# Leveling Up in Your State Legislatures:

## *Pre-Filing and Legislative Days*

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October 29, 2026

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PSYC ADVOCATE

# Foundations of a Strong Advocacy Program

## Direct Lobbying

*Professional advocates engaging directly with officials to encourage them to adopt, change, or oppose a policy position.*

## Grassroots Engagement

*Organizing stakeholders for them to encourage their officials to adopt or oppose a policy position.*

**Foundation of a Strong Advocacy Program**

## Political Giving

*Fundraising to support campaigns of candidates who champion issues relevant to your mission, typically through a Political Action Committee (PAC)*

## Coalition Engagement

*Partnering with like-minded organizations to elevate diverse voices on an issue.*

# Pre-Filing

Preparing to hit the ground running when session starts



# What is the purpose of pre-filing?

- Legislatures, legislators, and advocacy groups use prefiling for a number of purposes, including:
  - Agenda-setting
  - Announcement of priorities
  - Increase engagement with constituents and advocacy groups
  - Early track for priority legislation

# Prefiling looks very different from state to state

- Many variations in prefiling processes and requirements amongst the states, including:
  - Unlimited bills v. limit on number of bills per legislator
  - Limits on who can prefile (*i.e., legislators/ committees/ governor/ state agencies/ outside groups/ etc.*)
  - Limits on types of bills that can be prefiled
  - Deadline for prefiling v. prefiling on a rolling basis
- States may have different prefiling rules between House/Assembly and Senate
- Check your state legislature's rules!

# But not all states allow prefiling

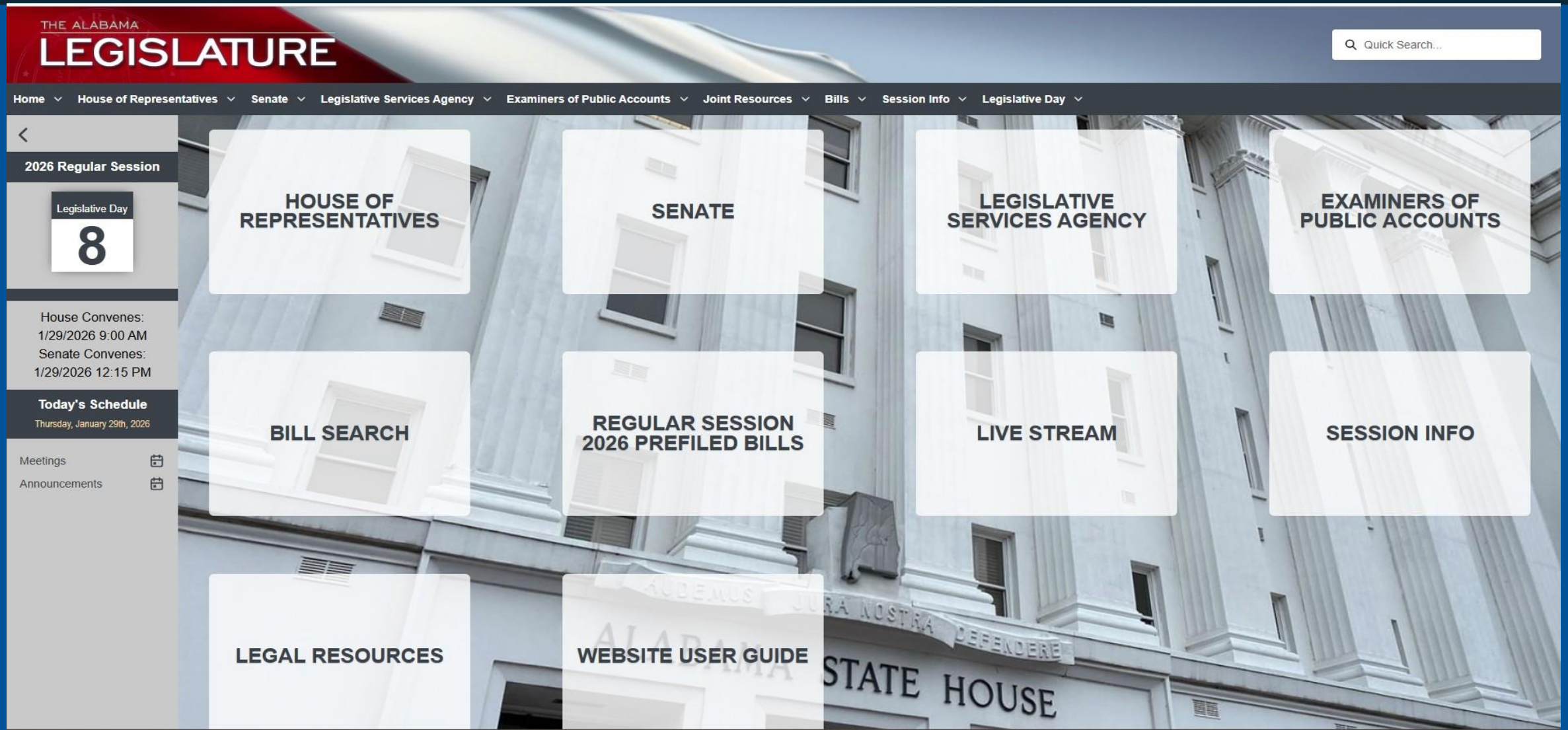
The following do not currently allow for prefiling of bills

