HOW TO BE AN EFFECTIVE GRASSROOTS LOBBYIST

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SECTION 1.  INTRODUCTION

This manual will help you understand how to participate in an effective grassroots legislative network. Additional training materials are available from the Advocacy Committee or the executive director.

A. GRASSROOTS LOBBYING VS. GRASSROOTS EDUCATING

Do you want to lobby or educate the individuals with whom you meet? Whether you are an association (whose volunteers usually are legally allowed to lobby) or a government agency (whose employees are legally prohibited from lobbying), grassroots network members typically spend the overwhelming majority of their time educating the individuals with whom they meet, not lobbying. That’s because you cannot persuade elected government officials to support or oppose legislation or regulation if they do not first understand the underlying issues—and many people in and outside of government have little appreciation for or understanding of employee assistance programs (EAP).

Members of Congress, White House officials and regulators in every federal agency are all coping with cramped schedules and a daunting list of issues. Most will have little or no experience concerning your industry or agency. Therefore, before they can make an informed decision about an issue of concern to EASNA, you must first ensure that these key decision-makers understand your issues. Your first task is to explain what your organization does and its value as an information resource on one of the single most important issues facing business and government leaders: health care.

Because education is such an important objective of any grassroots network, this manual focuses on the essential tasks of setting up meetings and sight visits and, as important, maintaining regular communication.

B. MANUAL CONTENTS

Information is divided into the following eight sections:

- Section 1  Introduction
- Section 2  Grassroots Lobbying Defined
- Section 3  The Advocacy Committee
- Section 4  Advocacy Committee Members’ Duties and Responsibilities
- Section 5  Building Resources
- Section 6  Identifying Your Audience and Message
- Section 7  Contacting a Member of Congress
- Section 8  Glossary of Congressional Terms
C. **ACTION ITEMS**

Within some sections of this handbook are action items, identified by the large check mark. Each is a tip for finding additional information or a suggestion for how to become a better grassroots lobbyist.
SECTION 2. Grassroots Lobbying Defined

Today, lobbying and lobbyists are a major force in the decision-making process of federal and state governments. By definition, lobbying is the means by which a person or a group of persons attempts to influence the voting of legislators. In the last few years individual constituents have increasingly replaced the large, well-funded groups that spent millions of dollars to dominate lawmaking. Specifically, “grassroots lobbying” now plays a substantial role in many legislative battles.

Grassroots lobbying refers to any technique that provides Members of Congress with input from constituents—the folks back home who vote. Communication with these individuals may include emails, letters, phone calls, or personal visits. Grassroots lobbyists develop a communications network so that when there is a vote on Capitol Hill—whether in a subcommittee or committee, or on the House or Senate floor—as many constituents as possible let Members of Congress know whether they support or oppose the pending bill. By moving quickly and in significant numbers, grassroots lobbyists can make a difference in the mind of a Representative or Senator who is unsure how to vote on the bill or is not very familiar with the subject of the bill.
SECTION 3. THE ADVOCACY COMMITTEE

The mission of the EASNA Advocacy Committee is to represent and advance the interests of the employee assistance community in legislative and regulatory affairs at the state, provincial and federal levels, where applicable. Working collaboratively with other organizations and coalitions, the EASNA Advocacy Committee seeks to create a regulatory and legislative landscape throughout North America that will facilitate the maximum growth and positive societal influence of employee assistance programs.

A. OBJECTIVES

The committee has the following objectives:

- Build bridges and establish liaisons with other relevant like-minded organizations and coalitions.
- Establish EASNA as a recognized resource and consultant for North American regulators and legislators on matters of EAP.
- Educate and mobilize the EASNA membership regarding EAP relevant legislation and regulations through a system of push email membership alerts.
- Draft policies regarding EAP relevant regulations and legislation for EASNA board consideration and adoption.

To achieve these objectives, the committee will establish and train a group of knowledgeable and effective grassroots lobbyists who will do the following:

- develop personal contacts with both Members of Congress and the legislative assistants working in personal offices and on committee staffs;
- develop personal contacts with subject matter experts or the government relations staffers in regulatory agencies, and
- initiate and coordinate EASNA’s advocacy activity.

