understand that increased meals translate to increased business. Find out who sells milk to the schools, for instance. Some basic research will let you know what legislators and what media outlets have shown interest in school issues, anti-hunger and children's well being.

Take the time to contact each of these persons and organizations in person. Network like there was no tomorrow. *Give everyone a written description of the problem and your vision of the solution.* Provide opportunities for people to meet one another and discuss what resources they might bring to the growing coalition. Help coalition members recognize each other's strengths and weaknesses. One member may have an excellent public image already. Another may have policy work expertise. And another may have important relationships with legislators. Keep good notes, track how to contact people, share information. Facilitate the process. It is key to personally acknowledge that a solution to the problem is central. Taking and getting credit personally – is beside the point.



## WHO HAS THE POWER AND INFLUENCE?

**Do your homework. Review previous, related legislation. Who introduced the bill? Where did it find funding? Who were the bill's sponsors? What committees or department boards reviewed the issue? What was their opinion? Who spoke against the measure? Ask other advocates for advice regarding the legislative and administrative gatekeepers regarding your issue.**

Meet the powerbrokers. One excellent description of such persons is, "public servant." They are accessible. Try to see key leaders during times that are not hectic and preferably in their home district. Keep track of appointments, secretaries' names and contact information.

*Remember the 51% rule.* Elected officials need 51% of voters in their district to remain in office. They need 51% of their colleagues to get a bill or budget item through committees and a floor vote. Elected officials want to know who supports an issue and how deep that support runs. You will need to convey numbers. This is one occasion when your coalition of supporters is essential.

Take good notes of each meeting and discussion with administrators and elected officials. Ask how your coalition can assist the legislator on the issue. Georgia's state legislators have few staff. Your ability to do research, write bills, find cosponsors, generate media attention and community support will be invaluable. You should follow-up meetings with a letter thanking the person for his/her time and summarizing the discussion and proposed next steps.



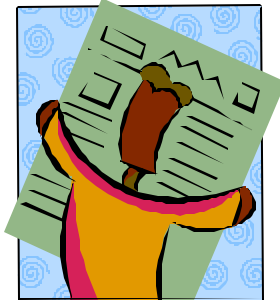
## PUBLIC CONVERSATION AND MESSAGE

**Most nonprofits have limited amounts of time and money to devote to lobbying decision makers. Generating public awareness about our issues is one of the most cost-effective ways to build support. Your audiences are other voters, the media and elected officials and their staff.**

Sit down with your coalition members and decide upon a common message. What are your key points? How will you demonstrate those points? What are the criticisms you are likely to encounter and how will you answer them? Try to anticipate tough questions. Develop a “talking points” sheet to which coalition members can refer. Try to include human-interest stories that demonstrate your point. If you are talking to the press about the importance of nutrition to students’ classroom behavior and achievement, ask an older student or teacher to accompany you. They can talk about their experiences and paint the picture the media, especially, needs.

When speaking to members of the voting public, legislators or the press, never exaggerate, evade or elude. If you don’t have an informed answer to a question, offer to get the answer and convey it at a later time. Then, do it. Be courteous and dependable.

Ask members of local media to give you advice on the type of stories they find to be newsworthy. Share this information with coalition members. Several of them may have invaluable story leads. Survey coalition members to discover a) who has talent as a spokesperson, b) who has personal contacts among local decision-makers and media personnel and c) who has experienced press relations staff on board.



## CAUTION, BUT FORGE AHEAD

Stay flexible and open to suggestion. Compromise is the key to legislative success. Decide what areas of your issue are negotiable well in advance of any legislative debate. Let your supporters, in the community and in the legislature, know what's acceptable to the coalition and what is not. There are no "enemies," merely a difference of opinion or a lack of information. Someone who acts as an opponent on one issue may be a vital ally on another. You are advocating for important issues, don't spoil future successes with today's sour grapes!

Make sure your efforts remain timely. Last legislative session, a coalition of anti-death penalty advocates held an enormous petition drive. They collected their petitions and had a delegation of high school and college students bring them to the office of the state Senate's majority leader.

The majority leader greeted them warmly, listened to their introduction and accepted their petitions. He told them he was very impressed with their petition drive and the support it showed for the issue. But, they had made this appointment for a day during the last week of the legislative session. They had no bill written – and it was just past the deadline for new legislation to be introduced. There was nothing either the Majority Leader or the coalition members could do to have this issue debated and voted on during that session.

The young people were very disappointed and discouraged. As they left the office, they complained about the "system" that had barred and negated their hard work. A well-seasoned lobbyist and the Majority Leader sat down with them and explained that it was their responsibility to obtain the information about the legislative calendar and to make sure they had a good understanding of its mechanics. Passing legislation is like playing in an orchestra – one has to be familiar with the sheet music, understand how all the instruments weave in and out of the composition and know when to play and when to wait!



## LOBBYING RULES FOR THE 501 (c)(3)

**“Lobbying- giving a voice to people and causes that are often neglected can be a charities most effective service.”**

*Charity Lobbying in the Public Interest: Resource and Discussion Guide/ A project of the Independent Sector.*

Many nonprofits operate under the myth that lobbying is illegal or not appropriate to their mission. Lobbying is absolutely legal and in most cases a perfect compliment. Who better to inform legislators about the needs of your community?

The following is a basic overview of the **1976 Lobby Law**-

501 (c)(3)s have a choice between two sets of rules to follow:

- The Substantial Part Test
- The Expenditure Test (also known as the 501h election).

It is generally preferable for charities to choose one set of rules. If a charity opts for the **Expenditure Test** it needs to “elect” this set of rules by filing an IRS form 5768 that informs the IRS that it has elected to follow the expenditure test for lobbying and report lobbying expenditures annually on *Tax Form 990 Schedule A*.

If a charity opts for the **Substantial Part Test**, lobbying cannot be a substantial part of your organizations’ activities. If you do make it a substantial part of your organizations’ activities you may lose your tax exemption and with it the right to receive tax-deductible contributions.

## What You CANNOT do as a 501(c)(3):

- Charities **cannot** endorse political candidates, nor mobilize supporters to elect or defeat candidates.
- Charities **cannot** align themselves with political parties. They cannot contribute to candidates or parties.

## What is the difference between Direct and Grassroots Lobbying?

**Direct lobbying** is when an organization attempts to influence specific legislation by stating its position or urges a legislator to support, oppose or otherwise take action on a bill or proposed legislation.

**Grassroots lobbying** is when an organization urges the public to take action on specific legislation. Key elements of grassroots lobbying are referring the community to legislation, reflecting on the merits of specific legislation, encouraging the people public to contact legislators and supplying contact information.

## Advocacy Actions that are NOT considered Lobbying:

- Self– Defense Lobbying: Matters affecting a nonprofit's own status such as opposing proposals to curtail lobbying.
- Non self-defense lobbying for programs in the nonprofit's field such as healthcare or welfare.
- Communications about legislation to other organization members even if the organization has a position on the legislation, so long as it doesn't directly encourage members or others to lobby.
- Contact with Executive Branch employees in support of, or opposition to, proposed regulations.

*(Excerpted and adapted from Charity Lobbying in the Public Interest: Resource and Discussion Guide A project of the Independent Sector.)\_For more of this information visit [www.clpi.org](http://www.clpi.org)*

# Activities: Discussion and Action



**Icebreaker**  
**Finding Your Voice**  
**Food Policy Game**  
**Writing That Letter**

# ACTIVITY #1

## ICEBREAKER

**Objective:** Stimulate conversation about hunger, poverty and advocacy. Ascertain each participant's current understanding of key concepts.

**The activity is appropriate for Junior High-Adult participants.**

**Materials Needed:** Copy of vocabulary list, cut into strips. You might also want a small box or hat to put them in, from which participants can draw their word.

**Time Needed:** 15-20 Minutes

### **Directions:**

1. Separate the words and phrases on the following page into individual strips, allowing one word or phrase per strip.
2. Distribute one strip to each participant.
3. Ask each participant to read his/her word and reflect upon their personal understanding of the word/phrase.
4. Give each person a few moments for reflection.
5. Ask each person to tell the larger group her/his ideas about the word on her/his strip. No group discussion has to occur at this point. Each person will speak, in turn, for a few moments.
6. Ask for comments once each participant has spoken. Did themes emerge from the group? Were there wide differences of opinion?
7. Explain that this exercise was done to demonstrate the breadth of knowledge and opinions about key concepts related to hunger, poverty and advocacy.

# WORDS AND PHRASES

For distribution during the advocates icebreaker

**Community Building**

**Poverty**

**Food Stamps**

**Welfare**

**Minimum Wage**

**Food Security**

**Working Poor**

**Homeless**

**Elderly**

**Government**

**Lawmakers**

**Lobbying**

**Advocacy**

**Community**

**Justice**

**Prejudice**

**Equality**

**Voice**

**Empowered**

**Hunger**

**Action**

**Coalition**

**Policy**

**Livable wage**

**Grassroots**

**Charity**

# ACTIVITY #2

## FINDING YOUR VOICE

**Objective:** To identify important issues in their community (school, neighborhood, faith (to name a few) and develop various strategies for change.

**Appropriate for Junior High-Adult Participants.**

**Materials:**

Internet access (a helpful research tool- not necessary to the brainstorming component of this activity.)

List of local lawmakers (See our list of websites- we have links to sites that will give you contacts by state.)

Local media contact information (see *'media contacts'* on website page)

Note paper/pens

Flip chart

Might also want to include art supplies for bulletin board education or flyers.

**Instructions:**

Brainstorm a list of rules or laws that we live by- either in school or in our communities-

Example: *"In my neighborhood we are not allowed to put any art work or have gardens in the front of the house."*

**Possible discussion questions:**

- How do we feel about these rules?
- Are they fair?
- What are the origins of these rules?
- Can these rules be changed?
- How might you change certain rules?

Brainstorm examples throughout history where people lived under oppressive conditions- with grave injustices. Example: Slavery, child labor, etc.

Brainstorm examples of injustice in our world and or country currently.

Brainstorm lists of peaceful strategies for changing a policy or law to generate justice, including:

- Letter writing to newspapers and legislators
- Lobbying
- Voting
- Rallies and demonstrations
- Strikes

**Take this activity to another level:**

Have groups choose an issue that is connected to poverty and hunger. Then research the selected issue:

Cost of Health Care  
Housing Crisis  
Cost of Health Insurance  
Minimum Wage  
Access to affordable childcare  
Transportation  
Food Stamp Program  
School Lunch Program  
W.I.C. Program  
Emergency Food  
Food Insecurity

**Some questions to ask as you research:**

- What are the latest statistics?
- Who do programs serve?
- Who is suffering?
- What are the limitations of programs?
- What are the access issues?

The focus of this activity is to learn about and address an issue. Focus your efforts on ideas to improve programs or supports and develop a strategy. The following is a list of questions you should work into discussions with your group:

- Which strategy or strategies will we use?
- Why are these strategies appropriate?
- Is this a federal, state or municipal issue?
- What resources will we need?
- Whose support will we need?
- Which tactics will help promote our strategies?  
(slogans, buttons, ads, editorials, videos, etc)
- What is our timetable?
- How will we divide up our tasks?

Present the campaigns to the entire group. You might decide to meet over several weeks to allow more time for research and development. You might decide to brainstorm now and check resources later.

We would like you to implement your strategies and move this from the classroom or table to action. Make sure that you access the resources available in this Guidebook.

