



State Legislatures - Process and Strategy

Susan Allan, MD, JD, MPH
Associate Professor



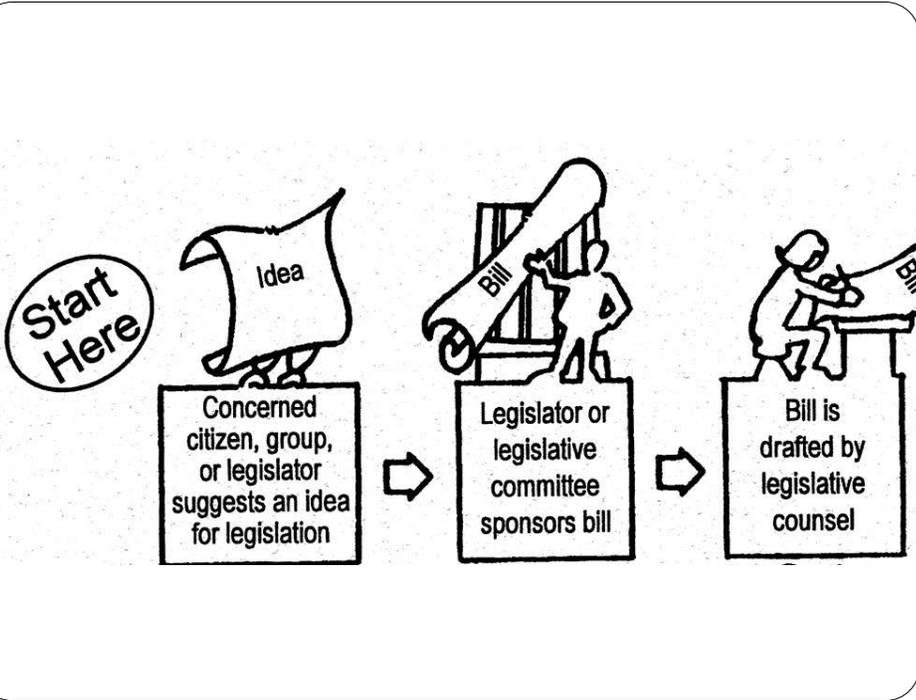
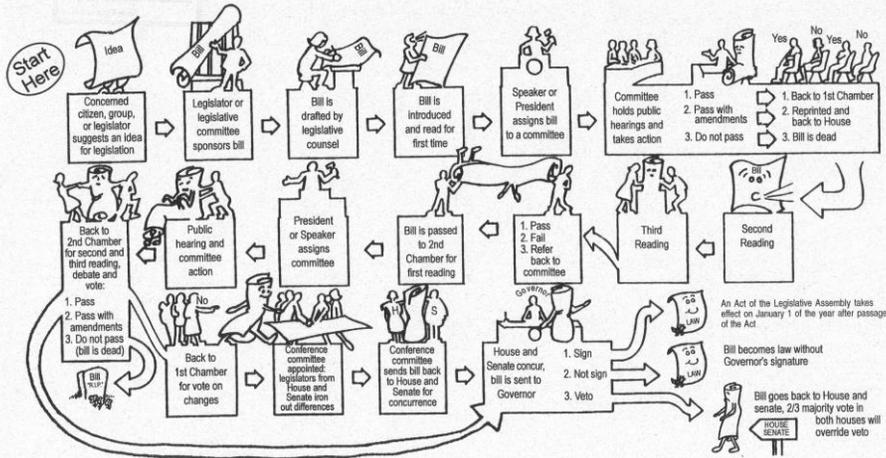
OBJECTIVES