B. DEVELOPING RELATIONSHIPS—THE KEY TO SUCCESS

The ultimate goal of the committee is to have a member establish working relationships with these individuals:

- key members of Congress on committees with jurisdiction over health care issues,
- Key legislative assistants to members of Congress in both personal offices and on committee staffs dealing with health care issues,
- key staffers at regulatory agencies involved in health care,
- advocacy counterparts with other grassroots organizations sponsored by EAP and health care-focused associations.

Advocacy Committee members make sure EASNA’s other members understand the following:

- how laws are made,
- how lawmakers can influence regulatory matters,
- which lawmakers represent them,
- how those lawmakers are elected, and
- the issues in Congress that may affect them.

Committee members let representatives and senators know your position on pertinent legislation and regulations and persuade them to consider your views on these issues or adopt your position on pending legislation and regulation. This handbook provides information on the federal legislative and political processes so that you can influence pending legislation and make a difference in the political and legislative processes.

**Action Item: How Laws Are Made**

Visit [Thomas](https://www.thomas.gov), the Library of Congress’ website on legislation, which has a detailed explanation of how a bill becomes a law, as well as other information useful for those new to grassroots lobbying.

**C. SCOPE**

A large number of network members is not always necessary to be effective on Capitol Hill—if the organization limits its scope to a carefully considered and limited set of issues. A key to success on Capitol Hill is often having a few network members developing close working relationships with the committees of jurisdiction, which may be oversight committee members (those responsible for monitoring the effectiveness of government agencies) or appropriations committee members (those responsible for funding agencies). This type of focused activity and communication can be far more effective than general communication with every Member of Congress without the personal involvement of a network member.

**D. ORGANIZATION**

The EASNA Advocacy Committee usually consists of the following:

- the board president (chair);
- the committee chair (named by the president),
- committee members, and
- headquarters staff.

Recruiting committee members is the essential responsibility of your committee chair. Credibility for any grassroots advocacy program can occur only when the association’s members see that the network is a priority for those at the top of the chain of command.
There are two critical means of supporting an advocacy program: by expressing its program’s value to the organization in speeches, articles and during meetings, and by funding the program’s activities when the organization’s board members prepare their annual budget. Although grassroots lobbying is one of the most cost-effective forms of working on Capitol Hill, it nonetheless requires some financial backing.
SECTION 4. ADVOCACY COMMITTEE MEMBERS' DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Each level of a grassroots network has specific responsibilities designed to ensure the maximum level of communication among committee members and among the general membership.

A. HEADQUARTERS

The board president directs all legislative activity, actions carried out by the Advocacy Committee chair. The chair is supported by the executive director in the headquarters office, who will assist with the following:

- establish a communication link to all members of the grassroots lobbying network, especially members of the Advocacy Committee;
- provide legislative training for all committee members;
- distribute committee-provided information regarding legislation and regulation in Canada and the US; and
- help identify members of the US House or Senate or committee staff or regulatory agency staff to be contacted regarding pertinent legislation and regulations.

B. ADVOCACY COMMITTEE

The members act on recommendations made by the board, as conveyed by the chair, including EASNA’s positions on legislative and regulatory issues.

C. COMMUNICATION

Communication is the key to keeping EASNA’s members informed about advocacy issues. EASNA’s headquarters staff maintains a list of all Advocacy Committee members, who are also listed on the website. The committee chair maintains background information on pending legislation and regulation and congressional hearings, and provides training programs and materials.

D. INFORMATION FROM WASHINGTON

The Advocacy Committee chair prepares and distributes updates for the board and membership at large, and directs the development of training programs and materials, working with the executive director in Washington. The committee also identifies information to publish on the EASNA website, again in coordination with the headquarters staff.
Action Item: Publicizing the Network

Keeping an up-to-date list of the Advocacy Committee is an important task. As important is making that list easily accessible to EASNA’s members. Committee members, issues, and news may all be distributed through broadcast emails (the EASNA Alerts) and on the website. The committee chair is the liaison with the headquarters staff for dissemination of this information.
SECTION 5. BUILDING RESOURCES

Now that EASNA has defined its Advocacy Committee structure and begun recruiting members, the next task is to establish channels for communication and training for members interested in becoming committee members and effective grassroots lobbyists. This section offers suggestions for retaining and training your network members so they will become effective resources for your organization.

