Introduction of a bill  A bill may be introduced by any member in
the House or Senate. On the day after it is filed, it will have its first
reading on the floor of either Chamber, depending on where it was
introduced. It is given a number and the presiding office (Speaker of the
House or Lt. Governor) will assign it to a committee for discussion.

Committee  A committee is a group of representatives or senators that
revolve around a specific issue. Committees report on introduced bills
and can reach several decisions regarding the status of the bill. If the
committee decides to not discuss the bill or gives an unfavorable report,
the bill will fail to move forward. The general public is almost always
welcome to offer comment during committee meetings.

Rules Committee  If a committee reports favorably on a bill, it is sent to
the Rules Committee. This committee can recommit a measure, meaning
it can debate and amend a bill. The Rules Committee can also place a bill
under Orders of the Day. The Orders of the Day is a list of bills and
resolutions that are ready for the House or Senate to be debated and/or
adopted on a specific date.

Floor Vote – First Chamber  Once a bill passes through the Rules
Committee, it goes to the floor, where debate will be held on the measure.
Amendments can be offered and debated as well. The presiding officer
will then call the question, meaning a vote will be held. If a bill receives
a majority of the vote (or 2/3 for a resolution), then it has found
passage and will move forward. If it does not pass, it can be sent back to
committee for changes.

Restart the process  After passage in either the House or the Senate, a
bill will re-start the process in the other Chamber. A bill can fail at any
step in either Chamber.

Re-Vote on Changes  If the bill passes on both sides, but the second
Chamber has made changes to the language of the bill, it must go back
to the original Chamber to vote on the new text of the bill. If the two
Chambers cannot agree on the new text, a conference committee will be
held on the bill.

Governor’s Desk  After being passed by both Chambers, the bill is sent
to the Governor. The Governor has three action options: sign, permit to
become law without signature, or veto. The Governor must act on the
bill within 40 days of Sine Die.

Amendment  A change or addition to legislation.

Bill  A written proposal for
addition, modification, or
repeal of statute law. “S.B.”
denotes “Senate Bill” and
“H.B.” denotes “House Bill.”

Committee Sub  A change or addition to
legislation in committee.

Crossover Day  Assigned day during session
(traditionally the 28th or
30th day) where legislation
must pass at least one
Chamber in order to stay
viable for passage.

Resolution  A written proposal for
addition, modification,
or repeal of the state
constitution. “S. R.” denotes
Senate Resolution and “H.R.”
denotes House Resolution.

Sine Die  Pronounced “sign-E-die”.
Adjournment; end of session.
Step 1: Visit a trusted, non-profit site. Our recommendation is [www.VoteSmart.org](http://www.VoteSmart.org). Simply enter your address into the search box at the top and wait for the drop-down box to appear.

This will give you all of your officials – from the President and Cabinet to local judges.

*Some addresses may require a +4 on the zip code for more accuracy.

You can look that up on the USPS website: [https://tools.usps.com/go/ZipLookupAction!input.action](https://tools.usps.com/go/ZipLookupAction!input.action), or by looking at some of your mail.

Step 2: Find their contact. By clicking on any one name, you can then select “bio” to be taken to his or her basic information. This will include their Capitol (either at the state or federal level) and district contact information. This information will be on the left, under the photo of the official.

• It is always best to use a district contact. This is more local and will (generally) result in a more rapid response.

**FINDING LEGISLATORS AT THE STATE CAPITOL**

**Capitol address:** 206 Washington St. SW, Atlanta, GA 30334

Offices will be located either inside the Capitol or in the Coverdell Legislative Office Building (CLOB) across the street.

Legislators generally share offices – up to six per office for representatives and two per office for senators. Each office will have at least one administrative assistant who can help you find time on the legislators’ schedule to meet with them. They can also take detailed notes on your comments or let you know about the legislators’ committee meetings.
1. Identify yourself and the issue clearly and quickly. If you are their constituent (you live in their district) be SURE to mention that!
   “Hi, my name is Crystal Jackson and I’m your constituent from Atlanta. I wanted to speak to you today about dignity for incarcerated women.”

