

ADVOCACY 101

Advocacy

- Who is an advocate?
 - You!
- Who/What do you advocate for?
 - Your schools
 - Your school employees
 - Your students
 - Your community
 - Programs and policies
- Who do you advocate to?
 - Other groups/individuals
 - Staff
 - Lawmakers



Relationships

- Advocacy is all about relationships
- Relationships matter; relationships take time.
- Congressional staffers range from experts to novices
- Be confident that you are an important constituent. You are an education expert; you know your schools and your community.

Basis of Advocacy

- Right to lobby established in the Bill of Rights
 - “Congress shall make no law ... abridging the right of the people to ... petition the government for a redress of grievances.”
- What happens if we don't lobby?
 - “If once [the people] become inattentive to the public affairs ... I, and Congress, and Assemblies, Judges and Governors shall all become wolves.”
Thomas Jefferson
- The votes happen whether you weigh in or not. Give them a shot at getting it right.
- “Congress may not do better, but they can know better.”

Why lobby Congress?

- Proactively inform and shape policy discussions before they reach the proposal level
- Gain better laws
- Protect favorable laws
- Repeal or replace unfavorable laws
- Stop adverse proposals for laws

When should you lobby?

- The best time to lobby is when you don't need anything.
- Lobbying is about relationships – don't just show up when you need something.
- In athletics, games are won not on game day, but in the off season. In advocacy, votes are held on the floor, but not necessarily won on the floor.
 - Do the work now—building the relationship, being a resource—so that when they have to vote, they are informed and in the habit of communicating with you.



Endurance

- It's a marathon – not a sprint
- Reach out often – not just when you need something
- Once a month – try our 2017 Year of Superintendent Advocacy Challenge

What does Effective Advocacy Look Like?

- Personal.
- Relationship-based
- Campaign-based
- Trust-based
 - Honesty
 - Accuracy
 - Credibility
- Education-based
- Constituent-based
 - Reelection and reputation most important to the lawmaker
 - “When I feel the heat, I see the light” – Dirksen



Logistics

- When you have meetings, they may be with your member of Congress, but they may just be with their education staffer
- The education staffer often knows more about our issues than the member
- Congressional offices are crowded – your meeting may be in the reception or hallway – that doesn't mean they don't take you seriously, so don't be insulted

Assess Your Strength

- Knowledge
 - Do you know about what you're asking for and what it could mean?
- Consensus
 - Where are other groups on this issue?
 - Building consensus helps guarantee the right outcome



Knowledge

- YOU are the expert in the room
- Be sure to share information about your district, schools, and the great work being done
- Be honest in how a policy is or would affect your schools
- If you have questions, be sure to ask

Working with Staff

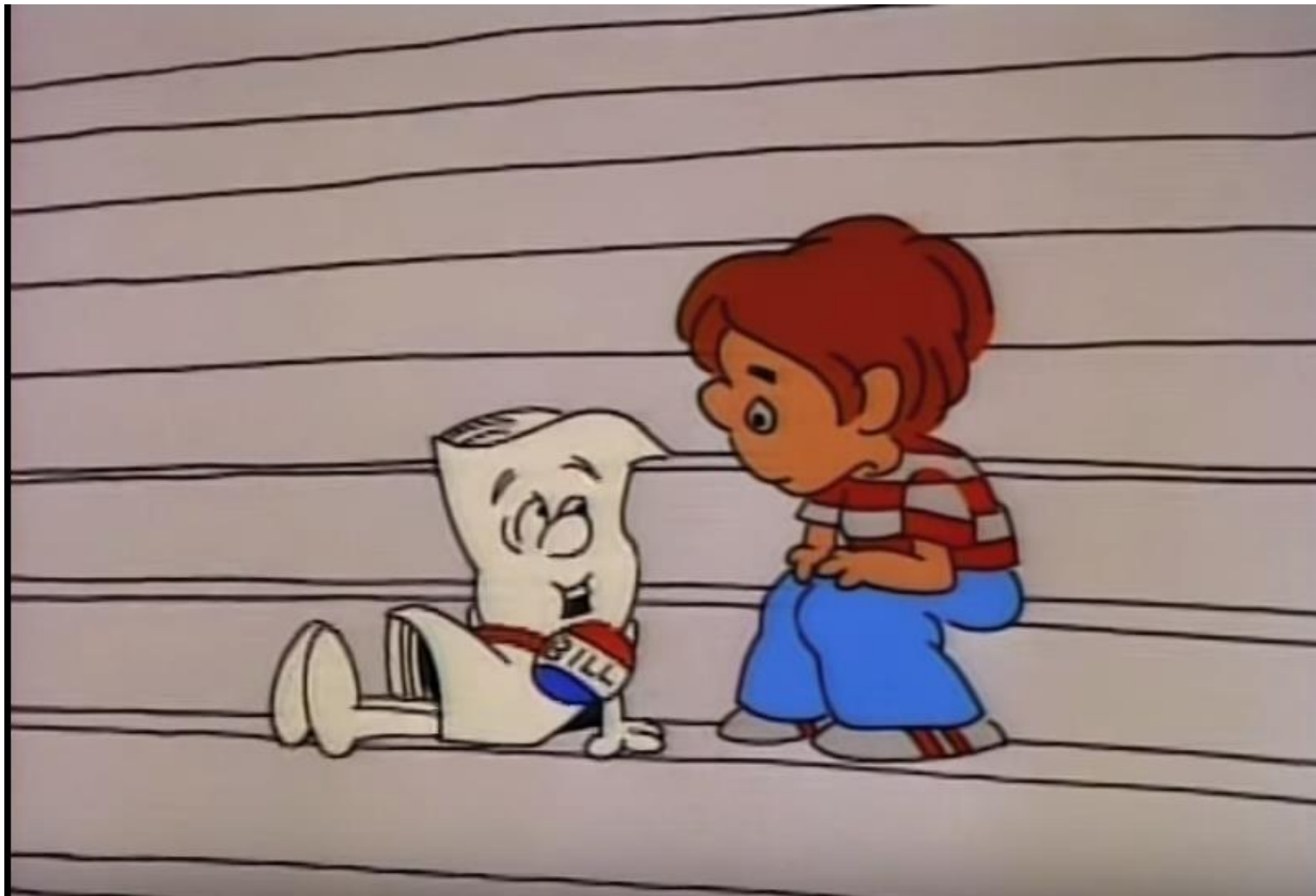
- Know who they are
 - Personal staff
 - Committee staff
 - Range from very knowledgeable to not at all knowledgeable
- Help them
 - Educate them where needed
 - Send them things they can use
 - Your relationship is a two-way street