## ACTIVITY #3

### THE FOOD POLICY GAME A PUBLIC POLICY EDUCATION PROJECT

*Adapted from an idea conceived by the University of Minnesota and the Minnesota Extension Service through a statewide forum entitled: Food Access: Exploring Issues and Affecting Changes.*

**This activity is appropriate for High School and Adult Participants**

**Time Needed:** A minimum of 1 hour.

Our Hunger 101 project has utilized a similar role playing game to offer groups the opportunity of experiencing the challenges of navigating social services if you are a low-income person: The Food Game. It has been a wonderful tool to learn about the challenges facing people everyday. This Food Policy Game is a wonderful way to explore stepping into the legislative process.

**“I know no safe depository of the ultimate power of the society but the people themselves; and if we think them not enlightened enough to exercise their control with a wholesome discretion, the remedy is not to take it from them, but to inform their discretion by education.” *Thomas Jefferson, 1820***

Ensuring that all citizens have access to a wholesome food supply requires thoughtful public policies. As our lives become more complex and as we try to decide what role government should play in the food system, we need greater understanding of the development of public policies and the impact they have on the quality of our lives.

The Food Policy Game provides an opportunity to practice making decisions (public and private), examine our own feelings and values, and relate them to public policies regarding food access.

**The learning objectives of this interactive Food Policy Game are to:**

- Determine the roles of individual stakeholders in the legislative process.
- Evaluate strategies for affecting the policy-making process.
- Identify sources of power in the legislative process.
- Develop an understanding of the beliefs and values underlying food and nutrition policies.

## **Key elements to a successful game include:**

- Diversity of participants- can promote a more thorough examination of issues.
- Introductions/ice breakers- allows people to connect and relax.
- Sufficient debriefing time- helps players integrate new knowledge.

## **Materials Needed:**

Blank nametags

Markers

Pencils

Masking tape

Game cards, photocopied, cut and collated as required

Signs for Speaker's Spot, Library and Cafeteria

Gavel for Referee

A minimum of 11 people is needed to play.

There is no absolute maximum- however debriefing with a group larger than 40 can make it difficult for all players to contribute to discussion.

## **Suggestions for experts to invite:**

Legislators (State or National), legislative aides, lobbyists, city council members, mayor, county board representatives, civic leaders who work with political issues, legislative policy analysts, media representatives.

## **Facilitator's Role is to:**

- Set the stage.
- Create a comfortable environment.
- Guide the discussion in such a way that all get to participate and share.

## **Overview:**

Players take on the roles of a legislative body- the Foodland Legislature.

The Foodland legislature is in its last day of the session in an election year. Foodland is an agricultural state, and it is spring planting time. One of Foodland's most important crops is called Honeybeans. However, it appears that any Honeybean planted this year will be eaten by something called the Fierce Flying Frogs, which are native to Asia and have no natural local predators.

The round opens with a speech by the governor, who has just returned from a trip to China. S/he presents the legislature with a proposal it import and release the Frog's natural enemy, the Stabbing Storks. The legislature must deliberate the pros and cons of this bill and then vote on it before the round ends.

Participants play the roles of Lawmakers, Aides, Lobbyists, and a few others, trading Clout Cards and information.

## **Space/Supplies**

- Be sure you have a room large enough for your group to move around freely.
- Mark off an area of the room as the Legislative Chamber. This may be done with masking tape on the floor, string, an arrangement of chairs, or in other ways. The space must be large enough for all of the Lawmakers and Aides in your group to step inside at the same time.
- It should be possible for Lawmakers to move easily in and out of the chamber.
- A sign identifying a Speaker's Well should be located inside the Chamber.
- You will also need an area, preferably a table or a few chairs together, marked with a sign as the Legislative Library. The Library should also be supplied with the information and papers that the Librarian will need. See the Role Inventory for details of what should be there. There may be a lot of traffic at the Library, so it is best situated away from the boundary of the Chamber.
- If you have refreshments available during the game, you may want to mark the table as the Legislative Cafeteria.

## **Facilitator**

Prepare by becoming familiar with roles and rules.  
Plan the debriefing session.

## **Roles and game cards**

Photocopy role materials needed according to directions.

The roles, speeches, agreements, clout cards and lists to copy/cut are all found at the end of this activity.

## LET'S START

- Facilitator should begin by having participants introduce themselves and/or go through the icebreaking exercise to get people warmed up and feeling more comfortable with each other.
- Introduce the FOOD POLICY GAME to the group and state your purpose in inviting them to play. Explain that roles are purposefully exaggerated and participants are encouraged to have fun with them!
- Introduce the game by reading this paragraph, or explaining the round in your own words:

***“In this game, you will take on roles as part of a lawmaking body, the Foodland Legislature. This is the last day of the legislative session in an election year. Foodland is an agricultural state, and one of its most important crops is Honeybeans. It appears, however, that any Honeybeans planted this year will be eaten by something called Fierce Flying Frogs, an exotic pest from Asia. Once you have received your roles, the game will open with a speech by the Governor, who has just returned from a visit to China.***

***You are entering into a simulation. This simulation creates an imaginary world where the people, places and situations are not real, and are not intended to exactly represent or parallel those in the real world.***

***This is experiential learning. You will not always be given detailed instructions on what to do. There is no right and wrong way to proceed. Please do not let this intimidate you. Relax and see what happens.***

***People’s unique life experiences will allow them to feel more or less comfortable with different roles. Don’t worry if a situation is new to you and you feel like you don’t know what to do. The purpose of a simulation is just that- to allow you to assume roles and experience situations that you might not encounter in real life.”***

Next read the **GROUND RULES** to the participants:

1. **“As long as you act within your role, as you understand it, and the instructions you have been given, anything is allowed.**
2. **The information you need to make wise decisions may be available from people playing other roles. If it is not available, do without it, or make it up.**
3. **There are no winners or losers. The only “consequences” of how you play are how much you learn and how much you enjoy it.**
4. **There are no “experts”. Some people will have more information than others regarding certain roles, but no one has all the “answers”. Getting access to the information is part of the experience.**
5. **Improvise and have fun!”**

At this point the role packets should be distributed randomly to the participants. Give them a few minutes to read the roles, but not long enough to start talking and acting; then open with the Governor’s speech. The facilitator usually reads this speech. If there is a journalist or reporter present you may call this a press conference. If you assign the role of Governor to someone, give him/her a copy of the speech- with other role materials.

**Note:** The role of the Governor can end with the opening speech, or s/he can continue as the Governor, circulating among the players, helping out, or lobbying for the bill, as s/he wishes. The facilitator or another person who wishes to observe rather than be a full participant should take on this role.

## **Role Packet Needs**

### **Referee**

Referee Role description, Bill/Rules

### **Librarian and Assistants**

Librarian Role description,

Clout Cards *(10 for each Lobbyist and 5 for each Aide.)*

*(You will give 10 to the Council on Agriculture Lobbyists with their role descriptions so you have no more for them)*

Information on Lawmakers' Districts.

Copies of the Coalition Agreement *(for total number of lobbyists divided by 4).*

Copies of the Bill/Rules *(for the number of lawmakers plus number of lobbyists).*

Copies of Non-committal Speeches.

### **Lawmakers**

Lawmaker Role descriptions (Blue, Red, Green, Orange, Purple, Brown, Yellow, Pink).

### **Legislative Aides**

Aide Role descriptions.

Additional 'Issues Sheet'.

### **Lobbyists**

Lobbyist role descriptions.

10 Clout Cards for the Council on Agriculture lobbyist only.

Position papers/speeches *(Each lobbying organization should have enough Position Paper/Speeches for all the lawmakers to have one. Determine the number of lawmakers and divide by the number of lobbyists from that organization to arrive at the number of copies to be supplies to each lobbyist.)*

### **Governor**

Governor's Speech

### **Concerned Citizen Journalist**

Role descriptions.

## Role Distribution

The key to role distribution is that no Lawmaker can be without an Aide, while Lobbyists can be added singly.

There are three different Lobbying Organizations. In addition, eight Lawmaker and Aide teams are each designated by a color. With more than 26 people, you will need to reuse some roles, and mark the role descriptions with numbers (e.g., Aide Green #1, Aide Green #2) so that they can pair up without confusion.

Assemble the role packages in this order, until all of the Lawmakers and Aides have been used once.

Referee-1  
Librarian-1

Lawmaker Red  
Aide Red  
Lobbyist 1

Lawmaker Blue  
Aide Blue  
Lobbyist 2

Lawmaker Green  
Aide Green  
Lobbyist 3

Lawmaker Orange  
Aide Orange  
Lobbyist 4  
...etc.

Library Assistant

If you are unsure of the number of participants, prepare enough Role Packets for the maximum number possible.

Distribute the Role Packets in random order. This helps mix the crowd since people who know each other often sit together. If roles are handed out in order, Lawmaker Red is likely to be sitting next to Aide Red.

Determine the number of participants and as you give out the last roles, **MAKE SURE THERE IS NO AIDE OR LAWMAKER WITHOUT THE OTHER.** If there is a single person left, give them a lobbyist role, or one of the auxiliary roles (Concerned Citizen or Journalist.)

## **ROLE: REFEREE**

Make a nametag to put on labeled "Referee (your name)." Find a watch or a clock in the room. This role should have use of a gavel.

You control the Speaker's Well, determining who can speak to the Chamber and for how long. You also maintain order in the Chamber.

You will open the legislative session as soon as the Governor is done speaking by reading the rules of the Chamber aloud. You will also announce that the vote will be called in 30 minutes. Note the time.

During the session, you must ensure that no lobbyists enter the Chamber.

If you find that no Lawmakers want to speak during the first 20 minutes, you may assist the Librarian in providing information or distributing Clout Cards, or you may circulate as you please.

At the appointed time, it is your responsibility to ensure that all the Lawmakers are in the Chamber for the vote. You can allow ten minutes of speeches, motions, or whatever the Lawmakers have in mind. You may decide whether or not to allow votes on other bills, amendments, etc. At the end of ten minutes, you must call a vote on the Stabbing Stork bill and announce the outcome.

## RULES OF THE CHAMBER

*Please give a copy to all players*

1. The referee will maintain order.
2. The referee will determine who speaks and for how long.
3. All speeches will be made from the Speaker's Well.
4. No lobbyist may enter the Chamber.
5. All Lawmakers must be inside the Chamber when the Referee calls the votes.
6. Lawmakers can vote yes, no or abstain.
7. The bill will pass only on a majority "yes" vote.

## YOU ARE A FOODLAND LAWMAKER

You are Lawmaker **BLUE**. Make yourself a nametag labeled "Lawmaker Blue (your name). Find your Aide.

You and your fellow Lawmakers have to vote on a bill before the legislative session is over. You decide how you will vote as well as how you can get re-elected. People who are able to give you *Clout Cards*, which symbolize power and influence, may sway you. Holding ten *Clout Cards* by the end of the session will help to assure your success in the fall. You may be swayed by Lobbyists' arguments or by your constituency.

You can make speeches at anytime from the Speaker's Well, which is controlled by the Referee. You can go anywhere in the room and talk to anyone. Time is limited. Make a good decision.

## YOU ARE A FOODLAND LAWMAKER

You are Lawmaker **RED**. Make a nametag labeled "Lawmaker Red (your name). Find your Aide.

You and your fellow Lawmakers have to vote on a bill before the legislative session is over. You decide how you will vote as well as how you can get re-elected. People who are able to give you *Clout Cards*, which symbolize power and influence, may sway you. Holding ten *Clout Cards* by the end of the session will help to assure your success in the fall. You may be swayed by Lobbyists' arguments or by your constituency.

You can make speeches at any time from the Speaker's Well, which is controlled by the Referee. You can go anywhere in the room and talk to anyone. Time is limited. Make a good decision.

### YOU ARE A FOODLAND LAWMAKER

You are Lawmaker **GREEN**. Make a nametag labeled "Lawmaker GREEN (your name)". Find your Aide.