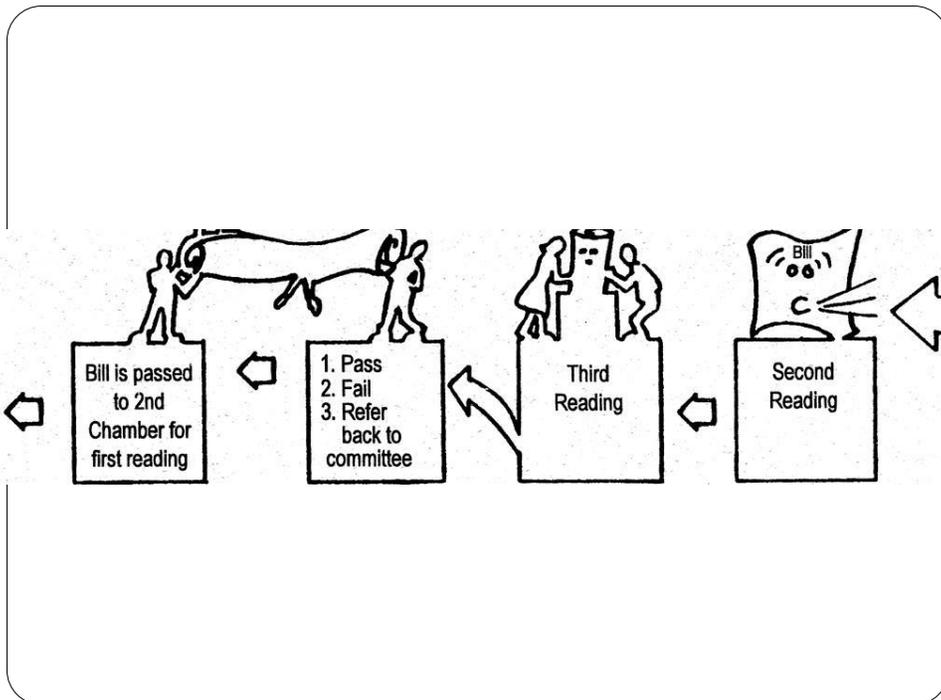
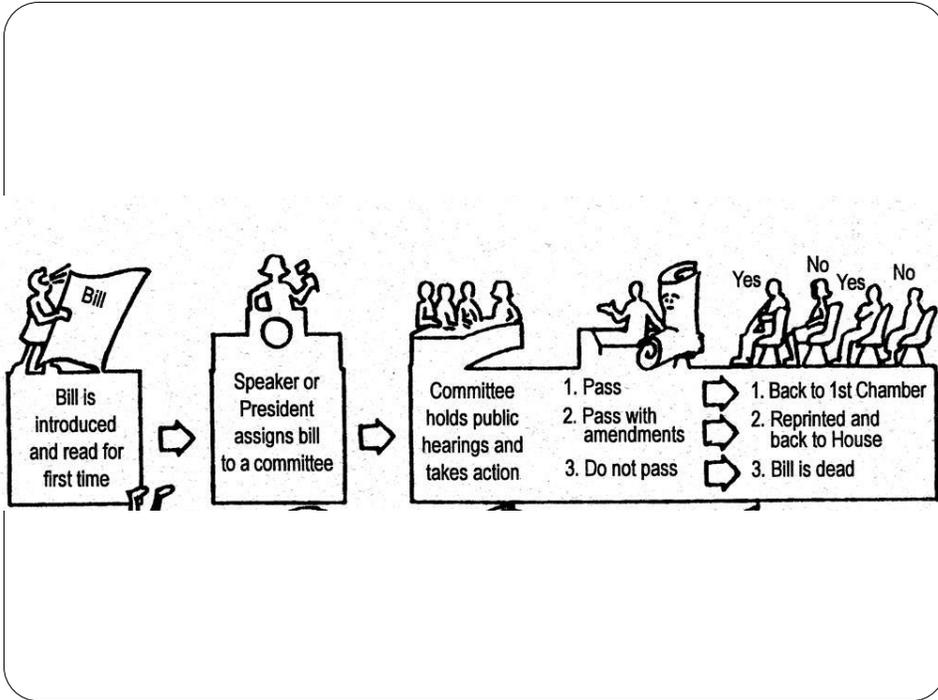
1. Describe a typical Legislative Process
2. Consider strategic factors for successful policy change
3. Explain how “rule-making” can be an opportunity for policy change
4. Describe examples of successful health policy and law changes

