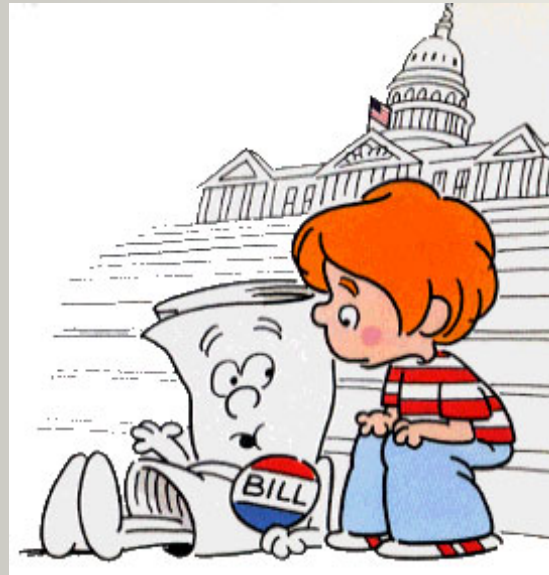




Briefing on State Legislative Process



Why is this important?

- Give members of the veterans community the tools, strategies, and know-how to:
 - *Effectively advocate on behalf of veterans*
 - Identify and target the most pertinent legislative stakeholders
 - Garner support or raise opposition to a particular proposal
 - Apply the political capital of the veterans community in an efficient, organized, and goal-oriented manner



WI Legislative Process

- ***“If you like laws and sausages, you should never watch either one being made.”***
-- Otto von Bismarck
- 2007-08 legislative session:
 - 15% of bills introduced were passed and signed into law
- 2009-10 legislative session:
 - One party control of all state government
 - Still only 24% of bills were passed and signed into law – 406 out of 1,686
- Illustrates the need for well-developed legislative agenda, a devoted grassroots effort, and a strong presence on the ground in the State Capitol



WI Legislature – Basic Structure

- The Wisconsin Legislature is a 2-house body consisting of a 33-member Senate and a 99-member Assembly. Each senate district is made up of 3 Assembly Districts.
- A new Legislature is sworn into office in January of each odd-numbered year to meet for a 2-year period (“biennium”).
- During the biennium, the Legislature is in continuous session with a schedule of committee work periods and floorperiods.



2011-2012 Legislature – Assembly Leadership

- 60 Republicans, 38 Democrats, and 1 Independent
- Speaker
 - **Rep. Jeff Fitzgerald** (Dodge County)
 - Presides over the Assembly
 - Oversees caucus agenda
- Majority Leader
 - **Rep. Scott Suder** (Clark/Marathon Counties)
 - Oversees caucus agenda
- Minority Leader
 - **Rep. Peter Barca** (Kenosha County)
 - Oversees caucus agenda



2011-2012 Legislature – Senate Leadership

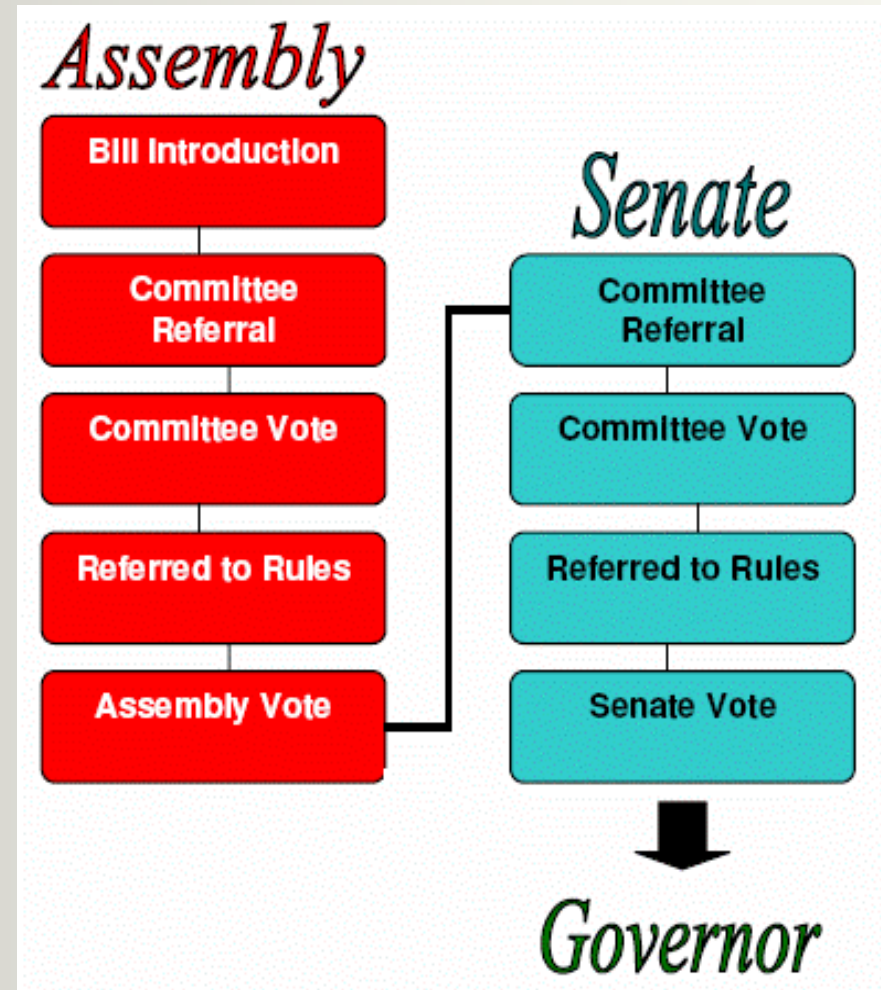
- 19 Republicans and 14 Democrats
- President
 - **Sen. Mike Ellis** (Winnebago/Outagamie Counties)
 - Presides over Senate
 - Oversees caucus agenda
- Majority Leader
 - **Sen. Scott Fitzgerald**
(Dodge/Jefferson/Dane/Waukesha Counties)
 - Oversees caucus agenda
- Minority Leader
 - **Sen. Mark Miller** (Columbia/Dane/Sauk Counties)
 - Oversees caucus agenda