- California
- Massachusetts
- New Hampshire
- New Jersey
- Rhode Island
- Vermont
- Georgia
- Washington, DC

# Prefiling in Alabama

- Only legislators can prefile
- Prefiled bills are posted to the Alabama legislature's website
- Between 150 to 200 bills were prefiled ahead of the start of the 2026 legislative session
- Prefiling for the 2027 legislative session begins December 1, 2026

# Prefiling in Alabama



# Prefiling in Alabama

THE ALABAMA LEGISLATURE

Quick Search...

Home | House of Representatives | Senate | Legislative Services Agency | Examiners of Public Accounts | Joint Resources | Bills | Session Info | Legislative Day

MY BILLS | BILLS - SEARCH CURRENT SESSION | BILL TEXT SEARCH | BILLS - SEARCH ALL SESSIONS | BILLS BY HOUSE SPONSOR | BILLS BY SENATE SPONSOR | PRE

2026 Regular Session

Legislative Day
8

House Convenes:
1/29/2026 9:00 AM
Senate Convenes:
1/29/2026 12:15 PM

Today's Schedule
Thursday, January 29th, 2026

Meetings
Announcements

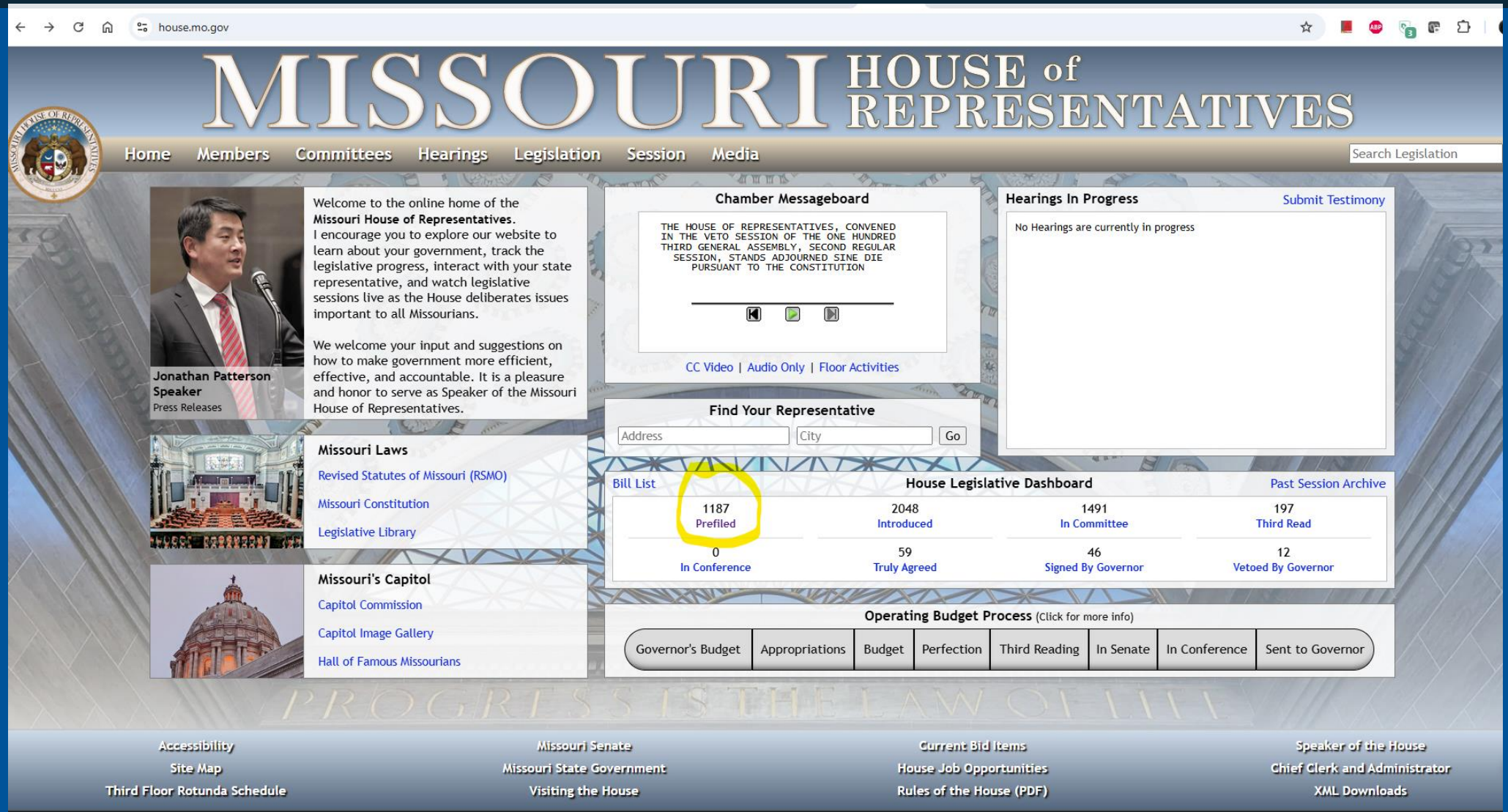
Search Table

| YEAR | BILL | SPONSOR | SESSION | BODY | SUBJECT | TITLE | ASSGN COMM | PREFILED |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2026 | HB1 | Boyd | 2026 Regular Session | House | Motor Vehicles & Traffic | Motor vehicles; suspension of driver license and ignition interlock device following first driving while under the influence conviction required | | 6/25/2025 |
| 2026 | HB2 | Standridge | 2026 Regular Session | House | Government Administration | Gulf of Mexico, renamed, observation and implementation by state and local entities and state and local employees required where practicable | State Government (House) | 6/25/2025 |
| 2026 | HB3 | Brown (C) | 2026 Regular Session | House | Taxation & Revenue | Taxation; to exempt certain retail sales of fish or other seafood from sales and use taxes | Finance and Taxation Education (Senate) | 6/25/2025 |