You and your fellow Lawmakers have to vote on a bill before the legislative session is over. You decide how you will vote as well as how you can get re-elected. People who are able to give you *Clout Cards*, which symbolize power and influence, may sway you. Holding ten *Clout Cards* by the end of the session will help to assure your success in the fall. You may be swayed by Lobbyists' arguments or by your constituency.

You can make speeches at any time from the Speaker's Well, which is controlled by the Referee. You can go anywhere in the room and talk to anyone. Time is limited. Make a good decision.

### YOU ARE A FOODLAND LAWMAKER

You are Lawmaker **ORANGE**. Make a nametag labeled "Lawmaker ORANGE (your name)". Find your Aide.

You and your fellow Lawmakers have to vote on a bill before the legislative session is over. You decide how you will vote as well as how you can get re-elected. People who are able to give you *Clout Cards*, which symbolize power and influence, may sway you. Holding ten *Clout Cards* by the end of the session will help to assure your success in the fall. You may be swayed by Lobbyists' arguments or by your constituency.

You can make speeches at any time from the Speaker's Well, which is controlled by the Referee. You can go anywhere in the room and talk to anyone. Time is limited. Make a good decision.

### YOU ARE A FOODLAND LAWMAKER

You are Lawmaker **PURPLE**. Make a nametag labeled "Lawmaker PURPLE (your name)". Find your Aide.

You and your fellow Lawmakers have to vote on a bill before the legislative session is over. You decide how you will vote as well as how you can get re-elected. People who are able to give you *Clout Cards*, which symbolize power and influence, may sway you. Holding ten *Clout Cards* by the end of the session will help to assure your success in the fall. You may be swayed by Lobbyists' arguments or by your constituency.

You can make speeches at any time from the Speaker's Well, which is controlled by the Referee. You can go anywhere in the room and talk to anyone. Time is limited. Make a good decision.

### YOU ARE A FOODLAND LAWMAKER

You are Lawmaker **BROWN**. Make a nametag labeled "Lawmaker BROWN (your name)". Find your Aide.

You and your fellow Lawmakers have to vote on a bill before the legislative session is over. You decide how you will vote as well as how you can get re-elected. People who are able to give you *Clout Cards*, which symbolize power and influence, may sway you. Holding ten *Clout Cards* by the end of the session will help to assure your success in the fall. You may be swayed by Lobbyists' arguments or by your constituency.

You can make speeches at any time from the Speaker's Well, which is controlled by the Referee. You can go anywhere in the room and talk to anyone. Time is limited. Make a good decision.

### YOU ARE A FOODLAND LAWMAKER

You are Lawmaker **YELLOW**. Make a nametag labeled "Lawmaker YELLOW (your name)". Find your Aide.

You and your fellow Lawmakers have to vote on a bill before the legislative session is over. You decide how you will vote as well as how you can get re-elected. People who are able to give you *Clout Cards*, which symbolize power and influence, may sway you. Holding ten *Clout Cards* by the end of the session will help to assure your success in the fall. You may be swayed by Lobbyists' arguments or by your constituency.

You can make speeches at any time from the Speaker's Well, which is controlled by the Referee. You can go anywhere in the room and talk to anyone. Time is limited. Make a good decision.

### YOU ARE A FOODLAND LAWMAKER

You are Lawmaker **PINK**. Make a nametag labeled "Lawmaker PINK (your name)". Find your Aide.

You and your fellow Lawmakers have to vote on a bill before the legislative session is over. You decide how you will vote as well as how you can get re-elected. People who are able to give you *Clout Cards*, which symbolize power and influence, may sway you. Holding ten *Clout Cards* by the end of the session will help to assure your success in the fall. You may be swayed by Lobbyists' arguments or by your constituency.

You can make speeches at any time from the Speaker's Well, which is controlled by the Referee. You can go anywhere in the room and talk to anyone. Time is limited. Make a good decision.

### YOU ARE AN AIDE TO A FOODLAND LAWMAKER

You are **AIDE BLUE**. Make yourself a nametag labeled "Aide Blue (your name)." Find your Lawmaker.

You will help your Lawmaker decide how to vote today. Your job depends on his or her re-election in the fall. You have a Lawmaker's ear and set his or her appointments, so you are very important to the Lobbyists. *Clout Cards* collected by you for your Lawmaker will increase his or her influence and chances for re-election.

You also have a list of other issues your Lawmaker needs to consider. If he or she is able to decide on all of them, bring the completed list to the Librarian for extra Clout. The Librarian may also have other information, including the text of a noncommittal speech on the issue and information regarding your district, which might be useful toward re-election.

You can go anywhere in the room. Time is limited. Use your influence well.

### YOU ARE AN AIDE TO A FOODLAND LAWMAKER

You are **AIDE RED**. Make yourself a nametag labeled "Aide RED (your name)." Find your Lawmaker.

You will help your Lawmaker decide how to vote today. Your job depends on his or her re-election in the fall. You have a Lawmaker's ear and set his or her appointments, so you are very important to the Lobbyists. *Clout Cards* collected by you for your Lawmaker will increase his or her influence and chances for re-election.

You also have a list of other issues your Lawmaker needs to consider. If he or she is able to decide on all of them, bring the completed list to the Librarian for extra Clout. The Librarian may also have other information, including the text of a noncommittal speech on the issue and information regarding your district, which might be useful toward re-election.

You can go anywhere in the room. Time is limited. Use your influence well.

### YOU ARE AN AIDE TO A FOODLAND LAWMAKER

You are **AIDE GREEN**. Make yourself a nametag labeled "Aide GREEN (your name)." Find your Lawmaker.

You will help your Lawmaker decide how to vote today. Your job depends on his or her re-election in the fall. You have a Lawmaker's ear and set his or her appointments, so you are very important to the Lobbyists. *Clout Cards* collected by you for your Lawmaker will increase his or her influence and chances for re-election.

You also have a list of other issues your Lawmaker needs to consider. If he or she is able to decide on all of them, bring the completed list to the Librarian for extra Clout. The Librarian may also have other information, including the text of a noncommittal speech on the issue and information regarding your district, which might be useful toward re-election.

You can go anywhere in the room. Time is limited. Use your influence well.

### YOU ARE AN AIDE TO A FOODLAND LAWMAKER

You are **AIDE ORANGE**. Make yourself a nametag labeled "Aide ORANGE (your name)." Find your Lawmaker.

You will help your Lawmaker decide how to vote today. Your job depends on his or her re-election in the fall. You have a Lawmaker's ear and set his or her appointments, so you are very important to the Lobbyists. *Clout Cards* collected by you for your Lawmaker will increase his or her influence and chances for re-election.

You also have a list of other issues your Lawmaker needs to consider. If he or she is able to decide on all of them, bring the completed list to the Librarian for extra Clout. The Librarian may also have other information, including the text of a noncommittal speech on the issue and information regarding your district, which might be useful toward re-election.

You can go anywhere in the room. Time is limited. Use your influence well.

### **YOU ARE AN AIDE TO A FOODLAND LAWMAKER**

You are **AIDE PURPLE**. Make yourself a nametag labeled "Aide PURPLE (your name)." Find your Lawmaker.

You will help your Lawmaker decide how to vote today. Your job depends on his or her re-election in the fall. You have a Lawmaker's ear and set his or her appointments, so you are very important to the Lobbyists. *Clout Cards* collected by you for your Lawmaker will increase his or her influence and chances for re-election.

You also have a list of other issues your Lawmaker needs to consider. If he or she is able to decide on all of them, bring the completed list to the Librarian for extra Clout. The Librarian may also have other information, including the text of a noncommittal speech on the issue and information regarding your district, which might be useful toward re-election.

You can go anywhere in the room. Time is limited. Use your influence well.

### **YOU ARE AN AIDE TO A FOODLAND LAWMAKER**

You are **AIDE BROWN**. Make yourself a nametag labeled "Aide BROWN (your name)." Find your Lawmaker.

You will help your Lawmaker decide how to vote today. Your job depends on his or her re-election in the fall. You have a Lawmaker's ear and set his or her appointments, so you are very important to the Lobbyists. *Clout Cards* collected by you for your Lawmaker will increase his or her influence and chances for re-election.

You also have a list of other issues your Lawmaker needs to consider. If he or she is able to decide on all of them, bring the completed list to the Librarian for extra Clout. The Librarian may also have other information, including the text of a noncommittal speech on the issue and information regarding your district, which might be useful toward re-election.

You can go anywhere in the room. Time is limited. Use your influence well.

### **YOU ARE AN AIDE TO A FOODLAND LAWMAKER**

You are **AIDE YELLOW**. Make yourself a nametag labeled "Aide YELLOW (your name)." Find your Lawmaker.

You will help your Lawmaker decide how to vote today. Your job depends on his or her re-election in the fall. You have a Lawmaker's ear and set his or her appointments, so you are very important to the Lobbyists. *Clout Cards* collected by you for your Lawmaker will increase his or her influence and chances for re-election.

You also have a list of other issues your Lawmaker needs to consider. If he or she is able to decide on all of them, bring the completed list to the Librarian for extra Clout. The Librarian may also have other information, including the text of a noncommittal speech on the issue and information regarding your district, which might be useful toward re-election.

You can go anywhere in the room. Time is limited. Use your influence well.

### **YOU ARE AN AIDE TO A FOODLAND LAWMAKER**

You are **AIDE PINK**. Make yourself a nametag labeled "Aide PINK (your name)." Find your Lawmaker.

You will help your Lawmaker decide how to vote today. Your job depends on his or her re-election in the fall. You have a Lawmaker's ear and set his or her appointments, so you are very important to the Lobbyists. *Clout Cards* collected by you for your Lawmaker will increase his or her influence and chances for re-election.

You also have a list of other issues your Lawmaker needs to consider. If he or she is able to decide on all of them, bring the completed list to the Librarian for extra Clout. The Librarian may also have other information, including the text of a noncommittal speech on the issue and information regarding your district, which might be useful toward re-election.

You can go anywhere in the room. Time is limited. Use your influence well.

## ADDITIONAL ISSUES FOR ALL AIDES

### Decisions to discuss with your Legislator:

\_\_\_\_\_ Should the first fund-raising dinner of the season be \$50 per plate or \$100 per plate?

\_\_\_\_\_ The high school principals in the district have requested that you make speeches to the student bodies. They don't vote yet, but...should we schedule it in?

\_\_\_\_\_ Do you prefer the red or the striped tie for the photo with the Governor?

\_\_\_\_\_ We need a decision today about how to respond to your opponent's call for live debates. He wants five of them. Mary thinks we can get away with only one by citing the demands of your office. What do we do?

\_\_\_\_\_ The woman whose son disappeared in Malaysia called again. We need to take decisive action or she may go to the press. Can we spend some Clout on this?

\_\_\_\_\_ The Party chairwoman is coming to the office at 4:30. It appears that she is unhappy about the interview that came out this morning, particularly with your comment on childcare. We need to plan a response. Do you want to stick strongly to the position? Her public image is very positive these days and you may not want to antagonize her.

\_\_\_\_\_ The local NRA representatives are coming tomorrow morning, first thing. They've finished their latest community poll, and the numbers seem to be against your stand. We haven't publicized your stand much yet. Should I prepare a more moderate position for them?

\_\_\_\_\_ Should this week's mailing include the picture of you with the President, or should we save it for the mailing closer to the election?

\_\_\_\_\_ Paul suggested some professional work on your front garden, to create a better background for the "parenting" clips we discussed for the TV campaign. Do you have any preference for whom to hire?

\_\_\_\_\_ The local food bank is starting a new "Kids Who Care" program, and you'll be handing out the awards at the end of the summer. Can you get your kids involved? The timing would be perfect for the "family/community" theme of the campaign. It might also help Tommy shed his rebel image, which is not helping you.