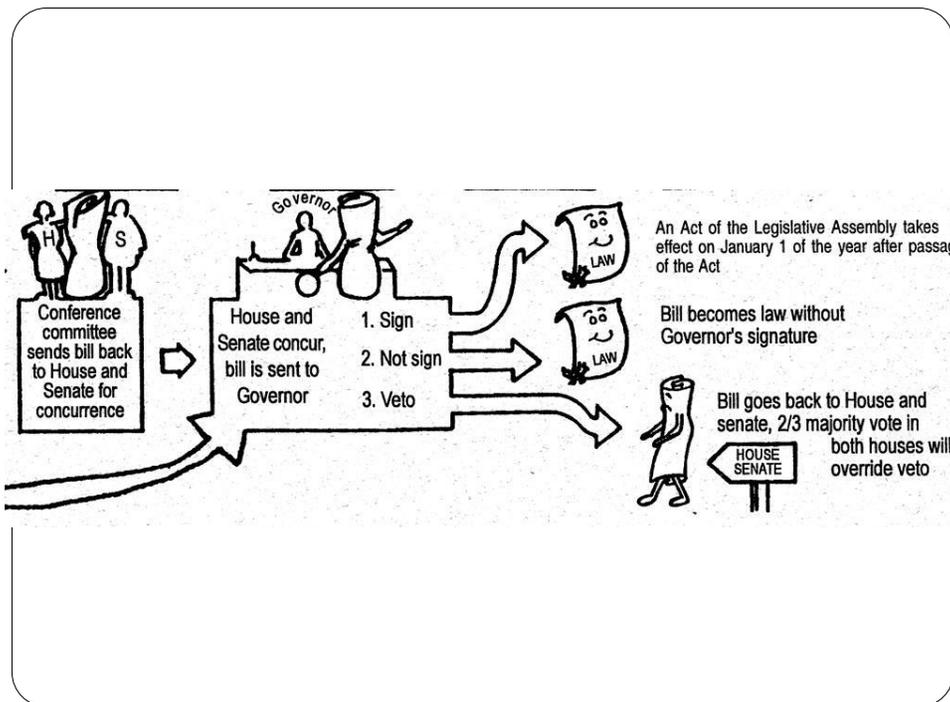
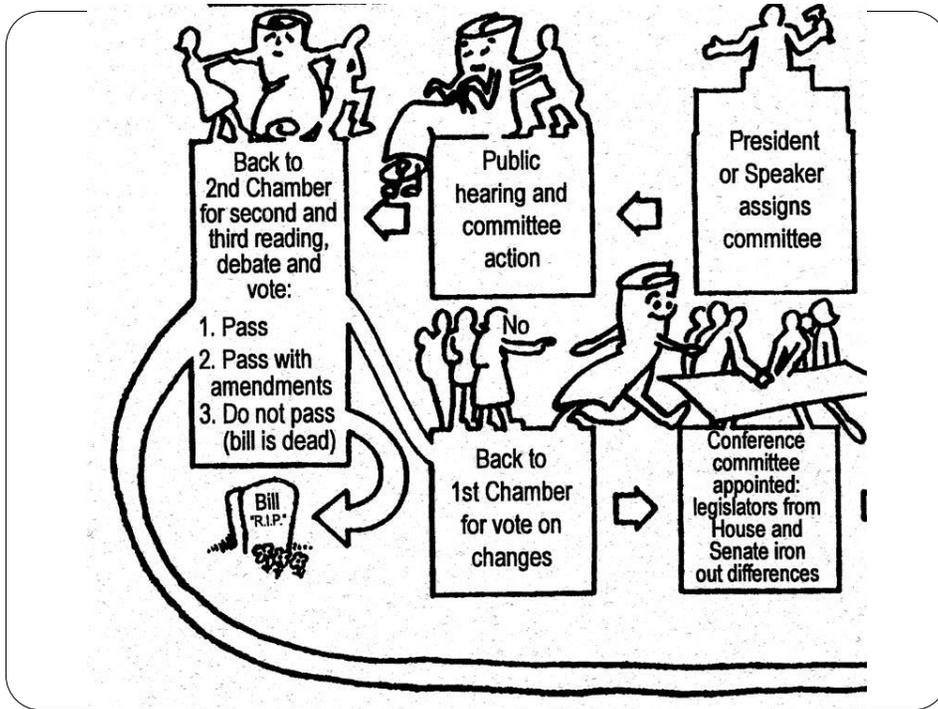
THE LEGISLATIVE PROCESS: AN OVERVIEW

How An Idea Becomes Law

A Simple View of the Oregon Legislative Process







Start with a Strategic Plan

- **Identify:**
 - Clear and brief description of goal
 - Possible routes to the goal
 - Pros and cons of each
 - Potential allies
 - Likely opponents
- **Assess** importance of the goal relative to the effort to achieve it and probability of success

****Changing law or policy is a major commitment of time, energy and sometimes of resources.****

Drafting Effective Legislation

- Broadly draft the law.
- Create a Framework.
- In many states, actual draft of legislative bill is written by a special unit or staff of attorneys affiliated with the legislature.
- **Rulemaking**
 - Rules and Regulations fill in details of the legislation
 - When possibly, use of national standards or successful implementation in comparable states lends credibility
 - *Consider whether you can achieve your goals through rulemaking rather than legislation.*

Some Tips for Success

- Pick the **RIGHT SPONSOR**
 - Someone on the committee that will hear the bill
 - Pick someone who is respected and listened to
- As early as possible, talk with all legislators who may be influential in getting the bill heard or passed
- Engage stakeholders and other lobbyists
 - They may speak on your behalf or be independently consulted by legislators
- Know who will support you and who will oppose you
- Seek the guidance of someone who knows the unspoken rules and processes – if possible to be your partner

Examples and Lessons

- **Virginia – Revised TB law**
 - Understanding the legislature's Power Structure
 - Understanding the sometimes-constrained role of government agencies
- **Oregon – Revised major public health codes**
 - Identifying advocates and opponents
 - Engaging them from the beginning
 - Understanding the variations among legislative committees – who really sets the agenda
 - Committee Chair, or staff, or respected member



Questions or Comments?