| 2026 | HB4 | Woods | 2026 Regular Session | House | Taxation & Revenue | Taxation; establishes Alabama Broadband Investment Maximization Act; exempts ADECA project funded or administered purchases from sales and use tax | Ways and Means Education (House) | 6/25/2025 |
| 2026 | HB5 | McCampbell | 2026 Regular Session | House | Consumer Protection | Service contracts; terms defined; certain disclosures in advertising required; disclosures of limitations of contracts further provided for | Commerce and Small Business (House) | 6/25/2025 |
| 2026 | HB6 | Pettus | 2026 Regular Session | House | Retirement | Employees' Retirement System, all ALEA law enforcement officers, including State Police Tier II Plan members, to receive payment for up to 80 hours of accrued and unused annual leave per year | Ways and Means General Fund (House) | 6/25/2025 |
| 2026 | HB7 | Woods | 2026 Regular Session | House | Crimes & Offenses | Crimes and offenses, penalty increased for crimes of making a terrorist threat in the first or second degree, principal to immediately contact law enforcement of terrorist threat, suspension of student, readmittance, and restitution provided | | 6/25/2025 |
| 2026 | HB8 | Gidley | 2026 Regular Session | House | Education | Campus chaplains; public K-12 schools authorized to accept as volunteers, local boards of education and governing bodies authorized to vote on whether to allow, limitations provided | Education Policy (House) | 6/25/2025 |
| 2026 | HB9 | Gidley | 2026 Regular Session | House | Crimes & Offenses | Abuse and exploitation of an elder, effect of conviction on intestate succession, wills, joint assets, and other contractual obligations provided | Judiciary (House) | 6/25/2025 |
| 2026 | | | 2026 Regular | | | | | |

