

# Sample Advocacy Letter

Your name and address

Date

Name

Title

Address

Salutation (Dear \_\_\_\_\_ )

**1st Paragraph:** Let the reader know what your concern is.

**2nd Paragraph:** You need to let the reader know the importance of your concerns and any impact the concern may have on the community.

**3rd Paragraph:** Thank your reader for taking the time to read your letter and make sure you re-state your concern. Provide a way for him to respond to you letter. Always add that you look forward to hearing their response on the issue. Now they know you expect an answer.

Sincerely,  
Your Name

Your address  
Phone number  
Email address

# Generating Evidence

## 1. Why do you need data? (purpose)

To illustrate a need

To reduce uncertainty

To inform public opinion

To substantiate for others what you already know in your day-to-day experiences

## 2. Based on your purpose, what data do you need?

### People data

Age, Race, and Gender

### Event Data

Births and Deaths

### Thing data

Places and Organization

## 3. Generating an evidence base

Following are areas to consider when generating evidence. Answering these questions can help make your evidence a well-rounded package:

Does the evidence consider inequities, disparities, vulnerability and marginalization?

Does the evidence provide convincing solutions to the problem?

Is the evidence complimented with human interest stories or experiences that highlight the human and personal dimensions of the problem?

Is the evidence complimented with qualitative analysis when it is quantitative, and vice versa?

Is the evidence grounded in solid research conducted by experts?

Does the evidence highlight the causes of a problem?

Is the evidence timely?

Can the evidence be easily disseminated?

Particularly, if the evidence is gathered through pilot points, what are the risks associated with using the evidence for advocacy in wider contexts and/or different environments? Is the evidence applicable in these wider contexts or different environments?



## HOW A BILL BECOMES A FEDERAL LAW

1

### EVERY LAW STARTS WITH AN IDEA

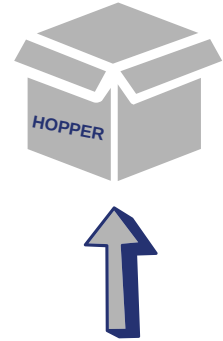
The idea can come from anyone, even you! Contact your elected officials to share your idea. If they want to try to make it a law, they will write a bill.



2

### THE BILL IS INTRODUCED

A bill can start in either chamber of Congress when it's introduced by its primary sponsor, a Senator or a Representative. In the House of Representatives, bills are placed in a wooden box called "the hopper."



3

### THE BILL GOES TO COMMITTEE

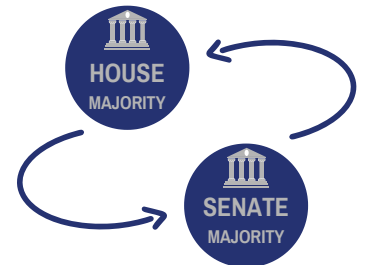
Representatives or Senators meet in a small group to research, talk about, and make changes to the bill. They vote to accept or reject the bill and its changes before sending it to the hopper.

Here, the bill is assigned a legislative number before the Speaker of a House sends it to a committee.

4

### CONGRESS DEBATES AND VOTES

Members of the House or Senate can now debate the bill and propose changes or amendments before voting. If the majority vote for and pass the bill, it moves to the other chamber to go through a similar process of committees, debate, and voting. Both chambers have to agree on the same version of the final bill before it goes to the President.



5

### PRESIDENTIAL ACTION

When the bill reaches the President, he or she can:

**Approve and Pass.**  
The President signs and approves the bill.

### THE BILL IS LAW



#### The President can also:

##### Veto

The President rejects the bill and returns it to Congress with the reasons for the veto. Congress can override the veto with 2/3 vote of those present in both the House and the Senate and the bill will become law.

##### Choose no action

The President can decide to do nothing. If Congress is in session after 10 days of no answer from the President, the bill then automatically becomes law.

##### Pocket veto

If Congress adjourns (goes out of session) within the 10 day period after giving the President the bill, the President can choose not to sign it and the bill will not become law.



# HOW AN IDEA BECOMES A LAW IN IOWA

1

## IDEA

A legislator(s) decides to sponsor a bill. Ideas come from many sources: constituents, interest groups, and government agencies.



6

## VOTE

A constitutional majority, at least 26 senators or 51 representatives, must vote "yes" in order for the bill to proceed to the second chamber.



2

## BILL DRAFTED & FILED

Legislator(s) requests the idea be drafted into a bill by the Legislative Services Agency, Legal Services Division. The bill draft is sent to the Senate or the House where it is assigned a number and is then sent to the President of the Senate or the Speaker of the House.



7

## SECOND CHAMBER

If the bill passes the second chamber without amendment, it is sent to the Governor. If the second chamber amends the bill it must be sent back to the chamber of origin for approval of those amendments. If the chamber cannot come to an agreement on the version of the bill, a conference committee is appointed.



3

## COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENT & ACTION

The President of the Senate or the Speaker of the House refers the bill to a standing committee. A subcommittee, assigned by the standing committee, then studies the bill and reports its conclusions to the full committee. The committee may pass the bill or pass an amended version of the bill. The committee may also send the bill to the floor without recommendation.



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## GOVERNOR

After the bill passes both chambers in identical form, it is sent to the Governor. The Governor may sign the bill, veto the bill, or take no action.



4

## FLOOR DEBATE

The bill is placed on the calendar, a listing of all bills officially eligible for debate. At this time legislators may file amendments to the bill.



5

## AMENDMENT

The bill and any amendments filed are debated by the whole chamber. Amendments must be approved by a simple majority of those legislators voting.



9

## LAW

**The bill becomes a law upon the Governor's signature or after three days during the session if the Governor takes no action. Bills received by the Governor during the last three days of the session have to be signed or vetoed within 30 days. If the Governor takes no action after the 30-day time period, the bill is considered vetoed.**



# Scheduling a Meeting With a Legislator



Call their office to ask for an appointment. Leave a number where you can be reached.



Introduce yourselves – describe your interest in the issue, any organization you are representing, and if you are a constituent.



Choose a convenient place where you can talk without being interrupted.



Be friendly and courteous.



Let them know what issues you want to discuss and what motivated you to call.



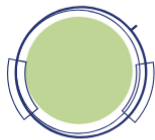
Be respectful of their time.



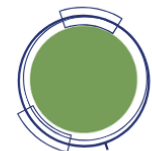
You can take one or two other people with you but keep the group small.



Be sure to listen to what they have to say.



Prepare for the visit.



Take a few notes.



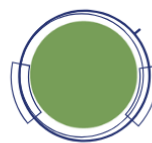
Be sure to leave your contact information.



Follow up with a thank you note.



Arrive on time but understand that they may not be. Be patient and understanding.



Don't be intimidated.

