
Legislative Advocacy for Architects

AIA Massachusetts 2023 - 2024
193rd Session of the General Court

— THE WINDOW

A legislative session lasts two years.

Within each session, elected members of the Senate and House are responsible for the passage of two budgets.

Bills may be passed throughout the two year cycle.

— THE CHURN

Each calendar year of the two-year session follows a similar schedule.

PETITIONS/ BILLS move through a process towards becoming laws.

Thousands of BILLS/petitions are filed in each session.



THE ODDS

Most bills do not become law.

Some bills are re-filed in subsequent sessions.

Many are not.





QUEUING UP LEGISLATION

1. Carry Over Bills
2. Bills of Collaboration
3. AIA MA Initiated Bills
4. Bills Inspired by You

CREATIVE COMMONS
alvarogalve at
<https://flickr.com/photos/61955637@N00/5307791597>

*Before
Session
Begins*

1

Queing Up Legislation



CO-SPONSORSHIP

This is a key advocacy period where we can improve a bill's odds by working to increase sponsorship.

Draft legislation is submitted as petitions, numbered, and sent to committee for hearing.

Then, legislators sign on as co-sponsors of each other's bills to demonstrate support.

Early Spring

Co-Sponsorship



COMMITTEE REFERRAL & PUBLIC HEARING

The bill receives A PUBLIC HEARING when it is in the hands of its initial committee.

This is a key advocacy opportunity. Written and oral testimony is collected. The committee may redraft the bill or bundle it with related bills before voting to favorably recommend it to Ways and Means or Steering and Policy or other Destination Committees.

A bill that is not favorably recommended is not moved forward.

Euphemism: “sent to study” = killed

3

*Committee Referral/
Public Hearing*



COMMITTEE REPORTING

At this time advocacy ramps up further as details of the bill and its language are more carefully vetted by leadership.

Interest groups and advocacy allies may be more willing to publicly support the bill because odds of passage have improved.

Pull-out all stops on public pressure.



DEBATE & VOTE

The bill is presented to the House and/or Senate for debate, motions, amendments and engrossment.

It is often necessary during this period for advocates to reach out again to newly engaged legislators to explain the bill and encourage amendments and favorable votes.

Mothers Out Front's Ania Camargo and Suzie Tapson, Boston Sun



RECONCILIATION & APPROVAL

If the House and Senate engrossed versions differ, the bill has to be resolved through a joint committee process.

Once reconciled, the bill is voted on by each chamber and sent to the Governor for signature.

The Governor may sign the bill into law, veto the bill, or send it back for amendment.

Preparing for Advocacy

1. Consider what do you want to happen? What's your **desired outcome**? Why?
2. **Partnerships**: Who else is interested? Opposed?
3. Define **your ask**



Content

You are sharing a story and explaining a problem in the legislator's district which they can help solve.

You need to educate, inspire, motivate, engage, give facts, and offer action steps.

1. DEFINE & DOCUMENT THE NEED:

Describe the problem with data and real stories

2. SHARE A PERSONAL NARRATIVE:

Demonstrate the impact of the problem

3. PROPOSE & DESCRIBE THE SOLUTION:

Name the benefits and the timeline

4. IMPACT OF ACTION:

How will money or proposed policy make it better?