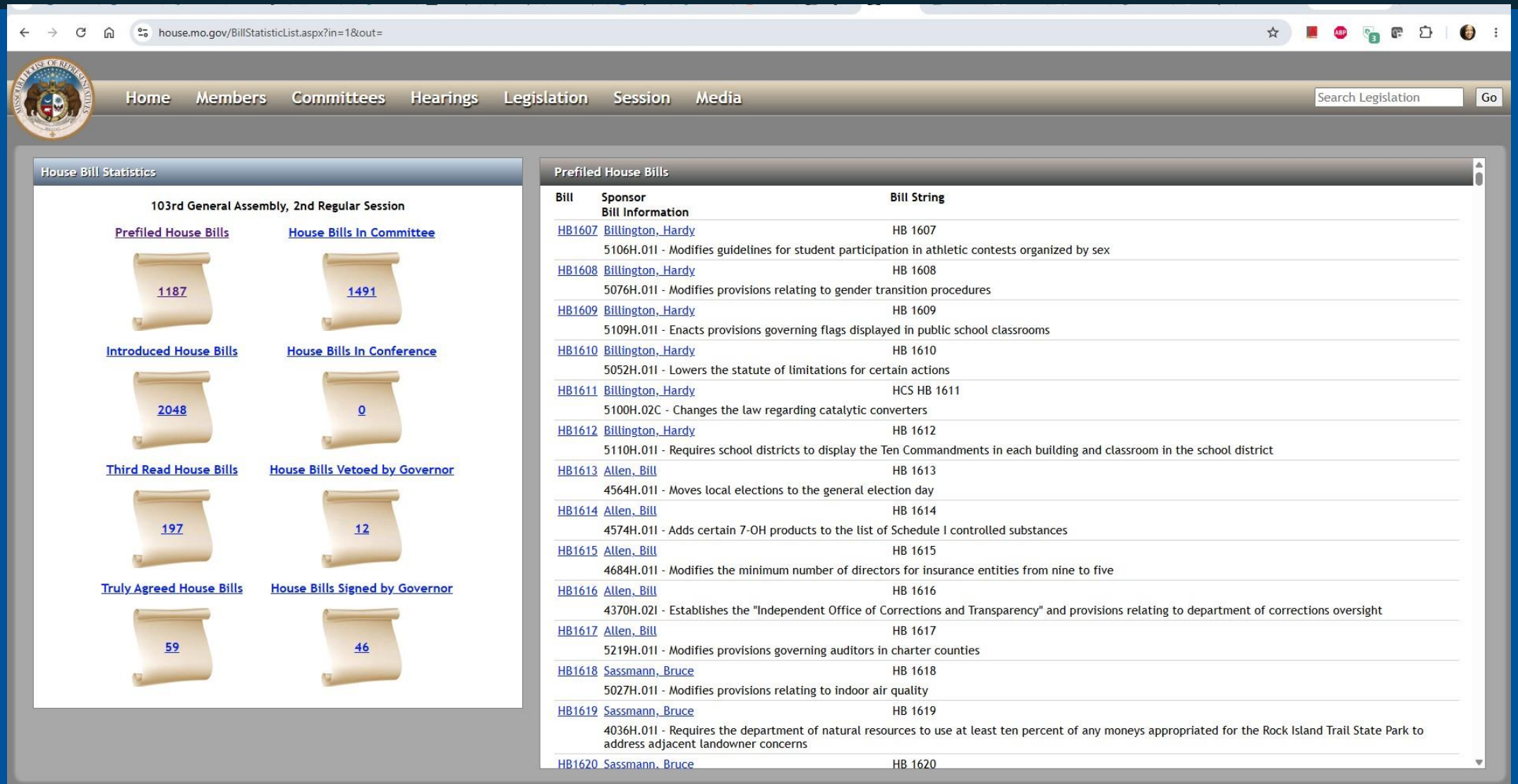
# Prefiling in Missouri

- For the 2027 General Assembly, prefiling begins December 1
- Once filed, details of the bill including the bill sponsor, number, and text is available
- Ahead of the 2026 legislative session, over 1100 bills were prefiled in the Missouri House of Representatives

# Prefiling in Missouri



# Prefiling in Missouri



# Why should I get involved?

- Once a bill is prefiled, advocates will be able to find and research the legislation
- Strategy can be developed early to either support or work to defeat the measure.
- Line up proponents or opposition to the bill
- Tool for relationship-building with state legislators:
    - Early awareness of legislation
    - Promotion of state psychology association priorities
    - Positioning psychologists as experts on a topic

# Where can I find more information about pre-filing?

- Your state legislature's website
- National Conference of State Legislatures
  - https://www.ncsl.org/documents/legismgt/ILP/02Tab3Pt6.pdf.