A. THE NEED FOR INFORMATION AND TRAINING

Most beginning grassroots lobbyists have some practical experience in politics (if only as voters), and some education experience (in civics or political science classes). To become effective grassroots lobbyists, however, they must receive training that focuses on Capitol Hill. Of special importance is information and training that identifies the changes that have occurred in the past two decades—and several years since many of our network members last studied the legislative process and politics.

THE INEXPERIENCED TARGET AUDIENCE

Two studies of congressional staff member experience by the Congressional Research Foundation completed in 1997 and 1998 confirm what most lobbyists (professional and grassroots) have known for some time: Staffers are younger, or less experienced than ever, and are spending fewer years on Capitol Hill.

As these studies illustrate, subject experts are hard to find in most congressional offices because of the turnover on Capitol Hill:
- Senate staff in 1997 had an average of 5.6 years experience;
- 62 percent of Senate legislative aides have been in their current jobs 2 years or less;
- House staff in 1998 had an average of 4.9 years experience;
- 78 percent of House legislative aides have been in their current jobs 2 years or less.

Since these formal studies were published, anecdotal evidence show that the youth movement has continued and the lack of experience has only increased.

This inexperience, however, also presents a tremendous opportunity for grassroots lobbyists because they can be the subject matter experts the staffers are looking for and need. Properly trained in the ways of communicating on Capitol Hill, grassroots lobbyists can quickly develop productive relationships with these young staffers. As important, your grassroots lobbyists almost immediately see the positive influence their work as a network member can produce.
TRAINING TOOLS

Training is essential for a new grassroots network, but also for established ones. Turnover in any network is inevitable, but even experienced individuals need new information and ideas to keep them informed—and motivated. In addition to this manual, EASNA members may also participate in a one-hour training teleconference, which may be scheduled by the Advocacy Committee chair. As noted previously, issue-specific information will be maintained on the EASNA website.

LOBBY DAY

As the EASNA advocacy program grows, the organization will consider offering in-person training in coordination with a lobby day. Participants will hear the latest news and information on our issues, receive training tips on effective lobbying techniques, and immediately put all of the information and tools to work by visiting with their elected officials in Washington and Ottawa.

Because so many individuals and organizations now visit both the Washington and Ottawa Capitol Hills, grassroots lobbyists must be better prepared than ever if they are to effectively communicate their message.

✔ Action Item: Keep Asking for Ideas

The Advocacy Committee’s value to the association depends on its ability to provide timely information on issues that matter to the members. Remember, the Advocacy committee is the public face of their network. Keep the members aware of the issues the committee is focused on and ask them where they need information—and where they can help the committee.
SECTION 6. IDENTIFYING YOUR MESSAGE AND AUDIENCE

Few grassroots organizations have the resources (human or otherwise) to reach every office on either Capitol Hill, much less the many regulatory agencies that implement health care laws and policies. Similarly, grassroots lobbyists can use their limited time as volunteers in our network to follow only a limited number of bills, resolutions, and regulations. To accommodate these limitations, you must articulate a focused message and define primary and secondary target audiences if the Advocacy Committee is to keep your legislative program on track and your volunteers involved and motivated.

A. MISSION STATEMENT

To be an effective grassroots lobbyist, you must understand the goal of the Advocacy Committee, which is outlined in its mission statement:

The mission of the EASNA Advocacy Committee is to represent and advance the interests of the employee assistance community in legislative and regulatory affairs at the state, provincial and federal levels, where applicable. Working collaboratively with other organizations and coalitions, the EASNA Advocacy Committee seeks to create a regulatory and legislative landscape throughout North America that will facilitate the maximum growth and positive societal influence of employee assistance programs.

B. ANNUAL LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

Throughout the legislative year, but especially at the beginning of every new Congress, House and Senate members introduce bills that concern EASNA or that connect in some way to your network’s mission statement. Similarly, regulatory agencies write the detailed regulations that indicate how different federal agencies will implement bills that become laws. EASNA’s position on some of those bills and regulations, developed by the Advocacy Committee, form the basis of your annual legislative agenda.