\_\_\_\_\_ We need to work up a position on animal rights. The factions are really starting to face off in the district. Furs and farm animals seem to be the essential elements. Do you have a preference for which way we go?

## YOU ARE A FOODLAND LOBBYIST

Make a nametag labeled "Lobbyist (your name)." You work for the Council of Agriculture. It is a powerful organization that pays you well.

Your job is to influence the outcome of decisions made by the Foodland Lawmakers for the people you represent. The vote they will take in this session is very important.

You should have a position paper for the Lawmakers, and the text of a speech you want them to make in the Chamber. There may be other lobbyists from your organization or other supporters present to help you influence the Lawmakers.

You also have 10 *Clout Cards*. These will increase your influence, which can sway Lawmakers.

Aides are important because they have the Lawmaker's ears, and you should try to convince them of your position.

You cannot enter the Legislative Chamber. Time is limited. Use your influence well.

**POSITION PAPER  
COUNCIL OF AGRICULTURE**

Honeybeans are Foodland's most important agricultural export.

20% of Foodland's farmers depend on Honeybeans for their livelihood.

Scientists predict that the Fierce Flying Frogs will destroy 90% or more of the Honeybean crop if left unchecked.

Stabbing Storks are the only known pest-specific defense against the Fierce Flying Frogs at this time.

We urge passage of the Stabbing Stork bill to stave off the impending crisis.

Producer, processors and marketers of food, especially Honeybeans, grown in Foodland form the backbone of our strong economy. It is agriculture that has made our high quality of life possible. We have come together in this Council to provide a voice for farmers and all those who make their living from agriculture in this increasingly urban society. We cannot abandon the Honeybean farmers to this crisis. We must help.

**SPEECH COUNCIL OF AGRICULTURE**

My fellow Lawmakers, I simply cannot express my gratitude, and that of my constituents, to the Governor. He has brought us the solution to the gravest crisis facing the rural economy in many years. We simply could not afford the economic consequences of a Fierce Flying Frog invasion, neither for the economy as a whole, nor for the individual farmers who would be wiped out. It is absolutely essential that this disaster be prevented from happening. We must act today to approve this bill, which was brought to us through the diplomacy of our Governor.

## **YOU ARE A FOODLAND LOBBYIST**

Make a nametag labeled "Lobbyist (your name)." You work for the Citizens' Lobby to Preserve Our Natural Heritage. It is a grassroots organization, and you are a true believer in your cause.

Your job is to influence the outcome of decisions made by the Foodland Lawmakers for the people you represent. The vote they will take in this session is very important.

You should have a position paper for the Lawmakers, and the text of a speech you want them to make in the Chamber. There may be other lobbyists from your organization or other supporters present to help you influence the Lawmakers.

The librarian has information on forming a coalition with other lobbyists who support your position. This will increase your influence, symbolized by Clout Cards, which you can use to sway Lawmakers.

Aides are important because they have the Lawmaker's ears, and you should use them.

You cannot enter the Legislative Chamber. Time is limited. Use your influence well.

**POSITION PAPER**  
**CITIZENS' LOBBY TO PRESERVE OUR NATURAL HERITAGE**

The Stabbing Stork bill would override the Exotic Species Exclusion Act.

The Exotic Species Exclusion Act prevents the introduction of exotic and unknown species in Foodland.

The Exotic Species Exclusion Act was one of the most important laws this chamber ever passed to defend Foodland's proud natural heritage.

The ecological consequences of introducing Stabbing Storks are unknown, but there is evidence that they would devour all frog species and drive out native wetland birds.

We urge defeat of the Stabbing Stork bill to defend our natural heritage.

We have learned through hard lessons that we are all part of a fragile web of life. We must take a firm stand now against any further threats to our ecosystem. We cannot take the chance of introducing Stabbing Storks.

**SPEECH**  
**CITIZENS' LOBBY TO PRESERVE OUR NATURAL HERITAGE**

My fellow Lawmakers, I must confess that I am disappointed in our Governor's performance today. The world already has an overabundance of examples of the unanticipated consequences of the introduction of exotic species into an ecosystem. The introduction of the Stabbing Storks could threaten destruction of Foodland's frog population, an essential link in the food chain in the wetlands that this state has worked so hard to preserve. The magnificent birds that symbolize the beauty of these wetlands could be threatened by the introduction of the aggressive Stabbing Storks. We cannot predict the outcome of the governor's proposal to introduce 5,000 Stabbing Storks. It was exactly to preclude these kinds of problems that this chamber enacted our current Exotic Species Exclusion laws, which this new bill would override. What is the use in having such laws if we are to ignore them just when we need them most? I urge you to defeat this bill, to protest the way it attempts to subvert laws we have passed in this chamber, and to preserve our natural heritage.

## **YOU ARE A FOODLAND LOBBYIST**

Make a nametag labeled "Lobbyist (your name)." You work for the Citizens' Working Group Against Taxing The Future. It is a grassroots organization, and you are a true believer in your cause.

Your job is to influence the outcome of decisions made by the Foodland Lawmakers for the people you represent. The vote they will take in this session is very important.

You should have a position paper for the Lawmakers, and the text of a speech you want them to make in the Chamber. There may be other lobbyists from your organization or other supporters present to help you influence the Lawmakers.

The librarian has information on forming a coalition with other lobbyists who support your position. This will increase your influence, symbolized by Clout Cards, which you can use to sway Lawmakers.

Aides are important because they have the Lawmaker's ears, and you should use them.

You cannot enter the Legislative Chamber. Time is limited. Use your influence well.

**POSITION PAPER**  
**CITIZENS' WORKING GROUP AGAINST TAXING THE FUTURE**

The Stabbing Stork bill would impose \$10 million in deficit spending.

We applauded the balanced budget forged by the Foodland Lawmakers in this session.

We urge defeat of the Stabbing Stork bill on budgetary grounds.

When Foodland's budget is not balanced, the deficit is a tax on the future- our children's future. We also believe that raising taxes today drains our children's economy, by chasing business and taxpayers from the state. We speak for the taxpayers and forward-looking people of Foodland when we call for a balanced budget without raising taxes.

**SPEECH**  
**CITIZENS' WORKING GROUP AGAINST TAXING THE FUTURE**

My fellow Lawmakers, no one knows better than we how difficult it was to put together a reasonable budget for Foodland this year. The Governor was also part of this process, and was present for some of the toughest negotiations. Yet today he asks us to decide, with almost no deliberation, on a bill that will require another 10 million dollars to be added to the budget! I cannot in good conscience support a bill like this, when this Chamber has worked so hard to reach an agreement on a fiscally sound budget. Think back to those long nights and difficult decisions, and vote 'no' on this irresponsible bill.

## **YOU ARE THE LEGISLATIVE LIBRARIAN**

Make a nametag labeled "Librarian (your name)." Locate the Library where you will work. You should find materials there waiting for you.

You have a very important role because many people will come to you for information. You have six kinds of information to give out:

- Copies of the **New Bill** and **Chamber Rules** can be given to anyone who requests them.
- Grassroots Lobbyists can come to you to read and sign a **Coalition Agreement**. Any number can sign together. You will give each Lobbyist signing the agreement ten (10) **Clout Cards**. Remind them to mark the cards so that Lawmakers will remember where they got their Clout.
- Aides can come to you for information about their districts. They must ask for information. Tell them what it says on the **District Information Sheet** about their color district and give them a **Clout Card** as recognition for learning about their districts.
- You also have copies of **Noncommittal Speeches** that you may give to Aides if they request them.
- If any Aide comes to you with a completed **Additional Issues List** that his or her Lawmaker has decided on, give him or her three **Clout Cards**.
- If people request other kinds of information, you may either tell them that it is not available at this time, or you can feel free to make it up if you like.

## **STABBING STORK BILL**

We the Legislature of Foodland, approve and authorize the purchase from China of 5,000 Stabbing Storks at a cost of 10 million dollars. These Stabbing Storks, once purchased, will be shipped to Foodland, for release by the Department of Natural Resources throughout the state, with special attention to the peat regions where Honeybeans are normally grown. This bill supersedes previous restrictions on the introduction of exotic species into state wild lands. No county or other local unit may restrict the actions of state agencies in carrying out the provisions of this bill.

# **RULES OF THE CHAMBER**

## **Foodland Legislature**

- 1. The referee will maintain order.**
- 2. The referee will determine who speaks and for how long.**
- 3. All speeches will be made from the Speaker's Well.**
- 4. No lobbyist may enter the Chamber.**
- 5. All Lawmakers must be inside the Chamber when the Referee calls the votes.**
- 6. Lawmakers can vote yes, no or abstain.**
- 7. The bill will pass only on a majority 'yes' vote.**

# COALITION AGREEMENT

We, \_\_\_\_\_  
and \_\_\_\_\_  
and \_\_\_\_\_

agree to enter into a coalition to work for

---

We enter into this agreement, acknowledging our differences but choosing to work together on this issue because we know that there is power in numbers and that we will all gain by the exchange of information and coordination of efforts and tactics. We hope by this agreement to gain a more powerful voice for the people we represent.

Dated this \_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 19\_\_\_\_

Witnesses: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## INFORMATION ABOUT LEGISLATIVE DISTRICTS

The **BLUE** district is mostly rural, in the peat region, with a high number of Honeybean farmers.

The **RED** district is semi-rural. It includes many small farmers growing apples and other alternative crops. It also includes many recreational wetlands.

The **GREEN** district is urban. It supported passage of the Exotic Species Act.

The **ORANGE** district is rural. It is not a Honeybean region, but it includes a high percentage of farmers and others who depend on the agricultural economy.

The **PURPLE** district is urban. It is a relatively young, middle class area.

The **BROWN** district is rural. It is in the Peatlands and includes many Honeybean farmers.

The **YELLOW** district is rural. It includes many wetlands and hunting areas.

The **PINK** district is urban. It includes many poverty stricken areas.

### **Note to Librarian:**

Give one **Clout Card** when this information is requested.

***Librarian- Non-committal Speeches***

*(Copy enough for all Aides)*

## **SPEECH ONE**

My fellow lawmakers, I am coming before you today to voice the dilemma that I find myself in. I find myself torn between principles. I rejoiced, as many of you did, when I first heard that there might be a way to resolve the Flying Frog crisis, which threatens to wreck havoc on the lives of many farmers, and on our trade economy. But now, as I examine the bill that we must vote on today, I find that it violates many of the things I have stood for in this Chamber. It asks us to negate the power of local authorities to refuse the local introduction of the Stabbing Storks. It also asks us to spend money that was not allocated in a budget we worked so hard on. I feel deeply offended by being asked to do these things on our last day in the chamber, without enough time to consult our constituencies. And yet, I find it inconceivable that we could defeat this bill, knowing what will happen to our State with the arrival of the Flying Frogs. As Lawmakers, we must do the right thing.  
But I am not sure just what that is.

***Librarian- Non-committal Speeches***

*(Copy enough for all Aides)*

## **SPEECH TWO**

My fellow Lawmakers, our great state is richly diverse. As we make our final decisions today, let us keep in mind the many different people we represent. The issues we are considering are not simple ones; their effects will be many and far-reaching. Foodland is a State of agriculturalists, including many who are affected by the Fierce Flying Frogs, and many who are not. Foodland is also a state of consumers, who are becoming more vocal in their demands. It also has a great tradition of protecting our wild lands. We must not forget Foodland's urban people, our industrialists, and the poor. Our job is not an easy one. We must not be swayed by any one group, but must keep all of the people in mind.