Bill Process – General Overview

- Assembly and Senate must pass the same version of a bill before it can be sent to the Governor for his signature.
- Bills may be introduced in one house, and then in the other, or they may be introduced simultaneously.

(Assembly example)



Bill Introduction

- Legislator either authors new legislation or reintroduces a bill from previous session
 - Drafted by Legislative Reference Bureau
 - Distributed via email for co-sponsorship by other legislators
 - Two-week circulation period
 - Supporters contact legislators and distribute press releases to urge co-sponsorship
 - Officially introduced and assigned a bill number (i.e. Assembly Bill 125)



Referral to Committee

- After introduction, the Assembly Speaker or Senate President refer the bill to committee
- “Legislatures depend on committees to sift, screen, revise, refine, weed, prune, shape, develop, dismiss, amend, gut, chop and rewrite bills.”
- Committees also analyze fiscal impact
- Veterans-related bills will typically be referred to the Assembly Committee on Veterans & Military Affairs or the Senate Committee on Economic Development and Veterans & Military Affairs



Assembly Committee on Veterans & Military Affairs

- Chair: **Richard Spanbauer**
 - Winnebago and Fond du Lac Counties
- Vice-Chair: **Evan Wynn**
 - Rock and Walworth Counties
- Jerry Petrowski
- Gary Bies
- Lee Nerison
- Warren Petryk
- **Nick Milroy** (ranking Democrat)
- Mark Radcliffe
- Christine Sinicki
- Janis Ringhand



Senate Committee on Economic Development and Veterans & Military Affairs

- Chair: **Randy Hopper**
 - Winnebago and Fond du Lac Counties
- Vice-Chair: **Rich Zipperer**
 - Waukesha and Washington Counties
- **Alberta Darling**
- **Van Wanggaard**
- **Julie Lassa** (ranking Democrat)
- **Lena Taylor**
- **Tim Cullen**



Committee Process – Public Hearing

- Committee Chair decides if and when to hold a public hearing
 - Bases decision on special interest or general public support
- Committee Chair notices the public hearing
 - Usually noticed one to two weeks in advance
 - Usually held at State Capitol
- Public Hearing Proceeding:
 - First the bill author testifies and provides information on the legislation
 - Citizens, advocacy groups, and government agencies can testify or simply register in favor or in opposition to the legislation
 - Citizens, advocacy groups, and agencies can testify for informational purposes as well



Committee Process – Executive Session

- After the public hearing, Committee Chair decides whether to hold an executive session to vote and pass the bill out of committee
 - Unless timing is critical to passage, executive session rarely occurs on the same day as the public hearing
 - Bills with little support rarely receive executive session (die in committee)
 - If amendments needed, typically introduced during executive session



Committee Process – Joint Finance Committee

- If a bill proposes to spend state money, raise revenue, or alter taxation, the bill will be referred to the Joint Finance Committee (JFC)
 - Usually a bill will first need approval from the relevant committee before going to JFC
 - Sometimes a bill is referred directly to JFC (i.e. 2009 Senate Bill 397 related to supplementing the Veterans Trust Fund with GPR)



JFC Members

■ Senate Finance Committee Members

- Co-Chair: Alberta Darling
 - Waukesha, Ozaukee, Washington, and Milwaukee Counties
- Vice-Chair: Luther Olsen
- Members: Shelia Harsdorf, Joe Leibham, Glenn Grothman, Randy Hopper, Lena Taylor, and Bob Jauch

■ Assembly Finance Committee Members

- Co-Chair: Robin Vos
 - Racine County
- Vice-Chair: Dan Meyer
- Members: Dan LeMahieu, John Nygren, Pat Strachota, Joel Kleefisch, Tamara Grigsby, and Jennifer Shilling



Referred to Rules/Organization Committee

- **Rules/Organization Committee:** If a bill is voted out of committee, it is sent to the Assembly Rules Committee or the Senate Organization Committee.
- These committees, headed by the Majority Leaders and comprised of members of the Legislative Leadership, decide which bills are scheduled for a floor vote before each respective house.



