EXERCISE YOUR POWER
WE THE PEOPLE
HOW THE LEGISLATURE WORKS

California elects from two houses

120 LEGISLATIVE DISTRICTS

40 SENATORS
Serve 4 year terms

80 ASSEMBLYMEMBERS
Serve 2 year terms

LEGISLATORS ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR

Drafting & introducing bills

Debating the merits of bills

Voting to pass or kill bills
CALIFORNIA LEGISLATOR INTRODUCES A BILL

*If senator, moves through senate

*If assemblymember, moves through assembly

SENATE

Bill assigned to committee(s)

COMMITTEE VOTE

PASS

FAIL

SENATE FLOOR VOTE

PASS

FAIL

Bill moves to Assembly

ASSEMBLY

Bill assigned to committee(s)

COMMITTEE VOTE

PASS

FAIL

ASSEMBLY FLOOR VOTE

PASS

FAIL

Bill moves to Senate

BILL passes in both houses

GOVERNOR

DOES NOTHING

VETOES

SIGNS

Generally, after 12 days, if bill is neither signed/vetoed (rare)

Legislature can override veto with 2/3 vote (rare)

BILL BECOMES LAW!

*Bills that start with “SB” are introduced in the senate

*Bills that start with “AB” are introduced in the assembly
The State Budget Process

Governor releases proposed budget for next fiscal year

- **BY JANUARY 10**
  - Senate & assembly budget committees & subcommittees review the governor’s budget and craft their own version.

Governor releases revised budget proposal

- **BY MAY 14**
  - Senate & assembly budget committees & subcommittees review the revised budget and work to finalize their version.
  - Legislative leaders meet with the governor to iron out any issues and finalize a budget.

Legislature must pass a balanced budget

- **BY JUNE 15**
  - Budget passes & goes to governor for a signature.

Start of the next fiscal year

- **JULY 1**
Legislators’ job is to represent the interests of their constituents. That means they work for you. Here’s how you can contact them:

**CALL & WRITE THEM**
- Make sure you sign up for our e-mail action alerts at aclu.org for timely opportunities to contact your legislators.

**MEET THEM IN PERSON**
- **STEP ONE** Schedule your meeting.
- **STEP TWO** Be flexible & patient.
- **STEP THREE** Prepare, educate yourself, & establish a clear goal.
- **STEP FOUR** Make a clear ask (i.e. “Vote yes on SB xxxx”) & take notes.
- **STEP FIVE** Follow up & say thank you!
- **TIP 1** Know the name of your legislator.
- **TIP 2** Plan out what you will say. Be prepared to provide your home address.
- **TIP 3** Remember to mention the bill number & why you are contacting your legislator. (i.e. “Vote yes on SB xxxx!”)
- **TIP 4** Make it short and sweet.
- **TIP 5** Tell a personal story, if you have one.
- **TIP 6** Frame the problem, solution, & action.
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- **TIP 5** Tell a personal story, if you have one.
- **TIP 6** Frame the problem, solution, & action.

**RESEARCH YOUR LEGISLATOR**
- www.assembly.ca.gov
- www.senate.ca.gov
- Not sure who your legislators are? www.findyourrep.legislature.ca.gov

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MAKE YOUR VOICE HEARD.

Your participation strengthens our democracy.