## GOVERNOR'S SPEECH

Good morning everyone. I am happy to be back here in Foodland after my visit to China. I am happy to report that it was a very productive trip and that I accomplished all my goals. The potential for trade and other exchanges between China and us is great. This trip was a first step in what will be a long and profitable relationship.

I am presenting a new bill to our Lawmakers today in the last day of the session. The Chinese have proposed to export 5,000 Stabbing Storks to us. This could be a solution to the problem on everyone's mind these days, the impending invasion of the Fierce Flying Frogs.

As you all know, this menace has been rapidly approaching Foodland, and we have been at a loss as to what to do to prevent these alien amphibians from devastating Foodlands' Honeybean crop. The Fierce Flying Frogs are voracious Honeybean eaters, and could destroy 90% of the crop. Honeybeans are our most important crop. Twenty percent of our farmers are totally dependent on Honeybeans, and can grow little else, because of the nature of the peat soil on which they grow.

In their native Asia, their natural enemies, the Stabbing Storks, keep the Flying Frogs in check. In the past, the Chinese have been reluctant to allow the export of these birds. But I have been offered the opportunity for Foodland to import and release 5,000 Stabbing Storks, to halt the invasion of the Fierce Flying Frogs. This will mark the beginning of our proud and productive new relationship with China.

I have given the new bill to the Referee of the Chamber. S/he will now read the Chamber rules, and open the session.

Role: Concerned Citizen

## **YOU ARE A CONCERNED CITIZEN**

**You are here in the Foodland Legislature to represent your interest as a member of one of the grassroots lobbying organizations represented here. The facilitator can tell you which one. Decide which color district you are from and find out something about your district from the Librarian.**

**You can help your cause in any way you see fit. You believe strongly in your cause.**

**You can talk to anyone but you cannot enter the Chamber.**

Role: Journalist

## **YOU ARE A JOURNALIST**

**You are here at the legislative session to report on the debate on the new bill. You should question Lawmakers, Aides, and other on their position and follow the arguments and persuasion as they happen. You should pay particular attention to the main questions, and how the Lawmakers decide to vote.**

**The facilitator will ask you to make a “live report” for the evening news near the end of the debate.**

# DEBRIEFING GUIDE

**Facilitator:**

Allow 20-30 minutes for debriefing.

**Suggested Introduction:**

“ The focus of this game is to enhance understanding of the legislative process. It is not designed to go through the steps of how a law is passed.

The rules and the roles are oversimplified. In the Legislature, there would be more information available and sought by lawmakers. There would be more time to consider the decision and more attempts to survey the constituency.

Now in the debriefing, we would like you to share your own knowledge and experience, pointing out areas the simulation did not cover. Also, let's brainstorm about what happened in the brief playing time: What were the elements that are similar to the actual lawmaking process? What is different about the legislative process? What did you discover? What worked? What didn't work?

Please share your knowledge and your experience!”

**Suggested Debriefing Questions****STAKEHOLDERS AND THEIR SOURCES OF POWER-**

- Who had more than 10 Clout Cards to assure re-election?
- Which roles had the most power? Why?
- How were Clout Cards and constituent favors used?
- Who affected your actions and decisions?
- How did your own role compare with what you know of a similar role in real life?

## **STRATEGIES TO AFFECT THE POLICY-MAKING PROCESS-**

The legislature works through committees. The committee that develops a bill is not the same one that appropriates money to put the law into action. This simulation did not include committees and we are looking at only part of the process today.

- What do you think about the effectiveness of our legislative process and its ability to ensure a safe, wholesome food supply for all citizens?
- How might you influence the legislative process in your own area? What would be effective?

## **LAWS AND POLICIES ARE VISIBLE SIGNS OF OUR VALUES AND BELIEFS**

- Lawmakers, how did your personal values affect your vote?
- Did real-life friendships or connections affect the way you worked in the simulation?
- Does the law reflect the majority of constituents' views?

Librarian: Clout Cards

(For each lawmaker copy both sheets, cut apart and give cards to librarian.)

CLOUT CARD

From: \_\_\_\_\_

CLOUT CARD

From: \_\_\_\_\_

CLOUT CARD

From: \_\_\_\_\_

CLOUT CARD

From: \_\_\_\_\_

CLOUT CARD

From: \_\_\_\_\_

CLOUT CARD

From: \_\_\_\_\_

CLOUT CARD

From: \_\_\_\_\_

CLOUT CARD

From: \_\_\_\_\_

CLOUT CARD

From: \_\_\_\_\_

CLOUT CARD

From: \_\_\_\_\_

# Activity #4

## WRITE THAT LETTER

**Objective:** To become familiar and comfortable writing letters to elected officials about policy issues. This is an important component to advocacy!

**This activity is appropriate for Jr. High-Adult participants.**

**Time Needed:** Approximately 1 hour.

**Materials:** Paper, pens, media contacts, contact information for elected officials.

- Writing a letter is one of the most effective ways to communicate with legislators.
- Public opinion is a major factor in the decision making process on Capitol Hill, in State and local government.
- Most elected officials tally the number of calls and letters on an issue.
- There is POWER in numbers, in coalitions, in raising one strong and centered voice. We could have- and sometimes do- an amazing impact on policy.

### IMPORTANT TIPS

**You can write a letter in 90 Seconds!**

**Be certain you are writing to the appropriate official-** If it is a House Bill then don't write your Senator, etc. [www.senate.gov](http://www.senate.gov) and [www.house.gov](http://www.house.gov) (as well as most of the advocacy links in the resource section of this curriculum) will offer you up to date information about legislative activities and where to put your advocacy efforts.

**Be personal-** a mailed, handwritten letter receives much greater attention than anything preprinted or e-mailed. Always remember to include your return address on the letter and on the envelope.

**Say something nice-** Legislators are people too and they have a difficult job. Thank them for being a public servant.

**Be concise-** State your position on a particular issue or piece of legislation. Tell why you have that position. If you are comfortable doing so, personalize your position. How are you or those you know impacted by the issue or legislation? Legislators remember personal stories.

**Put the situation in concrete terms and make sure you have your facts in order-** Example: "Studies show that, after leaving TANF, 33 percent of adults find full-time work and 16 percent find part-time work. This work is often unsteady, limited and almost always low paying."

*Bread for the World- [www.bread.org](http://www.bread.org) and America's Second Harvest- [www.secondharvest.org](http://www.secondharvest.org) (and a number of other advocacy sites) have web pages that give you specific information about current legislation and where it sits in the legislative process. They also have links that allow you to respond immediately, offer talking points and additional contact information.*

# SAMPLE LETTER

Date

Your address

The Honorable Senator or Representative \_\_\_\_\_  
Address

Dear Senator or Representative \_\_\_\_\_:

**(Senate Only) Now is the time to strengthen the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program! The reauthorization of TANF is your most important opportunity to help poor and hungry families this year and it is critical that you act now.**

**(House Only) I am aware that the House has passed a version of TANF reauthorization (H.R. 4737). I urge you to strengthen this legislation for poor and hungry families by cosponsoring the Roukema-Tierney Working From Poverty to Promise Act, H.R. 4210. Your support is important as the House and Senate begin to negotiate the final legislation.**

Sincerely,

Name

The content of this sample letter was taken from the ***Bread for the World*** website ([www.bread.org](http://www.bread.org)) about a current issue. It gives you an idea of how to be specific about your issue and what you would like them to do.

# ADVOCACY GROUPS

**Advocacy Institute-** "The Advocacy Institute works to make social justice leadership strategic, effective, and sustainable in pursuit of a just world." [www.advocacy.org](http://www.advocacy.org)

**America's Second Harvest-** ASH is the largest domestic relief organization with a network of over 200 Food Banks. [www.secondharvest.org](http://www.secondharvest.org)

**Atlanta Jewish Federation-** Raises funds for community outreach programs in Atlanta and internationally. [www.atljf.org](http://www.atljf.org)

**Bread for the World-** is a nationwide Christian movement that seeks justice for the world's hungry people by lobbying our nation's decision makers, engaging in research, and developing and implementing educational resources and activities-[www.bread.org](http://www.bread.org)

**CARE-** is an international relief and development organization, which assists poor communities to achieve social and economic well-being. [www.care.org](http://www.care.org)

**Center on Budget and Policy Priorities-** is a research institute that analyzes government policies and programs, particularly those affecting low and middle-income people.

**Congressional Hunger Center-** The mission of the Center is to lead, speak and act on behalf of the hungry, the poor and victims of humanitarian crisis, both domestic and international. Sponsors lead development programs and develop educational curriculum, as well as advocating on behalf of vulnerable populations. [www.chn.org](http://www.chn.org)

**Economic Policy Institute-** The E.P.I. is a nonprofit think tank that seeks to broaden the public debate about strategies to achieve a prosperous and fair economy. [www.epinet.org](http://www.epinet.org)

**Food Research and Action Center-** is a non-profit, non-partisan organization whose mission is to alleviate hunger and under-nutrition in the United States. [www.frac.org](http://www.frac.org)

**Institute for Women's Policy Research-** a public policy research organization dedicated to informing and stimulating the debate on public policy issues of critical importance to women and their families. Focuses on issues of poverty, welfare, employment and earnings, etc. [www.iwpr.org](http://www.iwpr.org)

**National Center for Policy Analysis-** a nonprofit, nonpartisan public policy research organization. [www.ncpa.org](http://www.ncpa.org)

**National Conference of State Legislatures-** the NCSL website provides personalized, comprehensive access for State Legislators and legislative staff to NCSL information and reports, plus the ability to search more than 500,000 state documents encompassing legislative policy reports, current and past legislation, State Statutes and 50-state surveys. [www.ncsl.org](http://www.ncsl.org)

# OTHER HELPFUL WEBSITES

[www.access.gpo.gov/su\\_docs/aces140.html](http://www.access.gpo.gov/su_docs/aces140.html)- Federal Registry- The official web site of the U.S. Federal Register. Allows user to access recent proposed and final federal regulation for all departments.

[www.cfpa.net](http://www.cfpa.net)- California Food Policy Advocates- "a statewide public policy and advocacy organization dedicated to improving the health and well-being of low-income Californians by increasing access to nutritious and affordable food."

[www.fic.info.gov](http://www.fic.info.gov)- A single point of contact for people who have questions about federal agencies, programs, and services.

[www.fns.usda.gov](http://www.fns.usda.gov)- The U.S. Dept. of Agriculture-Food and Nutrition Services- FNS reduces hunger and food insecurity in partnership with cooperating organizations by providing children and needy families access to food, a healthful diet, and nutrition education in a manner that supports American agriculture and inspires public confidence. Learn about programs that promote food-security.

[www.georgiafamilyconnection.org](http://www.georgiafamilyconnection.org)- The mission of Georgia Family Connection is to "serve as a catalyst for improving results for Georgia's children, families and communities."

[www.house.gov](http://www.house.gov)- The official website of the U.S. House of Representatives. Check the legislative calendar, learn about up to date events on the floor of the house as they happen, review office web sites from Members of Congress, or search for a particular bill and learn its status.

[www.independentSector.org](http://www.independentSector.org)- Find out all about Charity Lobbying in the Public Interest.

[www.oxfamamerica.org/advocacy\\_guide/index.php](http://www.oxfamamerica.org/advocacy_guide/index.php) - For more resource material about advocacy.

[www.oxfamamerica.org](http://www.oxfamamerica.org)- "Oxfam is an international development organization dedicated to creating lasting solutions to hunger, poverty and social justice world wide."

[www.ombwatch.org](http://www.ombwatch.org) - OMB Watch was formed in 1983 to lift the veil of secrecy surrounding government. They improve access to our governmental decision makers and seek to energize citizen participation.

