



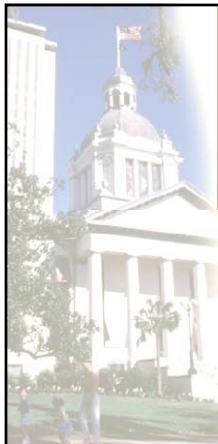
Student Legislative Training

Presented By:
NASW-FL



Goals for Today's Presentations

- To understand your role in the legislative process
- To acquire familiarity with the legislature and the current legislative environment in Florida
- To learn tips and techniques for making your Lobby Day visit more effective



Today's Agenda

- Social Workers and Social/Political Action
- Basics of Florida Government
- The Legislative Process
- The Issues
- Advocacy Tools and Tips
- Questions & Answers



What is public policy?

- A decision or action of government that addresses problems and issues.
- Some policies are passed into laws, and some policies are contained in rules and regulations.
- Inaction is also a form of policy.



What does public policy affect?

- Businesses
- Individuals
- Families
- Children
- Funding
- Social Work
- EVERYTHING!



Social problems:

- Can be defined in many different ways
- The policy made will be reflective of how the problem is defined



Why should social workers be involved?

- Person in Environment
- Value of Social Justice
- Code of Ethics



NASW Code of Ethics (6.04)

Social workers should:

- Expand choice and opportunity for all people;
- Promote respect for cultural and social diversity;
- Engage in social and political action that seeks equal access for all people;
- Be aware of the impact of the political arena on practice;
- Advocate for changes in policy and legislation to improve social conditions;



NASW Code of Ethics (6.04)

Social workers should:

- Promote policies that safeguard the rights of and confirm equity and social justice for all people;
- Act to prevent discrimination on the basis of race, ethnicity, national origin, color, gender, sexual orientation, age, immigration status, marital status, political belief, religion, or mental or physical disability.



The Basics of Florida Government



Executive Branch

- **Governor**
Charlie Crist, R



- **Lt. Governor**
Jeff Kottkamp, R





Executive Branch

State Agencies:

- Department of Health
- Department of Children and Families
- Agency for Health Care Administration
- Department of Elder Affairs
- Agency for Persons with Disabilities



Legislative Branch

House of Representatives:

- 120 Representatives
- 2 year terms
- Speaker of the House Larry Cretul
- Majority Leader
- Minority Leader
- Whips
- Committee Chairs
- Staff





Legislative Branch

Senate:

- 40 Senators
- 4 year terms
- Senate President Jeff Atwater
- Majority Leader
- Minority Leader
- Whips
- Committee Chairs
- Staff





Judicial Branch

- There are four types of courts in Florida:



- Supreme Court
- District Courts (5)
- Circuit Courts (20)
- County Courts (67)



Government Interaction

- Federal
- State
- Local

- Executive
- Legislative
- Judicial

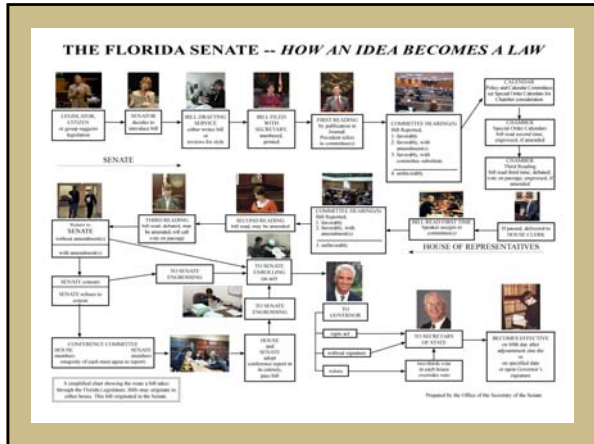


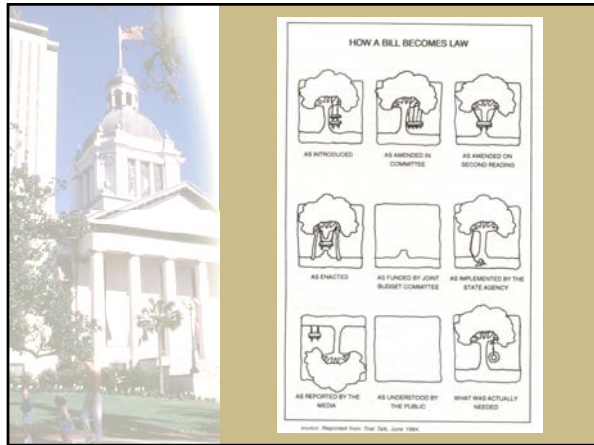
Current Environment

- 3/5 majority Republican in both houses of the legislature, Republican governor
- Tax structure in Florida: Sales tax and property tax base
- Impact of term limits
- Atmosphere of continued cuts
- Much of leadership not willing to consider revenue increases
- Bills with no \$ attached have a higher than usual chance



The Legislative Process







How Can WE Affect This Process?

- Write a bill
- Speak during a committee meeting
- Write your legislator a letter or e-mail
- Schedule a face-to-face meeting with your legislator
- Make a phone call to your legislator
- Educate others about the bill and encourage them to speak out as well



Why Will Legislators Listen to You?

- You are a constituent from their district.
- You have good reliable information. They are not experts in your field--you are.
- You are representative of a group they want support from.
- Your comments are representative of a broad based cross-section of people.
- You are personally affected by the issue.