# Growing Legislative Capacity

Overview of steps and tactics depending on your advocacy infrastructure.



# What Are Your Advocacy Goals?

- Who develops your advocacy agenda?
  - Typically a Legislative/Advocacy Committee or the STPA Board
- Do an Advocacy Survey
  - Two-for-one benefit…
    - 1) Advocacy Agenda
    - 2) You get an email list of people in your STPA who are interested n advocacy. That’s a grassroots network!

# 5 Examples of SPTA Advocacy Goals

1. **Build Visibility in the State Legislature**
   Establish the SPTA as a trusted resource for legislators and staff. No specific legislative issue required.
2. **Advance a Legislative Priority (Proactive Advocacy)**
   Introduce or support legislation that advances psychology, improves access to care, or strengthens the profession.
3. **Oppose Harmful Legislation (Defensive Advocacy)**
   Defeat or amend legislation that threatens psychological practice, patient access, or professional standards.
4. **Influence Regulatory and Administrative Policy**
   Engage state agencies, licensing boards, and regulators to shape policies affecting psychologists and their patients.
5. **Strengthen Advocacy Capacity and Member Engagement**
   Recruit grassroots and grasstops advocates, train members, and build infrastructure for sustained advocacy.

# GRASSROOTS ADVOCATES

**Many voices from the community who share their personal experiences and encourage others to take action.**

### WHO THEY ARE
Individuals, patients, professionals, students, and community members

### WHAT THEY DO
Share personal stories, contact their elected officials, write letters and emails, make phone calls, and engage on social media

### WHY THEY MATTER
Show broad public support and put constituent voices front and center with policymakers

# GRASSTOPS ADVOCATES

**Influential leaders who use their expertise, credibility, and relationships to shape policymaker decisions.**

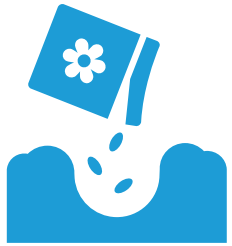
### WHO THEY ARE
Respected and influential individuals such as organizational leaders, expert practitioners, researchers, and other trusted voices

### WHAT THEY DO
Meet with policymakers, provide expert insight and data, offer policy recommendations, and serve as trusted resources

### WHY THEY MATTER
Bring credibility, expertise, and influential relationships that can guide and shape policymaker decisions



# Where Are You in Your Growth Journey?



## Building Capacity

*Targeted grasstops outreach*



## Expanding Relationships

*Meet and greet events*



## Drawing on Strong Roots

*Legislative days*



## Exploring New Paths

Example: Oklahoma Psychological Association's Psychologist of the Day

# Building Capacity: Understanding Targeted Grasstops

**Grasstops efforts spotlight a few individuals who serve as advocacy spokespersons for your SPTA on one or more issues.** They usually leverage more experienced advocates or responsive subject matter experts who are willing to be trained in advocacy.

These efforts are usually lower cost and have flexible timelines based on the evolving needs of your legislative efforts. You will usually need:

- Staff time (or the time of your contract lobbyist)
- Access to officials' staff contact information.
  - Note that the Advocacy Office provides SPTAs with PolicyNote (formerly FiscalNote) licenses, which includes staff directories.
- Access to candidate / officials' free newsletters to constituents.

# Grasstops Tactics Include…

- Direct email communications to officials. You will need staff or contract lobbyist time to…
  - Identify key offices and their contact information, and strategic windows for action (usually timed around the legislative cycle, e.g. introduction of a bill, committee review, floor votes, etc.).
  - Identify willing advocates. Prioritize responsive individuals who can act within the required timeframe.
  - Prepare talking points, and instructions on how advocates can personalize the content and when they need to send it. Aim to give them a week to follow through if possible.
  - Answer follow-up questions from officials' staff that advocates may refer to you within 3 business days.

- Issue-specific meetings. You will need staff or contract lobbyist time to…
  - Identify key offices and best strategic windows for action (see details above).
  - Schedule meetings on behalf of advocates – these can be virtual to save on travel expenses. Consider asking your lobbyist if any to bring local constituents to meetings they do for you. Offices may require up to 3 weeks notice for meeting requests.
  - Prepare and deliver a training on meeting best practices, and review key talking points for advocates to personalize. If you are only engaging one advocate at a time, this can be scheduled as a regular meeting rather than a formal training. This should be done at least a week before the meetings.
  - Staff time to participate in the meeting if needed or follow-up with the advocate for feedback.