[www.senate.gov](http://www.senate.gov)- The official website of the U.S. Senate. Check the legislative calendar, review committee assignments, find your Senators or the Senators from another state, or search for a particular bill and learn its status.

[www.state.ga.us](http://www.state.ga.us) - A great resource of services available in this state as well as links to all aspects of municipal, state and federal government.

[www.usda.gov](http://www.usda.gov)- Official web site for the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Review information on nutrition programs such as the Food Stamp Program, WIC Program, or the School Breakfast and Lunch Programs.

[www.vote-smart.org](http://www.vote-smart.org)- access to information about elections, elected officials and legislation nationwide.

[www.whitehouse.gov](http://www.whitehouse.gov)- access press statements, receive the latest information on Presidential initiatives, review commonly requested federal services, or e-mail the President.

[www.whitehouse.gov/WH/New/html/20things.html](http://www.whitehouse.gov/WH/New/html/20things.html)- 20 Things You Can Do On Government Websites: A list of 20 things you can do on government web sites and appropriate addresses.

## MEDIA CONTACTS

<http://newslink.org>- An essential resource to media contacts by State and Country.

<http://www.usnpl.com/ganews.html> - A listing of all the newspapers and radio stations in Georgia.

<http://www.n-net.com/ga.htm>- A listing of every newspaper in Georgia-alphabetically classified.

<http://www.hometownnews.com/ga.htm> - A listing of newspapers across the state and links to national newspapers.

# HOW A BILL BECOMES A LAW (Federal)

## **Legislation is introduced-**

Anyone can offer ideas for a bill and even draft a bill, *but only a sitting member of a legislative body can introduce a bill*. Legislative Counsel must review all bills. Bills requiring finances must carry a "fiscal note" suggesting sources for the funding.

**House-** Legislation is handed to the clerk of the House or placed in the "hopper." (The box on house clerk's desk.)

**Senate-** Members must gain recognition of the presiding officer to announce the introduction of a bill during the morning hour. If any senator objects to the bill, the introduction of the bill is postponed until the next day.

## **Committee Action-**

*Advocates can profoundly influence a bill while it is in committee. They can testify, provide information, interact with media, and generally help shape what the Committee decides.*

- Once a bill is introduced, the Speaker of the House or the presiding officer in the Senate assigns it to a committee, based on subject matter. Bills may be referred to more than one committee and it may be split so that parts are sent to different committees. Bills are placed on a calendar of the committee to which they have been assigned. Failure to act on a bill is equivalent to killing it.
- The Chairperson of the Committee can assign a bill to Subcommittee.
- Hearings and debate generally occur in the Subcommittee. A process known as "mark up" also occurs in Subcommittee. "Mark up" literally means *to mark it up*- to make changes to the bill.
- If a majority of the Subcommittee votes to report the bill out, it goes before the full Committee and process begins again.
- If substantial changes are made during the mark up phase, the committee can order the introduction of a "clean bill" which will include the proposed amendments. This new bill will have a new number and will be sent to the floor while the old bill is discarded.

- The fiscal chamber, of the House or Senate, must approve, change or reject all committee amendments before conducting a final passage vote.
- After the bill is reported, the committee staff prepares a written report explaining why they favor the bill and why they wish to see their amendments, if any adopted. House committee members who oppose a bill sometimes write a dissenting opinion in the report. The report is sent back to the whole chamber and is placed on the calendar.

### **Rules committee-**

In the House, most bills go to the rules committee before reaching the floor. The committee adopts rules that will govern the procedures under which the House will consider the bill. A "closed rule" sets strict time limits on debate and forbids the introduction of amendments. These rules can have a major impact on whether the bill passes. The rules committee can be bypassed in three ways:

1. Members can move rules to be suspended (requires 2/3 vote)
2. A discharge petition can be filed.
3. The House can use a Calendar Wednesday procedure. (*Calendar Wednesday is a procedure of the House of Representatives whereby Wednesdays may be used to call the roll of the standing committees for the purpose of bringing up any of their bills for consideration from the House or Union Calendar. This is a Federal procedure- not found in the State Legislature.*)

### **Floor Action-**

#### **Legislation is placed on the Calendar:**

- **House:** Bills are placed on one of four House Calendars. The Speaker of the House and the Majority Leader decide what will reach the floor and when. Legislation can also be brought to the floor by a discharge petition.
- **Senate:** Legislation is placed on the Legislative Calendar. There is also an Executive calendar to deal with treaties and nominations. Scheduling legislation is the job of the Majority Leader. Bills can be brought to the floor whenever a majority of the Senate chooses.

## **Debate:**

**House:** Debate is limited by the rules formulated in the Rules Committee. The Committee of the Whole debates and amends the bill but cannot technically pass it. The Sponsoring Committee guides debate and time is divided equally between proponents and opponents. The committee decides how much time to allot to each person. Amendments must be germane to the subject of the bill- no riders are allowed. The bill is reported back and voted on. (There needs to be a quorum of 218 to vote)

**Senate:** Debate is unlimited unless cloture is invoked (see glossary). Members can speak as long as they want and amendments need not be germane-riders are often offered. Entire bills can therefore be offered as amendments to other bills. Unless cloture is invoked, Senators can use a filibuster to defeat a measure by "talking it to death."

The bill is voted on. If passed, it is then sent to the other chamber unless that chamber already has a similar measure under consideration. If either chamber does not pass the bill then it dies. If the House and Senate pass the same bill then it is sent to the President or Governor. If the House and Senate pass different bills they are sent to Conference Committee. Most major legislation goes to Conference Committee.

## **Conference Committee**

- Members of each house form a conference committee and meet to work out the differences of the bill's two versions.
- The committee is usually made of senior members who are appointed by the presiding officers of the committee that originally dealt with the bill.
- The representatives from each house work to maintain their version of the bill.
- If the Conference Committee reaches a compromise, it prepares a written conference report, which is submitted to each chamber.
- Both the House and the Senate must approve the conference report.

**The President**- the bill is sent to the President for review.

- A federal bill becomes law if signed by the President or if not signed within 10 days and Congress is in session.
- If Congress adjourns before the 10 days and the President has not signed the bill then it does not become law ("Pocket Veto.")
- If the President vetoes the bill it is sent back to Congress with a note listing his/her reasons. The chamber that originated the legislation can attempt to override the veto by a vote of two thirds of those present. If the veto of the bill is overridden in both chambers then it becomes law.

**The Bill becomes a law**- once the President signs a bill or his veto is overridden by both houses, it becomes a law and is assigned an official number.

Excerpted from the following sources: Nancy Amidei of OMB WATCH in their workbook *A Key to Advocacy- So You Want to Make a Difference* and PROJECT VOTE SMART.

# HOW A BILL BECOMES A LAW (STATE)

## **The Idea:**

New legislation or a change in legislation can come from anyone: an individual legislator, a committee, a citizen or citizen's group, a special interest group or lobby.

## **The Drafting:**

Legislation can be drafted by any of the above-mentioned groups or individuals utilizing private legal resources. It can be drafted by legislative counsel or copied after legislation in other states.

## **Introduction:**

Bills may be introduced in either house in the legislature. Senate bills are filed with the Secretary of the Senate and House bills with the Clerk of the House. Upon introduction bills are assigned a number. At the beginning of each biennial session, House bills are numbered consecutively starting with House Bill No. 0001 and Senate bills are numbered starting with Senate Bill No. 2. In both houses, joint resolutions are assigned a letter.

## **Title Reading:**

Under State Constitution, every bill must be read three times before it may be passed. The courts have held, however, that reading the bill's title can satisfy this requirement. Upon introduction, the bill's title is read a first and second time in the Senate and is read once in the House. The bill is then ordered to be printed. A bill cannot be passed or become law until it has been printed or reproduced and in the possession of each house for at least five days.

## **Referral to Committee:**

Upon introduction, a bill is also referred to a standing committee in the Senate by the Majority Leader and by the Speaker in the House. All bills involving an appropriation must be referred wither directly to the appropriations committee or to an appropriate standing committee and then to the appropriations committee.

### **Committee Review:**

Committee members consider a bill by discussing and debating the bill. The committee may also hold public hearings on the bill.

### **Committee Action:**

Chairperson sets date for specific action on a bill and notifies interested parties. Interested persons testify, for and against.

Committee votes with several options available:

- Recommend “do pass” for bill in original form.
- Recommend “do pass” for bill with committee amendment.
- Recommend “do pass” for bill as substituted by committee.
- Recommend “do not pass” for bill either in original form or in amended or substituted form.
- Pass bill with no recommendation.
- Hold bill/no action.

### **Bill Returned to House (if passed)**

- Placed on calendar.
- Called by Speaker for third reading and vote.
- Bill debated on floor/ bill may be amended or substituted on floor by majority vote.
- Bill passed or defeated by majority vote (2/3 vote required for tax measure or constitutional amendment resolution.)

### **To the Senate:**

Bills that pass the House, in whatever form, are transmitted to the Senate where a similar process takes place.

### **Return to House:**

- Senate amendments require House approval.
- If House concurs with the Senate amendment or changes any other language, bill is assigned to conference committee- composed of three house and three senate members.
- Conference committee may rewrite entire bill or resolve differences on conflicting language.
- Conference committee report read in House and Senate which accepts or rejects the report.
- If accepted the bill is passed.
- If either chamber rejects the conference report, the measure is assigned to new conference committee or allowed to die.

### **Bill Goes to Governor:**

- Governor may sign the bill into law.
- May veto the bill.
- Bills not acted on will automatically become law (has 6 days during session and 40 days after session).

### **Veto Override:**

- General Assembly may override a veto by 2/3 vote and the measure will become law.
- The bill may be tabled.
- The bill may be re-referred to a committee.

# UNDERSTANDING THE STATE BUDGET PROCESS

## **Why is it important to understand the State Budget Process?**

As an advocate for low-income families and children it is important that you have an understanding of the state budget process. Community programs for homeless and working poor women, children and families are often under funded. The homeless and children don't vote and poor working families rarely have the time to get involved in advocacy and budget issues. Your voice as advocate for children and families can be influential and is vital for the continued improvement of results for Georgia's families.

## **Who are the key players?**

- Governor and the State Office of Planning and Budget (OPB)
- Legislative Budget Office (LBO)
- House and Senate Appropriations Committees
- Budget officials within each State Department

## **What is the timeline?**

- Revenue estimate made; requests and instructions given to state agencies.  
Submission of agency budgets to OPB by September 1.
- OPB recommendations to Governor.  
Governor finalizes budget by December 1.
- Governor presents budget to General Assembly in early January.
- Legislative appropriation process begins in the House; House and Senate hold hearing and eventually pass budget bill
- Governor approves/disapproves appropriations bill
- Annual operating budgets begin July 1
- Good times to try to influence an appropriation are when agencies are deciding what to recommend to the Governor; when OPB is working on the budget for the Governor; and when the budget is presented in the General Assembly.
- The Governor has the power to freeze any line-item budget issue once the budget has been finalized.

## What is the relationship between policy and budget?

- Budget priorities and restrictions very often drive policy.
- Emphasizing program effectiveness and cost effectiveness is very important.
- Develop short and long term goal strategies.
- Be realistic.
- A result based budgeting is key: have local results and try to put a dollar figure on the cost of failure (how much expenditures are needed for treatment for conditions that could have been prevented, e.g., repeat teen birth, jailing a child, foster care, etc.)

# FINDING YOUR WAY AROUND THE GEORGIA STATE CAPITOL

## **Transportation and Parking**

There is a MARTA station at Georgia State/Sloppy Floyd Building, which is less than a block from the State Capitol. Parking is available at a state-owned lot on Butler Street (behind the Sloppy Floyd Building) or at Underground Atlanta.