Given EASNA’s limited resources, the agenda will be a modest one that may change throughout the year as new issues and regulations are introduced.

C. PRIORITY COMMITTEES

All committees are not equally important for EASNA’s grassroots lobbyists. There are oversight committees, and perhaps appropriations committees, that are of primary importance to us because they would take initial action on any bills or resolutions concerning issues on our legislative agenda. Use these committees’ rosters as a way to focus our work and help identify a committee member in the district and state of the members on those committees.
D. **PROGRESS REPORTS**

To maintain the members’ interest in the Advocacy Committee’s work, it is imperative that the committee members help the chair prepare progress reports and other updates on legislative and regulatory issues. Most EASNA members do not have the time or resources to stay aware of these issues, so the Advocacy Committee can provide an exceptionally valuable benefit by sharing information.
SECTION 7. CONTACTING A MEMBER OF CONGRESS

It is essential for every grassroots network member and for Advocacy Committee members to maintain periodic contact with members of the Senate and the House of Representatives or their staffers. There are many possible communication options, such as letters, phone calls and face-to-face meetings. Some people are uncomfortable speaking their minds to someone of such importance, and they are not alone. Surveys show ninety percent of American adults have never written a letter to a member of Congress.

This section is a guide for communicating clearly and properly for best results. Communication is a basic key in a grassroots organization such as ours, and the way constituents communicate is just as important as what they communicate.

A. WRITING LETTERS

Letter writing has traditionally been the most effective way to get a point across to a Member of Congress because it lets you fully explain your views and concerns to your lawmaker. It is also the most effective way to ask a Member of Congress to introduce, cosponsor, support or oppose specific legislation. However, messages delivered by email have supplanted letters send by postal delivery.

NOTE: Sending information by postal mail is the worst way to reach members of Congress in Washington. Mass distribution through the House and Senate post offices is currently banned. All letters mailed by the US Postal Service are irradiated to ensure they cannot contain life-threatening spores or chemicals. This irradiation adds two-five days to the delivery time of materials and leaves letters with a distinct, and unpleasant, look and feel.

Instead of mailing a letter, send the same information within an email (or for longer documents, as an attachment to an email)—the delivery method Hill offices prefer. Email forms are available on the website of every member of Congress. However, messages that are sent by individuals who do not live in the House member’s district, or the Senator's state, are ignored.

Letters must be written correctly. Long-winded letters very rarely are read. Perhaps most importantly, letters must indicate clearly what it is you are requesting, such as the following:

- to express a stance on an issue and to ask for support,
- to congratulate them or thank them for a particular vote,
- to express disapproval of a vote (politely), or
- to ask the member to influence actions taken or being considered by a regulatory agency for which Congress has oversight.
CONTENT

Here are some helpful hints to remember when writing letters:

- Keep letters as short and to the point as possible. One-page letters are best.
- Identify what the subject of the letter is and state the name and number of the bill (such as HR 100 or S 99).
- State the reason for writing, including any personal experiences that pertain to the matter.
- Do not be argumentative.
- Never resort to name calling.
- If you have met the member of Congress personally or have some connection over and above that of a constituent, draw attention to it in the letter.
- Ask legislators to state their positions on the issue by written reply.
- Write as soon as possible, preferably while a bill is still in committee. Senators and representatives are usually more responsive to an appeal at that time.
- Never threaten political repudiation if the member of Congress disagrees with your position.
- Avoid standard phrases that give the appearance of form letters. They have less impact than a more personal one.
- Ask family members and friends to also send letters.

✔ Action Item: Send it NOW and with the Appropriate Contact Information

Once you write a letter, send it immediately. When a letter arrives is often just as important as what a letter says.

To ensure that your email gets past the electronic “fence,” it is essential that you include your full name and address—including both the area code before your phone number and your ZIP code. This information tells the congressional office that you are a constituent, increasing the likelihood that your message will get a prompt response.
Honorable Sally Smith  
or Honorable John Doe  
US House of Representatives  
or US Senate  
Washington, DC 20515  or 20510

Dear Representative Smith:  
or Dear Senator Doe:

As a voter and constituent represented by you, I am writing to urge you to oppose/support S_____/HR_____, a bill to ________________. This bill will be considered soon by the Committee on ___________ (or on the floor of the Senate/House).

