

Tracking Legislation in California

The Basics of the Legislative Process





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Agenda:

- Legislative Overview
- Legislative Calendar
- Legislative Tracking
- Engagement



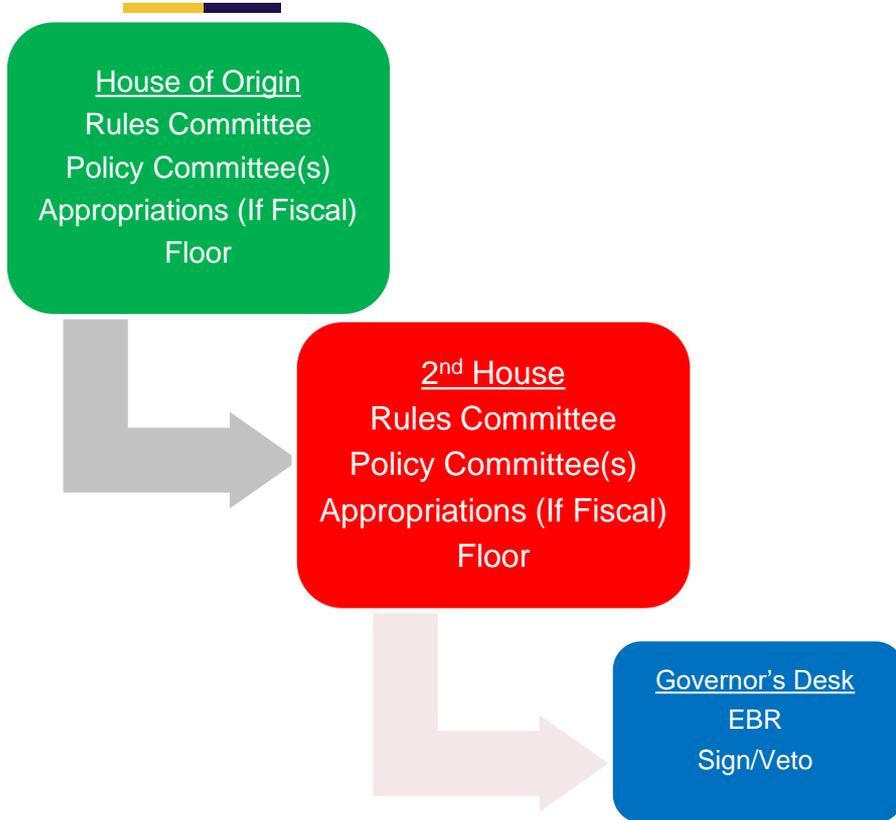
Legislative Overview



What does a bill do?

- Address a problem (i.e. *Make something a crime, reduce barriers to building affordable housing, etc.*)
 - Problem is addressed by:
 - Creating new statutes (i.e. *add a new section to an existing Code*)
 - Modifying existing statutes (i.e. *modify an existing section in a Code*)
 - Creating authority for another branch to address problem through regulations
 - Provide funding (*Budget bill primarily, very rarely statutory appropriations*)

Committee Process



Every Bill:

- Originates in a House.
 - Asm. (AB) or Sen. (SB)
- Then Policy Committee(s)
- If Fiscal, Appropriations
- Suspense File - if determined to be over the fiscal threshold
- Voted on House Floor
- Process Repeats
- Finally, Governor's Desk

Legislative Staff:

Capitol Staff

- Drafts bills
- Guides bills in legislative process
- Monitors policy areas
- Provides vote recommendations

Committee staff

- ❖ Responsible for depth of policy area
- ❖ Review bills, identify issues
- ❖ Work w/ author and stakeholders to address concerns



Legislative Calendar

Legislative Calendar

- Calendar is set annually as required by:
 - State Constitution
 - Legislative Joint Rules
- Available:
 - On Sen/Asm. Websites
 - Daily File

TENTATIVE SENATE CALENDAR 2021 REGULAR SESSION

2020

Dec. 7 —12 m. convening of 2021–22 Regular Session (Art. IV, Sec. 3(a)).

2021

Jan. 1 —Statutes take effect (Art. IV, Sec. 8(c)).

Jan. 4 —Legislature reconvenes (J.R. 51(a)(1)).

Jan. 10 —Budget must be submitted by Governor (Art. IV, Sec. 12(a)).

Jan. 18* —Martin Luther King, Jr. Day.

Jan. 22 —Last day to submit bill requests to the Office of Legislative Counsel.

Feb. 15* —Presidents' Day.