## **Food, Phone and Restrooms**

There is a cafeteria located in the bottom of the Sloppy Floyd Building. It has multiple serving lines and is open for breakfast and lunch. There is a small snack bar in the basement of the Capitol. There are many restaurants in Underground Atlanta, a short distance from the Capitol.

Public phones are on the third and first floor outside the restroom. If you are at the Capitol frequently, a cell phone is advisable due to the difficulty in accessing a phone.

Restrooms are on first and third floor of the Capitol.  
(The first floor is at ground level).

## **Schedule**

Both houses usually convene at 10 a.m. Committee meetings are held in the morning and the afternoon. Schedules are posted on bulletin boards outside the offices of the Secretary of the Senate and on the wall near the staircase outside the House Clerk's office. Committee Chairs sometimes post meeting notices outside their offices; also check with the Committee Secretary for time and locations of meetings.

## **Finding Information**

To find out who your local legislator is, call your local voter registrar (listed under county government) or go to [www.vote-smart.org](http://www.vote-smart.org). A book with information about legislators (commonly called the picture book) is published annually and available through the Senate Information Office (404-656-0028) or House Information (404-656-5082). The book has contact information about legislators.

Composites (a list of all bills and status of bills), First Readers (bills introduced daily), and daily calendars (committee meetings and bills to be considered) can be picked up at the Secretary of the Senate or the House Clerk's office. You can also request copies of bills at each office. You will need to know the number of the bill and fill out a form. One copy is free.

GeorgiaNET has information available online at [www.ganet.org](http://www.ganet.org) ; daily calendars, budget updates, general information, information on legislators, and bill status are among the services available online. You also can access a live audio feed of House or Senate Chamber debate on GeorgiaNet.

If you know a bill number, you can call the Clerk of the House at 404-656-5015 or the Secretary of the Senate at 404-656-5040 to check the vote on a specific bill.

### **Useful Phone Numbers**

Tours of the Capitol	404-656-2844
State of Georgia Information	404-656-2000
Post Office	
Capitol	404-656-0445
Legislative Office Bldg	404-656-0170
Lt. Governor's Office	404-656-5030
Speaker of the House	404-655-5020
Georgia Building Authority Catering	404-656-3850
House Research Office	404-656-3206
Legislative Budget Office	404-656-5050



**Contact Information for the  
Georgia Congressional Delegation  
2003**

**Senators:**

The Honorable Saxby Chamblis  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510  
[www.senate.gov](http://www.senate.gov)

The Honorable Zell Miller  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510  
[miller.senate@gov/email.htm](mailto:miller.senate@gov/email.htm)

**To find the congressional delegation from your state go to  
[www.house.gov](http://www.house.gov) and [www.senate.gov](http://www.senate.gov)**

**The House of Representatives:**

First District:	Jack Kingston	R	Savannah
Second District:	Sanford Bishop	D	Albany
Third District:	James C, Marshall	D	Macon
Fourth District:	Denise Majette	D	Decatur
Fifth District:	John Lewis	D	Metro-Atlanta
Sixth District:	Johnny Isaakson	R	Marietta
Seventh District	John Linder	R	Smyrna
Eight District	Michael Collins	R	Moultrie
Ninth District	Charles Norwood	R	Clermont
Tenth District	Nathan Deal	R	Evans
Eleventh District	Phil Gingrey	R	Atlanta/Gwinnett
Twelfth District	Max Burns	R	Augusta
Thirteenth District	David Scott	D	Atlanta

**All Congressional Representatives have the same address:**

The Honorable (Name of Representative)  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515  
[www.house.gov/\(last name\)](http://www.house.gov/(last name))

**Go to Bread for the World's** website to update information about elected officials in all states, issues and current legislation, elections, candidates and a guide to media all over the country.  
<http://capwiz.com/bread/home/>

# GLOSSARY OF LEGISLATIVE TERMS

**The Union Calendar –(Federal)** Deals with bills, which would raise revenues and spending bills (appropriations).

**The House Calendar – (Federal/State)** Deals with public bills which do not raise revenue or appropriate any money or property.

**The Consent Calendar – (Federal)** Deals with bills, which are not controversial and are passed without debate. This calendar is called on the first and third Monday of each month.

**The Private Calendar – (Federal)** Deals with claims against the U.S.

## TYPES OF LEGISLATION

**Bills** – Are denoted with HB in the House and S in the Senate and then followed by an assigned number. This is the most common form of legislation.

**Private Bill –(Federal)** A bill that deals only with specific private, personal, or local matters rather than with general legislative affairs. The main kinds include immigration and naturalization bills (referring to particular individuals) and personal-claim bills.

**Public Bill – (Federal)** A legislative bill that deals with matters of general concern. A bill involving defense expenditures is a public bill.

**Resolution** - Only the chamber that introduces it, and deals with issues concerning the operation of that chamber adopts this type of legislation.

**Concurrent Resolutions** - H Con Res or S Con Res. This type of legislation does not become law. It deals with issues that relate to internal matters in both the House and the Senate.

**Joint Resolutions** - HJ Res or SJ Res. These are treated much the same as bills with the exception of joint resolutions which propose amendments to the Constitution. Two-thirds of both the House and the Senate must approve proposed amendments and then the Joint Resolution is sent to the states for ratification instead of the President.

# OTHER TERMS

**Absentee Voting**- A way people can vote when they can't get to their polling place. They vote on a special form and mail it in.

**Appropriation**- An act of Congress that enables Federal agencies to spend money for specific purposes.

**Balanced Budget** - A balanced budget occurs when total revenues equal total outlays for a fiscal year.

**Bias**- A leaning in favor of or against something or someone; partiality or prejudice.

**Bills** - Denoted with HR in the House and S in the Senate and then followed by an assigned number. This is the most common form of legislation. There are two types of bills: public and private (see "P" section of glossary).

**Calendar**- The daily lists issued by both houses, which show legislation that is to be acted upon that day at the discretion of the presiding officer.

## House Legislative Calendars-

**The Union Calendar** - Deals with bills that would raise revenues and spending.

**The House Calendar** - Deals with public bills which do not raise revenue or appropriate any money or property.

**The Consent Calendar** - Deals with bills, which are not controversial and are passed without debate. This calendar is called on the first and third Monday of each month.

**The Private Calendar** - Deals with claims against the U.S.

**Calendar Wednesday- (Federal)** A procedure of the House of Representatives whereby Wednesdays may be used to call the roll of the standing committees for the purpose of bringing up any of their bills for consideration from the House or Union Calendar.

**Calling the Question**- a method of cutting off debate and calling for an immediate vote on whatever is being considered.

**Campaign** - A series of planned actions for getting someone elected.

**Candidate** - A person who seeks, or who has been suggested for an office or award.

**Caucus**- A meeting of all the members of a political party of either house to make plans, discuss procedures or elect officers.

**Citizen** - A person who is a member of a country or state; citizens have certain duties and rights.

**Cloture – (Federal)** Is a motion in the Senate to limit debate. It takes 60

votes to invoke cloture. Invoking cloture will end a filibuster.

**Committee of The Whole –(Federal)** The members of the House of Representatives organized into a committee for the consideration of bills and other matters. Most House business is transacted in the, Committee of the Whole so that the formal requirements of its regular sessions, such as having a quorum of one-half the membership, can be avoided.

**Coalition-** An alliance of people, factions, parties or nations.

**Conference Committee-** a committee where members of each chamber meet to work out the differences of the of a bill's two versions.

**Congressional Districts (CD)** - A political subdivision in which the nation is divided for the purposes of elected U.S. Representatives. Each district contains about 570,000 people.

**Constituent** - Having the right to vote or elect; any of the voters represented by a particular official.

**Constituency** - All of the voters in a particular district.

**Co-Sponsor** – An additional member(s) (after the original sponsor) who join on to support a bill.

**Debate** – A face-to-face discussion of views by candidates.

**Democracy** - Government by the people, through free and frequent elections.

**Discharge Petition –(Federal)** In the House, if a committee does not report on a bill within 30 days, any member may file a discharge motion. Once offered, the motion is treated as a petition needing the signatures of 218 members, a majority of the House. This is attempted more often in the House than in the Senate, and the procedure is rarely successful.

**Discharge Resolution** - In the Senate, a special motion that any Senator may introduce to relieve a committee of consideration of a bill.

**Editorial** - Expressed opinions, written or broadcast, intended to persuade viewers and listeners by taking a side.

**Election** - The process whereby eligible persons vote to determine who will hold a political office.

**Election Day** - The day reserved for people to vote. In general elections, it is by tradition the first Tuesday after the first Monday in November. Primary elections are also usually held on Tuesdays.

**Electoral College** - The voters of each state to formally elect the U.S. President and Vice President. Each state has as many electors as it does U.S. Representatives and U.S. Senators. In all but two states the candidate who

receives the plurality of popular vote in the state receives all of its electoral votes.

**Federal** - Of or describing a union of states having a central government or pertaining to that government.

**Filibuster** - An attempt to defeat a bill in the Senate by talking indefinitely, thus is preventing the Senate from doing any other work. From the Spanish *filibuster*, which means a "freebooter," a military adventurer.

**Floor Debate**- a discussion conducted in either House or Senate advising support of, or opposition to, a proposed piece of legislation.

**Franchise** - The constitutional right to vote.

**Germane** - Pertaining to the subject matter of the measure at hand.

**G.O.P.** - Letters that stand for Grand Old Party, the nickname of the Republican Party.

**Grassroots** - The involvement of common citizens.

**Gubernatorial Election** - The selection of a governor by a state's voters.

**Hopper** - Box on House Clerk's desk where members deposit bills and resolutions to introduce them.

**Hype** - Slang for political ads. e.g. slick short TV commercials.

**Incumbent** - A person now holding an office.

**Independent** - A candidate not belonging to one of the major political parties.

**Issues** - Problems, ideas to be talked about, questions, decided upon and voted on.

**Landslide** - An election in which one candidate defeats the other by a very large margin.

**Law** - An act of Congress that has been signed by the President or passed over his veto by Congress.

**Local Legislation**- Proposals on local matters such as salaries, changes in charters, or resolutions calling for local referendums.

**Majority**- The number of votes required by the Constitution to pass legislation, usually half the vote plus one. Special types of legislation may require more.

**Majority/Minority Leader** - Leads the majority/minority party in Congress. There is a majority and minority leader for each house of Congress.

**Majority/Minority Whip** -Assists the leader , rounds up votes for the majority/minority party, heads group of deputy whips. There is one in each house of Congress.

**Mark-Up**- Means literally, to mark up, write on, make changes to legislation.

**Morning Hour** - The time set aside at the beginning of each legislative day for the consideration of regular, routine business. The "hour" is of indefinite duration in the House, where it is rarely used.

**Mudslinging** - Negative, often personal, frequently inaccurate or exaggerated attacks of the opposition.

**Nominee** - The person that a political party chooses to represent it in a general election. This is called *nomination*.

**Non-partisan** –An individual or a group that is not supporting or controlled by a group or a cause.

**Override a Veto** - If the President (or on the State level-Governor) disapproves a bill and sends it back to Congress (on State Level- the General Assembly) with his/her objections, Congress/General Assembly may try to override his/her veto and enact the bill into law. Neither house is required to attempt to override a veto. The override of a veto requires a recorded vote with a two-thirds majority in each chamber. The question put to each house is: "Shall the bill pass, the objections of the President/Governor to the contrary notwithstanding?"

**Partisan** - A strong, often emotional supporter of a person or cause; can apply to a group as well as individuals.

**Party** - A group of people who join together because they share many ideas about what the government should do.

**Platform** - A public statement of the principles, objectives, and policy of a political party, a plan.

**Political Action Committee (PAC)** - An organization of 50 or more people that is created to raise money for favored political candidates and is registered with the Federal Election Commission (FEC). A PAC may be formed by any group, including businesses, labor unions, and special interest bodies.