Passage/defeat of this legislation is important to me as a member (spouse of a member) of the (name of your organization).

When this bill comes up for consideration, I urge you to vote for/against it because (in your own words, state your reason—state your expertise on the matter—relate personal experiences that are relevant).

I would appreciate your support of this position and would like to know your views on the issue and how you intend to vote on this bill.

Thank you for taking time to consider my views.

Sincerely,

Jane Smith  
111 Main Street  
Your Town, ST 54321  
(010) 555-1212

Figure 1, Sample Letter to a Member of Congress
B. **Telephone Calls**

Another effective way of communicating with legislators is through telephone conversations. Every representative and senator has an office in Washington, and at least one in the home district or state. Phone calls to a member's office are effective even when it is not possible to speak to the member directly.

When constituents contact a Member's district or state office, the staff member relays a constituent's views to Washington. Such reports are made daily when there is a large number of responses on an issue.

In certain situations, such as when a closely contested bill is considered by the full House or Senate, grassroots lobbyists may need to contact a Member's Washington office directly.

**NOTE:** When you call a congressional office, ask for the staffer responsible for your issue (or responsible for all health care issues). Expect voice mail. Congressional offices are very busy and can receive hundreds of phone calls daily when significant legislation on any issue is pending. Before calling, prepare notes on the issue to be discussed. Always ask for the Member's position on the issue in question. If the Member indicates how he or she intends to vote, immediately pass the information through the Advocacy Committee so the news is spread.

C. **Meeting Face-to-Face**

The face-to-face meeting is the best way to communicate your positions on legislative issues. Legislators appreciate constituents giving their opinions. Many decisions made by legislators are based on public response—whether in person, by letter, or phone.

Legislators meet with constituents both in Washington and when they are back in their home district or state. The most effective visits involve an entire delegation, but individual visits also are effective. When preparing for a meeting, plan out the interview in advance. Legislators should feel that the meeting with constituents was time well spent.

Remember to be friendly and cordial. Personal contacts are the basis for successful lobbying.
MEETING WITH LEGISLATIVE AIDES

Because of the hectic schedule kept by every Member of Congress and the number of issues with which they must be familiar, constituents often meet with legislative aides (LAs). These staff members usually cover five or more major issues and several minor ones. LAs often are young (under age 30) and, because of their inexperience, may have only a passing familiarity with your organization and its issues. Therefore it is critical to provide these individuals with background information pertaining to a bill, as well as information on your position on the bill.

Do not be disappointed when asked to meet with a staff member instead of the elected official. LAs are sometimes more important than the elected Member, who cannot possibly be an expert on every bill introduced in a particular Congress. When a bill is up for a vote, the first person a Representative or Senator asks for information is the LA responsible for that issue. Therefore, never underestimate an LA's influence and importance. LAs provide Members of Congress with reports of constituent visits to staff members, including the constituents' positions, how organized the individual or group was, and the number of constituents who expressed support for, or opposition to, a particular bill.

Action Item: Find out who handles health care issues

Call your representative and BOTH of your senators Now to get this important information. That way you'll be ready when an issue arises. Get this person's name AND email address.

CONSTITUENT GATHERINGS

This last route of communication, the constituent gathering, is usually held when the legislator is in his or her home state or district for a “town hall” meeting. It is here the legislator and the constituent may come together in a more relaxed atmosphere. Most legislators are eager to attend a gathering of voters, because the legislator has the opportunity to learn voters' views and lobby for their support at the polls.

D. SITE VISITS

Today Members of Congress must keep track of hundreds of issues—many more than their predecessors did even a decade ago. Members are trying to cope with more issues at the same time budget cuts have reduced the number of staffers they can hire. To complicate matters further, there are more constituents visiting Washington and district/state offices. With this competition for time and attention, how can you help your representative or senator understand—and remember—your issues? One of the most effective and least expensive techniques for grassroots lobbyists is to get the Member or
staffer off Capitol Hill and into your environment so they can visit your place of business.