Feb. 19 —Last day for bills to be introduced (J.R. 61(a)(1)), (J.R. 54(a)).

Mar. 25 —Spring Recess begins upon adjournment of this day's session (J.R. 51(a)(2)).

Mar. 31* —Cesar Chavez Day.

Apr. 5 —Legislature reconvenes from Spring Recess (J.R. 51(a)(2)).

Apr. 30 —Last day for policy committees to hear and report to Fiscal Committees fiscal bills introduced in their house (J.R. 61(a)(2)).

May 7 —Last day for policy committees to hear and report to the Floor non-fiscal bills introduced in their house (J.R. 61(a)(3)).

May 14 —Last day for policy committees to meet prior to June 7 (J.R. 61(a)(4)).

May 21 —Last day for fiscal committees to hear and report to the Floor bills introduced in their house (J.R. 61(a)(5)). Last day for fiscal committees to meet prior to June 7 (J.R. 61(a)(6)).

May 31* —Memorial Day.

June 1 - 4 —Floor Session Only. No committee, other than Conference or Rules, may meet for any purpose (J.R. 61(a)(7)).

June 4 —Last day for bills to be passed out of the house of origin (J.R. 61(a)(8)).

June 7 —Committee meetings may resume (J.R. 61(a)(9)).

Calendar Fundamentals

- The California Legislature convenes in two-year sessions.
- 2-year Session (2021-2022):
 - Odd Calendar Year (2021)
 - Even Calendar Year (2022)
- Every bill must meet specific deadlines
 - Waivers can always be obtained – As a general rule, all of the joint, Assembly and Senate Rules can be waived with either a majority vote or a two-thirds vote. Even some constitutional rules can be waived by a legislative vote. We saw a lot of this during the Pandemic.



Two-Year Bills



What is a two-year bill?

- As we already know, the California Legislature convenes in two-year sessions and bills are introduced in both of those two years.
- Bills introduced in the first year of Session can be carried over to the second year of the Session.
- Any two-year bill must pass its house of origin by January 31st.
- This deadline applies to all bills and all resolutions, but does not apply to constitutional amendments.
- Bills introduced in the first year that have already passed over to the second house are NOT subject to the January 31st deadline because those bills already passed their house of origin by the constitutional deadline.

Tracking Legislation



Why Track Legislation?

- Tracking the movement of bills is important so that you may engage in the legislative process and determine when your advocacy efforts are needed most.
- Necessary in order to send position letters in by committee deadlines.
- Allows you to know when and who to set up meetings with so you can effectively advocate for or against a bill.



How to Track Legislation?



- There are several tools that are *free* at your disposal to track legislation.
- CSAC offers the ability to search legislation through the CSAC website - www.counties.org/legislative-tracking
- This tool will allow you to search bills and see whether CSAC has already taken a position, has written a letter or an informative newsletter bulletin on the measure.
- This tool also allows you to see the list of bills in each CSAC policy area that CSAC is tracking.

Other Tools

- The California Legislative Information Website (LegInfo) will allow you to search for bill information including the bill language, votes, history, analyses and more.
- This is a free tool where you can also track legislation by signing up for a free subscription service.
- LegInfo can send you notifications every time the measure is referred to a committee, is amended, when it is set for hearing, enrolled and more.
- You can also search for California laws.
- *Has limitations* – all subscriptions will be deleted at the end of the two-year session.
- <https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov>



Paid Subscription Services

- CSAC uses a paid subscription service called Capitol Track.
- Capitol Track allows staff to make bill lists, post them on the CSAC website, and provides a way to track and see what other policy areas are tracking.
- Allows CSAC to view bills we have taken a position on since 2009 (when we began the service); all other archives since 2001.
- capitoltrack.com



Engaging on Legislation



When do we engage?



In the beginning of each Legislative year, CSAC identifies bills that will likely have policy or fiscal impacts (whether positive or negative) on local governments based on:

- CSAC Platform
- Similar past bills
- Current language
- Author/Sponsor of bill
- Experience



How do we engage?

- Identify bills that have an impact on counties.
- Depending if we have concerns, reach out to the author to communicate our issues, or try to solve them with recommended amendments.
- CSAC always tries to be reasonable and offer solutions.
- Although, if the bill is unworkable and the author does not want to work out the issue, we engage by writing position letters, set up meetings with relevant committee members and staff, and testify at bill hearings.
- *Create credible coalitions* – Coalitions can strengthen a position since they create a unity between diverse interest groups.
- Coalitions enhance potential to gain attention of Legislators and help achieve the preferred outcome.



Questions?