2. Cite a connection you have to the issue.
   “As a formerly incarcerated woman, I saw many of my fellow inmates unfairly shackled during their pregnancy and in giving birth, and I think the practice should stop.”

3. State your case – choose one simple, key fact to make your point strongly.
   “Between 1980 and 2016, the number of women who were imprisoned in Georgia increased by 567 percent and yet we still force women in prison to be shackled all the way up to their childbirth.”

4. Make your ask – state what you want, clearly and concisely, and try to get a commitment.
   “Will you help end this practice by supporting the Dignity for Incarcerated Women Act?”

5. Say “thank you” and make sure they know how to follow up with you. If you have materials, make sure to get them to the lawmaker!
   “Thank you for taking the time to speak with me today. Here is a handout about the bill and the many organizations working on it. We look forward to speaking with you more about the issue.”

Lobby Days are bi-weekly, ACLU-sponsored events where we help people meet their legislators and discuss strategy.

We have lobby days dedicated to criminal justice reform, voters’ rights, reproductive rights, and immigrants’ rights.

Learn more about our lobby days at acluga.org or email info@acluga.org.

Pro-tip: You can also use these steps to write an effective letter or email to your legislator to cover the same topics if you can’t get an in-person meeting.
SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media is an effective way to generate attention for a particular cause. Here are some tips to help you use social media more effectively:

**Be visual:** Share a photo or infographic in order to increase likelihood of post visibility.

**Use hashtags:** Make sure to tweet to existing conversations or campaigns.

**Retweet and comment:** Don’t just send out personal posts; retweet posts from your legislator’s office and comment thoughtfully.

PHONE CALLS

Phone calls can be an extremely effective way for you to communicate your views on any given issue, especially if in-person meetings make you anxious.

You can leave a message for your elected officials, entire committees, and the House and Senate leadership.

Use the tips in the previous pages to find contact information for your legislator and an abbreviated form of the messaging to leave a succinct message about why you are calling. You don’t need to be more complicated than “Hi, my name is X, a constituent from city Y, and I’d like Representative/Senator Z to vote for/against HB001 because X.”

TIPS TO REMEMBER

1. **Be polite and professional** -- especially to the staff! Keep a positive attitude, even if you’re being told no. Meeting with lawmakers is more about building a relationship than getting a quick yes. Go for the long game and work to build trust and a warm environment so you can be a trusted source of information and input.

2. **Stick to the content** -- only discuss one topic per meeting to you can be focused and use your time effectively. This will also be more professional and have a better chance of getting the lawmaker to agree to your ask.

3. **Relax** -- lawmakers work for us, the people of Georgia, and they want to hear from you. **Be confident** and **make personal connections** to the topic: Legislators read hundreds of bills every year and hear from many advocacy groups, so the heartfelt stories are more likely stick with them.

4. **It is OK to tell a legislator that you do not know the answer to a question you are asked** -- (for example, a specific statistic). Assure them that you will **look it up after the meeting and get back in touch**—and then be sure you do!

5. **After any meeting or conversation with a legislator or staff member, always follow up!** Send them a thank you email, answer any questions they had, and ask for a follow up, if any is needed.
RESOURCES

**ACLU GA**
www.acluga.org
Facebook: ACLU of Georgia
Twitter: @ACLUofGA
Instagram: @ACLUofGA

**People Power**
Peoplepower.org - ACLU People Power is an online tool for volunteers and supporters to organize in their local communities, state, and across the nation. People Power allows you to host and attend events while building a network of ACLU supporters in your community.

**Where to Vote**
https://www.mvp.sos.ga.gov/MVP/mvp.do

**Georgia General Assembly**
http://www.legis.ga.gov – see your Georgia legislative leaders, track legislation and watch the House and Senate chambers live.

**GovTrack**
https://www.govtrack.us/ - track federal legislators and federal legislation.

**City of Atlanta**
https://www.atlantaga.gov/ - track local legislation, watch debate and find your local city councilperson.