**UNDERSTANDING THE VALUE OF THE VISIT**

There are several reasons for scheduling a site visit:

- You get more time with the Member or staffer, without the competition of phone calls, votes, hearings, and any other interruptions.
- You show the Member what your working life is really like—a valuable experience for any Member, but especially for young Members and staffers who may never have been exposed to your type of business or government agency.
- You give them the chance to see real people at work. Members find it much harder to criticize any business or government agency if they have seen the difficulty, complexity, and value of your work.

**INVITING MEMBERS**

The best time to invite a Member of Congress to tour your site is when you are in the Member’s office during a personal visit. After explaining your issues, the logical next step is asking the Member to see first-hand the nature of your business or the situation that would be influenced by pending legislation. If you are unable to extend an invitation in person, then do so in writing, suggesting a date and location for a site visit.

Whether you deliver your invitation in person or in writing, remember that few invitations for a site visit are accepted the first time they are offered. Success may come only after inviting the Member several times. Success may require persistent and professional follow-up work with the staffer, or legislative assistant, assigned to handle your issue.

Whether inviting a Member in person, by phone or letter, confirm the Member’s acceptance in writing, indicating the date, time, and precise location. Be sure to request a contact person with whom you can discuss additional details, and who will be responsible for confirming the visit. Be prepared for changes. It is very common for visits to be cancelled and rescheduled several times, especially if the site visit occurs during a busy part of the legislative calendar.

**PREPARING FOR THE VISIT**

A site visit provides an excellent opportunity to impress Members and staffers, but without good advance planning, you could just as easily make a bad impression. The key to success is attention to detail in your planning and preparation.

When planning a site visit, remember that every Member has a limited amount of time. That’s why it is so important to establish up front the amount of time your visitors can spend at the site—and to stick to that schedule. To avoid any chance for confusion, confirm such details in writing, sending the information by mail or fax. Don’t be surprised
or disappointed, however, if the Member insists on last minute changes. Be prepared for the Member to arrive at the site and to announce that the visit will have to be cut short.

Although you may have many members of your grassroots network available for a site visit, avoid overwhelming your visitors. Decide who should be involved, then select a principle spokesperson. Discuss each person’s role, but remember that not everyone has to speak. Review plans for the visit at a pre-tour meeting, an excellent opportunity to review small details such as appropriate attire for the tour guides.

Good preparation includes briefing materials for the staffer who accompanies the Member. The staffer will brief the member while they are driving or flying to your site, so prepare concise, easy-to-understand materials. Provide a general overview using a simple and uncomplicated format. Again, avoid overwhelming the staffer or member.

Next, stage a dress rehearsal to review the precise path of the visit and expose any unanticipated problems. Consider every possible factor:

- Where do you want the member and staffers to enter and exit the facility? Is security or safety a concern?
- What departments should they see? (Time constraints may not allow you to include every one.)
- Who might the member meet along the way and how much time could such conversations take?
- Should someone take pictures during the visit, and if so, when and where?

After touring the facility, especially if it is one where noise makes conversation difficult, consider talking briefly with the member in a quiet office setting. Ideally, and if time permits, your conversation would be during lunch or dinner, or at a small reception. Changes in what “gifts” members may accept under the gift ban, however, have made most members reluctant to accept offers of seated dinners.

Action Item: Ask about the Gift Ban

Before a meeting with a member, always know whether you can buy lunch, give a coffee mug or any other seemingly inconsequential gift. This will help you avoid an awkward situation when the member is especially sensitive to the give ban.

Conducting the Visit

Never be on time for a visit with a Member or staff; always be early, in case the member is. Use the extra time to review your plan for the visit and each person’s role. Review the key issues you want to reference during the visit. And don’t forget to “ask for the order,” or to ask the Member to support or oppose any pending legislation you are concerned with, or to ask the Member to introduce a bill you want to see enacted.
FOLLOWING UP AFTER THE VISIT

To extend the value of your site visit, send a formal letter of appreciation to the Member no later than the day after the visit. If you took pictures, include them with the letter. Were questions asked that required information not available during the visit? Include these answers in your letter. Call the Member’s office to ensure that materials were received and that all questions were answered. Finally, publish an article and your photos in your internal publications (and consider sending the same to your local newspaper immediately after the visit).