**Poll** - A place where votes are cast; also refers to a survey to assess public opinion or to forecast an election.

**Pollster** - A person or company that researches public opinion.

**Precinct** - A division of voters by neighborhood; smallest political unit in U.S. politics. Cities and counties are divided into precinct polling districts, each

containing 200 to 1,000 voters and a polling place.

**Private Bill** - A bill that deals only with specific private, personal, or local matters other than with general legislative affairs. The main kinds include immigration and naturalization bills (referring to particular individuals) and personal-claim bills.

**Public Bill** - A legislative bill that deals with matters of general concern. A bill involving defense expenditures is a public bill.

**"Put in the Hopper"**: The act of submitting proposed legislation in either house.

**Quorum**- The number of members who must be present in either house before any legislation can be considered.

**Ratified** -The formal approval by voters or other persons.

**Referendum** - The legal process of submitting to the voters for their approval or rejection of proposed state or rejection of proposed state of local laws or constitutional amendments.

**Resolution** - A type of legislation (Hres or Sres) that is adopted only by the house that introduces it, and deals with issues concerning the operation of that house only.

### **Types of Resolutions-**

**Amendment**- A proposed change to the Constitution. Requires a 2/3 majority in both houses before being submitted to the electorate at a regular election.

**Concurrent Resolutions** - H Con Res or S Con Res. This type of legislation does not become law. It deals with issues that relate to internal matters in both the House and the Senate.

**Joint Resolutions** - HJ Res or SJ Res. These are treated much the same as bills with the exception of joint resolutions which propose amendments to the Constitution. Two thirds of both the House and the Senate must approve proposed amendments and then the Joint Resolution is sent to the states for ratification instead of the President.

**Privileged Resolutions**- A commendation for a particular person or group being honored by the Legislature. Passed by courtesy and does not require the Governor's signature.

**Rhetoric** - The ability to use language effectively; The undue use of exaggeration or display; The art of influencing others through the use of words.

**Rider** - A provision, unlikely to pass on its own merits, added to an important bill so that it will ride through the legislative process.

**Sponsor** - The original member who introduces a bill.

**Status Sheet** - Daily lists showing all of the proposed legislation before the General Assembly by the number of the bill or resolution, the committee assignment, and the date of any actions taken.

**Statute**- A law which is not properly part of the Constitution of a State.

**Unbiased** - Without favor or blame; Objective.

**Veto** - The power of a president, governor, or mayor to kill a piece of legislation by not signing it into law. From Latin term *veto* - "I forbid".

*Excerpted and adapted from Project Vote Smart -[www.votesmart.org](http://www.votesmart.org) and Family Connection Partnership-[www](http://www).*

# FOOD AND NUTRITION POLICY HIGHLIGHTS

Here are a few key nutrition policy initiatives that have been shaped by the legislative process.

\* A full listing can be found in the Surgeon General's Report on Nutrition and Health.

- 1867** Office of Education is established with responsibilities for nutrition education within public schools.
- 1933** Agricultural Act Amendment allows purchase of surplus commodities for donation to school lunch and child nutrition programs.
- 1961** Pilot of Food Stamp program established.  
Expanded Food and Nutrition Program (EFNEP) is funded.  
White House conference on Food, Nutrition and Health, resulting in an administrative structure to administer federal food assistance programs.
- 1972** WIC (Women's, Infant's, and Children's Program) established and the Consumer Protection Act guarantees price supports to farmers. The Older Americans Act of 1965 is amended to establish Congregate and Home-delivered Meal programs.
- 1988** *Surgeon General's Report on Nutrition and Health*, Department of Health and Human Services. This report cites statistics implicating dietary patterns as risk factors for 5 of the 10 leading causes of death in the United States. "The report's main conclusion is that over consumption of certain dietary components is now a major concern for Americans." (*Summary and Recommendations*, DHHS (PHS) Publication No. 885021 1, p. 2).
- 1990** National Nutrition Monitoring and Related Research Act of 1990 to strengthen national nutrition monitoring by requiring HHS and USDA to work together to assess the dietary and nutritional status of the U.S. population.

*Surgeon General's Report on Nutrition and Health-excerpted from  
The Foodgame: A Facilitator's Guide. University of Minnesota, 1992*



## TIPS FOR TESTIFYING AT PUBLIC HEARINGS

An effective way to voice your opinion on a public issue is to testify at a public meeting. Major goals in providing testimony are to state your point of view, demonstrate that you know your facts and gather support. Being well prepared, organized and knowing the rules that govern the decision making process are essential to effectively communicate your opinion. The following action checklist outlines suggestions that will help you plan how to give testimony before a decision making body. We use the word 'committee' to mean any body of decision makers.

### **ACTION CHECKLIST**

- Do your homework.
- Research your issue.
- Get all the facts.
- Check facts for accuracy.
- Find out the arguments for the opposition.
- If the opposition has valid points, modify your position accordingly.
- Be ready to answer questions

### **If you are representing a group:**

- Be sure the group approves your testimony.
- Have documentation of your support.
- Let group members check your rough draft and give suggestions.

### **Get on the agenda:**

- The committee generally must be notified a specific number of days in advance of your intended appearance.
- Ask the City Clerk (or Chair of the decision-making body) for advice on getting on the agenda.

### **Prepare your remarks:**

- Know the time frame (generally 3-5 minutes).
- Organize the main points of presentation into four sections:
  1. Introduction - state what the issue is.
  2. State how this issue affects you, your family and community.
  3. Document your opinion with facts and examples.
  4. Summary/conclusion - review what you have stated.
- Ask for specific action on the part of the committee to whom you are speaking.
- Make an outline of the major points.
- Write a rough draft using your outline. ?
- Share the rough draft with your group members.
- Have extra final copies to hand out at the meeting to:
  1. Committee members- if possible, have them included in the information packets, which are distributed ahead of time.
  2. The media.
  3. Interested persons/potential supporters.

**Practice your testimony at home:** Time your remarks. Speak slowly and clearly.

### **The actual hearing:**

- Arrive on time and sit near the front and on the aisle.
- Ask members of your group/organization to attend the meeting.
- Check the agenda to find out when you will speak.
- When you are called:
  - Go to the front/to the microphone.
  - Address the chairperson and members.
  - Introduce yourself and whom you represent.
  - Give your presentation.
  - Look at your audience!
  - Be brief, concise and logical.
  - If you have supporters, ask them to raise their hands, and if it is appropriate, to stand.
  - Answer questions.
  - If you don't know the answer, admit you don't know.
  - Promise to find out and inform them.
  - Be sure to follow through, quickly.
- Thank the committee for allowing you to speak.
- Talk to committee members individually after the meeting to say "thank you, if you need any information please contact me," etc.

### **After hearing:**

- Write a letter to the committee thanking them for their consideration.
- Write to the editor of local paper about your concern.
- If the committee decides against you, don't give up. Ask why.

### **Appeal process:**

- Find out if you can offer an appeal and where/when to file it.
- If there is no formal appeal process, decide on a new plan of action with a different but related outcome.

# Relationship Building with Policymakers

Advocacy is really about building relationships with people. You can provide information to them in an effort to get them to make decisions you think are appropriate. You have to understand how decisions are made and who is making the decisions in order to effectively influence decision-making. It helps to have concise, relevant information about issues, particularly if you can show either positive or negative impact. Style is also important. Your reputation as an advocate will influence how policymakers perceive you and directly relate to how effective you can be. Be honest, factual and polite. It will help you build positive, long-term relationships. There are several factors that are crucial, whether you are trying to impact local, regional, state or federal decision-making. Tips are outlined below to increase your effectiveness as an advocate.

## **Establish visibility and ongoing relationships with policymakers and key staff.**

### **Know your legislator:**

- Find out personal information (occupation, personal interests, family).
- Learn his/her legislative profile (tenure, committee assignments).
- Learn his/her political profile (Democrat, Republican, swing voter, votes with the party).
- Understand the demographics of his/her legislative district (rural, urban, income level).

### **At home:**

- Contact legislators before the General Assembly goes into session.
- Invite them to lunch or to a meeting; have a small group meet informally with the legislator.
- Identify members (of your group/org) who know the legislator personally and involve them.
- Visit or call newly elected legislators.
- Make sure they are on your mailing list for newsletters, reports, etc.

### **At the Capitol:**

- Find out the best time to meet.
- Make an appointment and be prepared to wait.
- Get to know their staff.
- Be brief - 15 minutes at the most, 5 minutes is better.
- Limit the size of the group.
- Have someone experienced go with the inexperienced.
- Know your subject; be prepared for questions.
- Explain what you want; be concise, present solutions, talk about what works (have success stories), be honest.
- Thank them and follow-up with a note.
- Thank them publicly if their support was key to your success.

### **During Election Season As An Individual Citizen:**

- Register and vote.
- Participate in or organize candidate forum.
- Assist candidates with fundraising, yard signs, making introductions.
- Invite them to an event or membership meeting.

### **Build Consensus:**

- Conflict or disagreement among advocates can make legislators unwilling to work with you.
- Have realistic goals for a coalition of partners; it takes time.
- Work in coalition with likely and unlikely partners.
- Know your organization's position and what you have in common with partners.
- Understand the big picture.
- Develop a broad base of support.
- Build consensus around a realistic agenda.
- Understand the importance of compromise.
- Promote strategies adaptable to compromise while not sacrificing your principles.

- Be tolerant of the legislative process.
- Have realistic expectations.
- Don't get angry; find common ground.

**Build constituent support statewide (grassroots efforts):**

- Use "the folks back home" to contact legislators.
- Legislators respond to voters from their district.
- There is strength in numbers.

**Involve new voices and new leaders:**

- Broaden the base of support (include likely and unlikely partners such as garden clubs, business groups, neighborhood groups, civic clubs).
- Make sure members and interested people are registered to vote.
- Involve some people who have clout with the policymaker.

**Have bipartisan strategies:**

Have strategies that cut across party lines and ideologies.

**Provide factual and compelling information in a useable form.**

**Provide well-researched and accredited information.**

- Be factual; be thoughtful.
- Provide examples of what has worked in other places.
- Use common language; no jargon.
- Use simple facts (2 out of 3 rather than 66%).

If you have real data from a legislator's district, use it (a name, a person, a business that has been impacted; examples that are meaningful to the legislator).

If you give them written information, make it concise and readable.

### **Communicate effectively:**

- Be honest.
- Be pleasant and polite.
- Don't get mad or threaten.
- Be firm regarding your issues.
- Be prepared; be able to say your message in a concise sentence.
- Repeat your message clearly using different wording.
- Know the bill number or budget item.

# ADVOCACY GUIDE EVALUATION

You will help us improve our Advocacy Guide by completing this evaluation form.

Demographic Information:

Age \_\_\_\_\_

Occupation \_\_\_\_\_

What is your interest in Advocacy?

What aspect of this guide did you find most helpful?

\_\_\_ Stories

\_\_\_ Resources

\_\_\_ Activities- If yes- which activities? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_ "How to" information

What would you like to see added to this curriculum?

What aspect was the least helpful?

In what ways have you used the information in this guidebook?

\_\_\_ Personally.

\_\_\_ With students.

\_\_\_ With members of community.

Please share any other comments you have. Feel free to use extra paper.

**Please Fax or mail the evaluation to:**

Lindy Wood  
Hunger 101 Coordinator  
Atlanta Community Food Bank  
970 Jefferson St. NW  
Atlanta Ga. 30318  
Fax-404-892-4026  
Phone-404-892-3333 ext 228  
lindy.wood@acfb.org