Remember

- Legislators are generalists, they see approximately 2000 bills a year
- Be a source of knowledge for them
- It takes 50 to 60 separate contacts with a legislator to make an impact
- If you don't know something, say so, and then get back to them with the information.



Legislative FAQ

When does the regular legislative session begin and end?

- The regular legislative session starts on the first Tuesday after the first Monday in March for a period not to exceed 60 days.

How can I tell the difference between a House and a Senate bill?

- House bills receive odd numbers (1, 3, 5, ...) and are prefixed by "H" or "HB"; Senate bills receive even numbers (2, 4, 6, ...) and are prefixed by "S" or "SB."

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Legislative FAQ

What does the underlining and overstriking in bill and amendment text mean?

- Underlined text is new language and overstriking indicates text being removed from existing law.

What is the difference between an engrossed and an enrolled bill?

- An engrossed bill is a bill which has been amended. An enrolled bill is a bill that has passed both houses of the legislature in identical form and has been converted into an act for presentation to the Governor or Secretary of State.



The Issues



Legislative Agenda

The NASW-FL Board of Directors has outlined the following areas as legislative and advocacy issues for 2010:

- Professional Social Work
- Mental Health
- Child Welfare
- Health Care
- Social Welfare



Professional Social Work

- NASW-FL believes that licensed clinical social workers should be able to practice their profession in a manner that best serves the general public while upholding the standards expressed in the NASW Code of Ethics.



Professional Social Work Bills

- Sample bills include:
- HB 567/SB 1094 Relating to Assault and Battery/Social Workers



Mental Health

- NASW-FL believes that maintaining the mental health of the citizens is a vital role of the government, and we will monitor legislation and take action to further this goal.



Mental Health Bills

- Sample bills include:
- HB 7/SB 182 Relating to Coverage for Mental and Nervous Disorders
 - SB 1140 Relating to Mental Health



Child Welfare

- NASW-FL will support bills that reduce bullying in schools, oppose cuts in foster care training, and support legislation that reduces the barriers to adoption and expands the pool of available homes for foster children.



Child Welfare Bills

- Sample bills include:
- HB 3/SB 102 Relating to Adoption
 - HB 627/SB 1356 Relating to Transitional Services for Youth



Health Care

- NASW-FL will support legislation promoting accessible and affordable health care for all Florida citizens, full funding for the KidCare program, and opposing state budget cuts for medically needy programs in Florida.



Health Care Bills

- NASW-FL will look closely at the state budget and monitor how proposed cuts will impact health care programs such as KidCare or Medicaid.



Social Welfare

- NASW-FL will closely track legislation affecting the creation of fair immigration laws. NASW will support legislation that would reduce human trafficking, and also legislation that would reduce discrimination.



Social Welfare Bills

Sample bills include:

- HB 11/SB 506 Relating to Crimes against Homeless Persons



Budget

- In addition, NASW-FL will closely follow proceedings relating to the Florida budget; with funding for human services and education being the overall priority.



NASW-FL's Legislative Advocacy

- NASW-FL's Legislative Network
- NASW-FL Lobbyists & Staff
- Online Advocacy Center
- NASW-FL Lobby Day



Lobby Day Workshop 2010

April 5th

Tallahassee Automobile Museum

2:00 p.m. – Part I

4:00 p.m. – Part II



Lobby Day 2010

April 6th

Social Work Lobby Day
Historic Capitol Building
Front Steps
Tallahassee, FL 32303

8:00 a.m. Rally

9:00 a.m. and on
Meetings with Legislators



Lobby Day 2010

DRESS CODE

April 5th

Casual dress,
e.g. t-shirt and jeans

April 6th

Professional attire/
business suit



Advocacy Tools and Tips



Lobbying Do's and Don'ts

- Don't be angry
- Don't be hostile
- Don't threaten
- Don't have too much information or take up too much of their time.
- Don't lose credibility
- Don't be dishonest or exaggerate



Lobbying Do's and Don'ts

- Do be polite and friendly
- Do be concise and to the point
- Do play on emotion and include personal relevance
- Do mention that you are a voting constituent
- Do thank them and follow up afterwards



Most Important Tip!

THANK YOU!!
Please thank the legislators and their staff for their time.



After the Meeting

- Follow-up thank you letter
- Opportunity for following:
 - Brief recap of your position/issue and request.
 - Additional points you had no time for or forgot to say at meeting.
 - Answers to questions that came up at meeting.
 - Additional fact sheets, stats, etc.



Before Lobby Day

- Call your legislator and set up an appointment. You'll probably be speaking with an aide or assistant.
- "I would like to make an appointment with Representative (or Senator) to talk about (NASW priority issues or other pertinent issues). We will bring information about this topic".
- "I am a constituent, and a student at. I will be there as part of Social Work Lobby Day."
- Thank you very much, we will see you then.

Web Resources

- Florida Legislature Web Address
<http://www.leg.state.fl.us>
- Florida Senate Web Address
<http://www.flsenate.gov>
- Florida House of Representatives Web Address
<http://www.myfloridahouse.gov/>
- Florida Governor's Office Web address
<http://www.flgov.com/>
- The U.S. Library of Congress Federal Legislation
<http://thomas.loc.gov/>
 - CAPWIZ by NASW- MegaVote:
Emails Congressional Votes Weekly
<http://capwiz.com/socialworkers/megavote/>
 - NASW- National
<http://www.socialworkers.org/>
 - NASW- Florida
<http://www.naswfl.org/>



Questions & Answers