- Candidate events e.g., townhalls, forums and door-to-door opportunities. You will need staff time and possibly travel funds to…
  - Review political candidate newsletters, etc. for townhall or forum announcements (timelines vary).
  - Identify willing advocates and discuss whether they need financial support to travel to the event location (may be more relevant in states with large distances between cities).
  - Prepare targeted talking points for advocates to personalize for specific events, and a feedback loop to hear back on how the event went.
  - Prepare general talking points for people to use if candidates knock on their door during canvassing.



PSYC ADVOCATE

# KEY TAKEAWAY

**Targeted grasstops efforts prioritize quality over quantity.** Do not underestimate the effectiveness of a small number of motivated and responsive volunteers to begin building your SPTA's advocacy profile.

# Expanding Relationships: Understanding Meet and Greet Events

Meet and greet events gather multiple constituents and legislators in one place so they can interact more informally. They can be used to educate generally on psychology or raise your association's visibility on a specific issue.

These efforts are more costly than targeted grasstops, but less onerous than a full legislative day because they are smaller in scale and shorter in duration. Costs may be shared with coalition partners / sponsors. They require staff time and funding for:

- Identifying a strategic date (e.g. during legislative session) and a budget for the event, usually at least 6 months in advance. This means you may start planning in the year prior to the event.
    - This includes whether to fully or partially fund travel for select members from sectors that would otherwise be underrepresented (e.g. travel scholarships for students or early career professionals), and whether to share event costs with coalition partners, etc.
- Event announcements to officials and advocates, and tracking of RSVPs if any, usually sent 4 months in advance of the event. You will want to send both groups period reminders.
- Booking a venue (many state capitols offer event rooms), timeline will vary by venue.
- Arranging for food and beverages, timeline will vary depending on use of caterers or not.
- Preparing sample talking points for participants with instructions on how to personalize (disseminate a week before the event) at least 1 week before the event. If printing materials, do so at least 2 weeks before the event.
- Tracking feedback / follow-up opportunities within a week of the event.

# Meet & Greet Events Include…

- Legislative Breakfasts and Coffees. These are 1- to 2-hour events where multiple officials and their constituents can interact, without needing to schedule multiple meetings. You will need to:
  - Identify an ideal date / budget
  - Book a venue
  - Arrange food and beverages
  - Announce the event to officials
  - Recruit participating constituents and give them sample talking points to personalize.
  - Develop a feedback loop
  - See previous slide for timeframes for all these items.
- Info Sessions. 1- to 2-hour happy-hour style receptions, etc. with tables / posters around the room with experts and/or constituents who can discuss various sectors of psychology. The planning for this type of event is like a legislative breakfast, but you will need to increase the budget to factor in display materials, and invite select subject matter experts at least 2 weeks earlier than other participants to ensure representation of their topics.
- Site visits. 1-hr event where constituents showcase facilities / programs, etc. to officials. Often paired with a round-table discussion. You will need to:
  - At least 6 months in advance: Decide on your capacity and if you have a budget for site visits.
  - At least 3-4 months in advance: Identify willing programs with facilities that can be toured and are relevant to your advocacy.
  - As soon as possible after a site host is secured, identify target offices, their availability, and schedule a date / time.
  - Once an office agrees to participate, start planning who will be part of the tour, what travel may be needed, logistics for the discussion segment (e.g., food, etc.) and talking points.



# KEY TAKEAWAYS

**Meet and greet events can be educational or issue-specific.** They form a lower-pressure environment for officials and advocates alike.

**They are more impactful as part of a multi-pronged strategy.** Events might light a policy spark in your officials, but it takes repeated follow up to grow and maintain that momentum over time.

# Drawing on Strong Roots: Understanding Legislative Days

Legislative days showcase the breadth of your constituent support and the depth of expertise your association can bring to the table. While they are usually centered around a policy, they can also be generally educational on the field of psychology.

Legislative days are the most costly and time-consuming way of engaging your grassroots, because you will have to schedule meetings on behalf of your participants, print supporting materials, etc.. However, costs may be reduced by either:

- Partnering with coalitions, or
- Focusing on a targeted effort where only your grasstops leaders participate.