A single visit with a Member of Congress or a staffer should be only one small part of a good communications program. A site visit is an excellent opportunity to develop a closer, more significant relationship with the Member. Take advantage of this opportunity by staying in touch, and by inviting the Member to other events—including informal gatherings, such as a company picnic or holiday program.

✅ Action Item: Calling Capitol Hill

To reach the Washington office of any Representative or Senator, call the Capitol Switchboard: 202-224-3121.
SECTION 8. GLOSSARY OF CONGRESSIONAL TERMS

Act
A bill that has passed through the legislative process and becomes a law.

Adjournment Sine Die
The final adjournment of a session of a Congress, occurring in November or December of every even-numbered year.

Amendment
A proposal to change the language of a bill or Act.

Appropriations Bill
A bill reported out of the House or Senate Appropriations Committee, which appropriates funds approved by authorization bills.

Authorization Bill
A bill reported out of one of several authorizing committees, which authorizes a government program that eventually is funded by an appropriations bill.

Bill
A legislative proposal introduced by a member of Congress. Bills are designated as HR (House of Representatives) or S (Senate) according to the body in which they are introduced, and assigned numbers according to the order in which they are introduced. Most bills are public bills, dealing with general issues. Private bills deal with individual claims against the government, such as immigration cases and land disputes.

Budget Bill
The document Congress sends the President each year designating how much money the government will spend during the next year (or more) and on what specific programs.

Budget and Impoundment Control Act of 1974
The law by which Congress changed its budget process; the act also created the Congressional Budget Office and the Senate and House Budget Committees.

Budget Committees
A committee in each chamber that coordinates spending legislation and formulates the overall congressional budget.

Budget Resolution
Concurrent resolution of both the House and Senate which prescribes spending limits in the various areas of government activity.

By Request
A phrase used when a Senator or Representative introduces a bill at the request of somebody else.

Calendar
An agenda for pending legislative business.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chamber</td>
<td>A meeting place for either the House or Senate (as opposed to a committee room).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clerk of the House</td>
<td>The chief administrative officer of the House of Representatives, with duties corresponding to those of the secretary of the Senate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cloakrooms</td>
<td>Small rooms for Democrats and Republicans located off the floor of the Senate and House of Representatives, where members can go for informal conferences and phone calls.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Closed Rule</td>
<td>A rule granted by the House Rules Committee that prohibits amendments to a particular bill during House floor action. Under a “closed rule” the House must either accept or reject the bill as recommended by the sponsoring committee.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cloture</td>
<td>The procedure by which a filibuster can be ended in the Senate. Cloture requires the signatures of 16 Senators and the votes of three-fifths of the entire Senate membership.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Committee of the Whole House</td>
<td>This device enables the House to act with a quorum of 100 instead of the normally required 218. The House itself becomes a “committee” and is assisted by the parliamentarian. All debate is confined to the pending bill. After it has considered a bill as a “committee of the whole,” the “committee” is dissolved and the House then takes up the bill for final action.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concurrent Resolution</td>
<td>A statement of opinion approved by a simple majority in the House and Senate but not sent to the President for approval.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conference Committee</td>
<td>A special committee formed to reconcile differences between differing versions of a bill passed by the Senate and House. Conference committee members, or conferees, are appointed from the bill's sponsoring committees in each chamber.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Congressional Record</td>
<td>The daily printed account of the proceedings of the House and Senate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Congressional Terms of Office</td>
<td>Congressional terms normally begin on January 3 of the year following a general election. They are two years long for Representatives, six for Senators.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continuing Appropriation</td>
<td>Spending bill that provides funds for government operations for a short period of time until Congress and the President agree on an appropriation bill.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enacting Clause</td>
<td>A clause included in every bill: “Be it enacted by the Senate (or House of Representatives)...”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Term</td>
<td>Definition</td>
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<tr>
<td>Engrossed Bill</td>
<td>The final copy of a bill as passed by the House or Senate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enrolled Bill</td>
<td>The final copy of a bill which has been passed in identical form by both the Senate and the House.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Executive Session</td>
<td>A closed meeting of a Senate or House committee.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Filibuster</td>
<td>A delaying tactic of unlimited debate, used only in the Senate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fiscal Year</td>
<td>For the federal government from October 1 to September 30.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germane</td>
<td>Pertaining to the purpose of a bill.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hearing</td>
<td>House and Senate Committee session in which testimony regarding legislation is taken from interested parties.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hopper</td>
<td>A box on the House clerk's desk where bills are placed to be introduced.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joint Committee</td>
<td>A committee composed of both House and Senate members.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joint Resolution</td>
<td>A statement of opinion approved by a simple majority in the House and Senate and sent to the President for approval to have the force of law.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Majority Leader</td>
<td>The leading spokesperson and legislative strategist for the party in control of either the House or the Senate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Majority Whip</td>
<td>The assistant majority leader in the House or Senate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marking Up a Bill</td>
<td>The process of going through a bill section-by-section in committee and considering possible changes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minority Leader</td>
<td>The leading spokesperson and legislative strategist for the minority party in either the House or Senate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minority Whip</td>
<td>The assistant minority leader in either House or Senate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Omnibus Bill</td>
<td>A bill containing several separate but related items.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ordered Reported</td>
<td>The process of moving a bill out of a committee. A full committee approves a bill and orders it “reported” to the House or Senate. The bill has cleared the committee but is not quite ready for floor action. The committee first must write a report explaining the bill. The report may contain not only the “majority views” (opinion of the committee's majority), but the “minority views” and “individual views’ or “additional views.” The bill and report are then filed in the House or Senate and at that point the bill is considered “reported.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Override a Veto
A procedure that Congress may enact when the President refuses to sign a bill into law. Congress must have a two-thirds vote in each chamber to override the veto. If this vote occurs, the bill then becomes law over the President's objections.