Floor Vote

- **Floor Vote:** If a bill is scheduled for a full vote, it must pass by a simple majority.
- **If the bill passes, it's sent to the other house where it must go through the same process.**
- If the other house makes a change(s) to the original bill, the house which acted on the bill first must concur with those changes.



Sent to Governor

- If a bill is passed – in identical form – by both houses of the Legislature, it is sent to the Governor for his approval or veto.
 - In the case of a veto, the Legislature may override, or pass the bill over the veto by a two-thirds vote in each house.
- Once signed, bill becomes law





Helpful Links/Resources

Conclusion – Keeping Updated

<http://legis.wisconsin.gov/>

The screenshot shows a Windows Internet Explorer browser window displaying the Wisconsin State Legislature website. The browser's address bar shows the URL <http://legis.wisconsin.gov/>. The website header features the text "WISCONSIN STATE LEGISLATURE" and "State of Wisconsin Home Page". Navigation links for "Site Map", "Contact Us", and "FAQs" are visible. A "Site Search" section includes a search box and a "Search" button. A sidebar on the left contains a menu with items like "Home", "Senate", "Assembly", "Legislation", "Joint Legislative Committees", "Legislative Service Agencies", "Wisconsin Law", "Wisconsin Blue Book", and "Other Information". Below the menu, there are options to "Request text and history of legislative proposals" for either the "Assembly" or "Senate", a "Proposal Type" dropdown set to "Bill", a "Proposal Number" input field, and a "Session" dropdown set to "2009 Regular Session". A "Submit" and "Reset" button are at the bottom of this section. The main content area features a large photograph of the Wisconsin State Capitol interior, with the caption "Photos by Brent Nicastro and Jay Salvo". To the right of the photo is a "LEGISLATIVE ACTIVITY" section with links for "2009-2010 Session Calendar", "Committee Schedule", "Senate Session", "Assembly Session", "Spotlight", "Session Statistics", and "Audio/Video Coverage". Below this, there are links for "2009 WI Act 2", "2009 Budget Bill as vetoed (Act 28)", and "Republished Section 9122 (7i) of 2009 Wisconsin Act 28 (Executive Budget Bill)". At the bottom of the page, there are three columns: "SEARCHABLE INFOBASE" (a searchable database of bills and amendments), "WHO REPRESENTS ME?" (find your state and federal representatives, with a link to "Legislative Districts"), and "NOTIFICATION SERVICE" (track legislative activities on proposals, committees, authors and subjects by receiving notification emails). The Windows taskbar at the bottom shows the Start button, several open applications (Inbox - Microsoft Out..., Wisconsin State Legis..., Links for CVSOs [Jan ..., Microsoft PowerPoint ...), and the system tray with the time 10:21 AM and 100% zoom.

Important Tracking Devices

<http://notify.legis.state.wi.us/Home.aspx>

The screenshot shows a Windows Internet Explorer browser window displaying the Wisconsin Legislative Notification Service website. The browser's address bar shows the URL <http://notify.legis.state.wi.us/NotifyItems.aspx>. The website header features the text "Wisconsin Legislative Notification Service" with a logo of a gavel and a Wisconsin state emblem. Below the header is a navigation menu with links for "Home", "Preferences", "Notify Items", "Add Items", and "Notify Activities".

The main content area is titled "NOTIFY ITEMS" and includes the instruction "View what items you are currently following." On the left side, there is a sidebar with the current user identified as "max.dulberger" and a "Log out" button. Below this, there are links for "Questions or comments?", "Contacts", "FAQs", "Glossary", "Legal notice", "Terms of Use", and "Privacy Notice". At the bottom of the sidebar is the "Wisconsin Legislature Home" logo and an "Unsubscribe" button.

The main content area has four filter buttons: "Proposal", "Committee", "Author", and "Subject". The "Committee" button is currently selected. Below these buttons, there is a section titled "Committees you are following" which contains a "Remove" button and a list of committees with checkboxes:

- All Committee
- Finance (Joint)
- Veterans and Military Affairs (Assembly)
- Veterans and Military Affairs, Biotechnology, and Financial Institutions (Senate)

At the bottom of this list is another "Remove" button. Below the list, there are two links: ">>> Add more committees to follow" and ">>> View/Edit the activities that trigger notifications about committees".

The Windows taskbar at the bottom shows the Start button, several open applications including "Inbox - Microsoft Out...", "Notify Items - Windo...", "Links for CVSOs [Jan ...", and "Microsoft PowerPoint ...", and the system clock showing "10:05 AM".

Keeping Updated

- **WDVA Legislative Page**
 - www.WisVets.com/legislation
- **Legislative Fiscal Bureau**
 - <http://legis.wisconsin.gov/lfb/>
 - All budget-related documents
- **Legislative Reference Bureau – Reference and Research Services**
 - <http://legis.wisconsin.gov/lrb/Research/index.htm>
 - Utilize research analysts on past and current legislation
 - Reference Desk: 608-266-0341