# Legislative Day Process

*Legislative days require staff time and funding for:*

- **Identifying a strategic date (e.g. during legislative session) and a budget for the event, usually at least 6 months in advance.** This means you may need to start planning in the year prior to the event.
    - This includes deciding whether to fully or partially fund travel for select members from sectors that would otherwise be underrepresented (e.g. travel scholarships for students or early career professionals).
- **Recruiting participants at least 4 months in advance** so they can plan for a full day away from their work or classes. You will need to do periodic reminders for people to RSVP if you are aiming for a larger event.
- **Scheduling meetings with each relevant office for all your participants once your event registration closes**. When outreach begins will vary based on the culture of your state legislature (e.g. some are staff year-round so meetings can be scheduled further in advance, some are only staffed during session).
- **You may need to book a room / site** for at least an hour for day-of distribution of meeting materials and possibly do a refresher on issue talking points. Timeline will vary by venue.
- **Drafting and finalizing leave-behind materials**, at least 2 months in advance if relying on volunteers.
- **Ordering final leave-behind materials to be printed** at least 2 weeks in advance.
- **Preparing for a training for all participants**, to be held at least 1 week before the event, to teach meetings best practices and key talking points around the issues / profession.
- **Tracking feedback / follow-up opportunities within a week of the event**.



# Legislative Day Capacity: Assess Your…

## NEED

Is your primary goal impacting a specific policy, or raising your visibility / general education?

Not every issue you need to act on is suited for a legislative day. But legislative days do not need to be issue-specific.

## CAPACITY

- Do you have constituents or coalition partners in key districts?
- Which participants have compelling stories to share or demonstrates the broad range of the field?
- Who among your participants can be included in your follow-up strategy (e.g. has bandwidth, etc.)?
- When / how can your participants meet to all get on the same page?

## STRATEGY

Consider messaging / training approaches that reflect who your participants may meet:

- Champions to thank
- Potential champions to show value to
- Potential skeptics who need to be reassured / convinced to sit this one out

# KEY TAKEAWAYS

**Legislative days are a show of force and expertise…** But they need not be issue-specific, and they can be targeted to save on costs.

**Legislative days need not be one size fits all.** Customize your approach to your state culture, membership, etc.

# Psychologist of the Day | Only Program of its kind

Mondays during the February–May legislative session • Connect with lawmakers and share the value of psychology in Oklahoma. First Monday of each week, including the first day of session which is the State of the State by the Governor .

## How did it start and what happens - 2012

- Doctor of the Day and Nurse of the Day every day during session
- Psychologist of Day is one day a week as we don't have the numbers to serve weekly nor have we advocated for that.
- Sign up in November at OPA's Annual Meeting for a date.
- Show up and get introduced from the podium in the Senate then House of Representatives by your Legislator
- Coordination on Wednesdays for proclamation with House and Senate Staff with instructions to psychologist and shadow serving the Friday before serving.
- Coordinated parking spot for Psychologist of Day

## Evolution of Program - 2026

- Staff coordinate appointments with Senate and House Legislators prior to start of daily session (sometimes after session visits. Attendance can include committee meeting attendance, if applicable)
- Staff attends meetings with psychologists and any shadows (students, post docs, other psychologists) and brings handouts (What is a psychologist, Prescriptive Authority, Legislative Priorities for the year, AI white paper)
- Recognize each serving opportunity in weekly newsletter with link to Senate and House introductions and photos. Each new Psych of Day (never served before) is recognized at OPA's Annual meeting with an OPA branded business card

# Psychologist of the Day | What to Expect

Mondays during the February–May legislative session • Connect with lawmakers and share the value of psychology in Oklahoma. First Monday of each week, including the first day of session which is the State of the State by the Governor .

## Before Your Visit

- Submit your biography to OPA staff for legislative citations.
- OPA staff arrange meetings with your House Representative and Senator and helps to connect you with your legislative leaders and any other legislators you have or have a desire to connect with.
- OPA provides legislative issue briefs; a pre-visit conversation with the lobbyist can be arranged.
- The Executive Director confirms session start time the Friday before you serve. The ED attends the Psych of Day with each member and their shadows (other psychologists, Post Doc's or Students).

## Arrival & Dress

- Arrive no later than 12:30 p.m. and at least 30 minutes before session begins. Session generally starts at 1:30 p.m.
- Check in at the Doctor of the Day medical office, Ground Floor, near the south visitor entrance and Capitol Gift Shop.
- Professional attire is expected; sport coat required for men, and no tennis shoes.