President of the Senate
The presiding officer of the Senate, normally the vice President.

President Pro Tempore
The presiding officer of the Senate in the vice President's absence, elected by the full Senate.

Quorum
The required minimum number of members present in order for the House or Senate to conduct official business (fifty-one in the Senate, 218 in the House).

Recommit to Committee
A motion to return a bill to the committee that reported it after it has been debated on the floor.

Reconciliation
The process whereby Congress enforces a budget resolution which requires the authorizing and appropriations committees to spend within the resolution's prescribed limits.

Reporting a Bill
What a committee does after approving a bill. A committee that has been examining a bill referred to it by the parent chamber "reports" its findings and recommendations to the chamber when it completes consideration and returns the measure. The process is called "reporting" a bill.

Rider
An amendment, usually not germane, which its sponsor hopes to get through more easily by including it in other legislation.

Rule
The instructions on the time and substance of debate on a bill, which are attached to the bill when reported out to the floor by the House Rules Committee.

Secretary of the Senate
The chief administrative officer of the Senate, responsible for overseeing the duties of Senate employees, educating Senate pages, administering oaths, handling the registration of lobbyists, and handling other tasks necessary for the continuing operation of the Senate.

Select or Special Committee
A committee set up for a special purpose and, usually, for a limited time, by resolution of either the House or Senate.

Speaker of the House
The elected presiding officer of the House of Representatives.

Special Session
A session held after Congress has adjourned sine die. The President convenes special sessions.
Suspension of Rules  The process where the Senate and House may suspend their usual rules on the first and third Mondays of each month and during the last six days of a session if two-thirds of a quorum vote affirmatively. A bill may then be brought up immediately for a debate limited to twenty minutes for each side. No amendments are permitted.

Unanimous Consent  A process for approving noncontroversial bills without serious debate. Used to expedite floor action and frequently is used in a routine fashion, such as when a Senator requests the unanimous consent of the Senate to have specified members of his staff present on the floor during debate on a specific amendment.

US Code  A consolidation and codification of the general and permanent laws of the United States arranged by subject under fifty titles. The first six deal with general or political subjects, and the other forty-four are alphabetically arranged from agriculture to war. Certain section of Title 5 cover employee benefits and retirement programs.

Veto  The rejection of a bill by the President.

Voice Vote  Voting in unison yes or no by voice, without a record of how individuals voted.

Well  The area in front of the speaker's rostrum from which House members address the House.

Whip  A key assistant to a party leader in the House or Senate.

Yield  Allowing one member to interrupt another. When a member has been recognized to speak, no other member may speak unless he obtains permission from the member recognized.