**NOTE: OPA staff provide a briefing prior to seeing your legislators beginning at 1 and again at 1:15. Shadows also have meetings with their legislative leaders to enhance the psychological voice.**

# Your Day at the Capitol | Logistics & Support

OKLAHOMA PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION
ADVANCING THE PRACTICE SINCE 1946

## Parking & Access

- Use the designated Psychologist of the Day parking space on the east side of the Capitol, facing Lincoln Boulevard.
- Tell the gated entrance guard you are serving as Psychologist of the Day; the space may change locations.
- Enter through the east doors (Level 1); the Doctor of the Day office is on the Ground Floor.

## At the Capitol

- OPA's Executive Director and lobbyists accompany you during Capitol activities.
- You are introduced in the House and Senate; chamber escorts are coordinated through the Doctor of the Day office.
- OPA and Capitol photographers take photos. Bring business cards if available.
- You may stay to observe House and Senate proceedings and/or Committee meetings and speak with legislators afterward.

NEW in 2024 – OPA was asked to begin consultations after session in a small, private room for any senate or house staff. This session provides coping strategies for high stress, often threatening environment.

**Questions or conflicts? Contact OPA Executive Director • okpsychassociation@gmail.com • 405-664-0270 (calls/texts)**

# OPPORTUNITIES ABOUND for other states

OKLAHOMA PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION
ADVANCING THE PRACTICE SINCE 1946

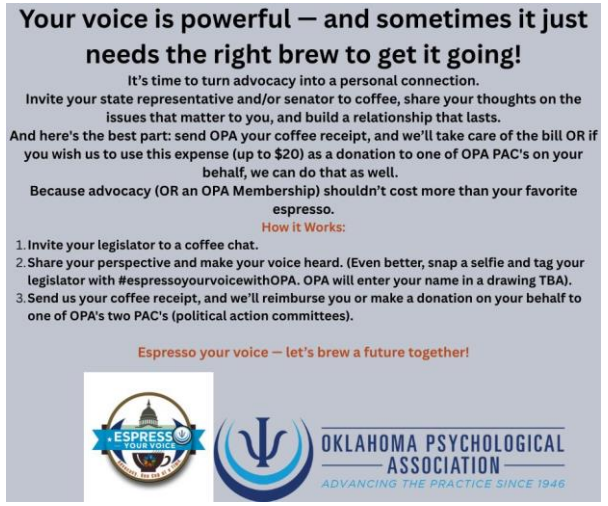
## States with recurring volunteer programs and sponsoring organization

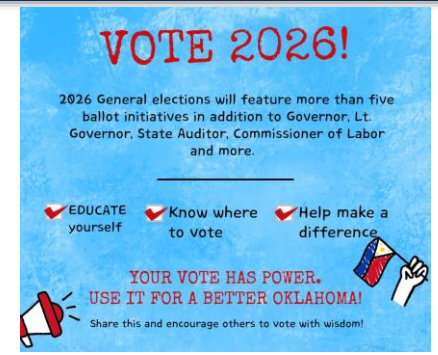
- Arizona – Arizona Medical Association
- Florida – State Medical and Specialty Societies
- Mississippi – Mississippi State Medical Association
- New Mexico – NM Academy of Family Physicians
- North Dakota – ND State Medical Association
- South Dakota – SD State Medical Association
- Texas – TX Academy of Family Physicians

Live Proceedings
www.oksenate.gov
www.okhouse.gov

## Program Features - These states and Oklahoma Resources (Click here for PDF )







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# Questions?

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# Appendix

Strategic content to share with your legislative chairs, etc. to inform your advocacy planning



# Building Capacity: Assess Your Infrastructure

### What does your membership prioritize?

Survey them on issues and level of interest in activities to identify potential issue-specific advocates.

### Who are your advocacy "spokespersons"?

Assess who in your leadership or existing volunteer base has experience with meeting officials or is willing to learn, and can commit the time to do so.

### What training opportunities can you offer?

What is your bandwidth and budget to offer advocacy training, and who can you leverage to conduct it?

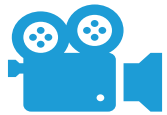
### Is your lobbyist experienced in grassroots advocacy?

If your SPTA has a lobbyist, discuss their experience and comfort with bringing advocates to meetings.

# Legislative Day: Make Sure Advocates Know to…



**Research decisionmakers** in advance to find common ground and inform their narratives.



**Use concrete examples and anecdotes to make an issue come alive.** Keep your language accessible.



**Follow up early and often.** Participants need to understand that they will likely not get to "yes" in the first meeting, and when the next opportunities for action are. Officials need to hear often from them and your SPTA to keep your issues on their radar.

# Get Involved with APA Advocacy