Communication

- Advocacy is not a one-time thing – be sure to follow up often
- After your meeting, follow up with the staffer – promise them some information or a resource and send it along
- Don't just be in touch if they sky is falling. Constant communication keeps you on their mind.
- Invite your member of Congress to your district – have the photo op with your kids and school

Legislative Process

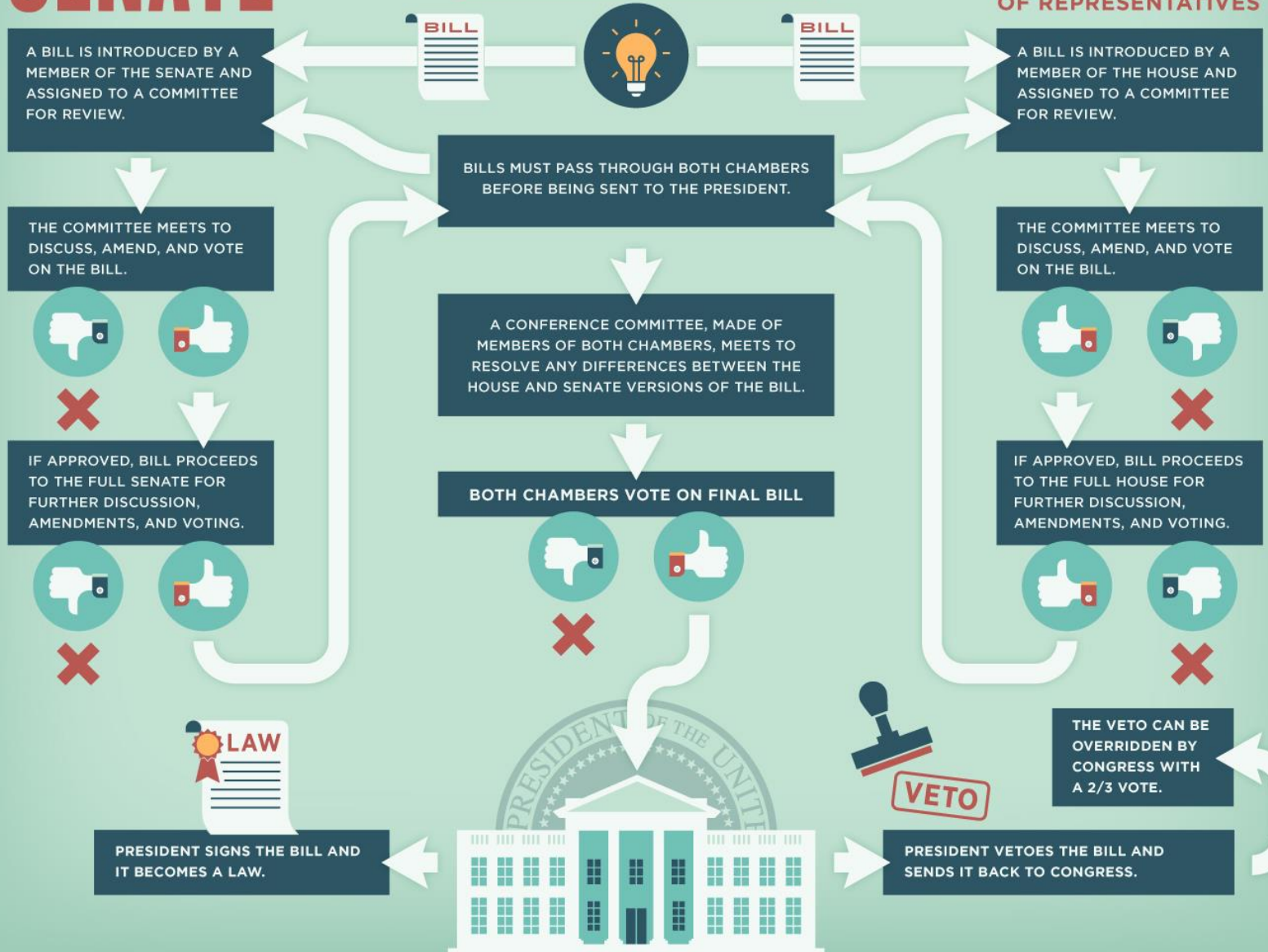


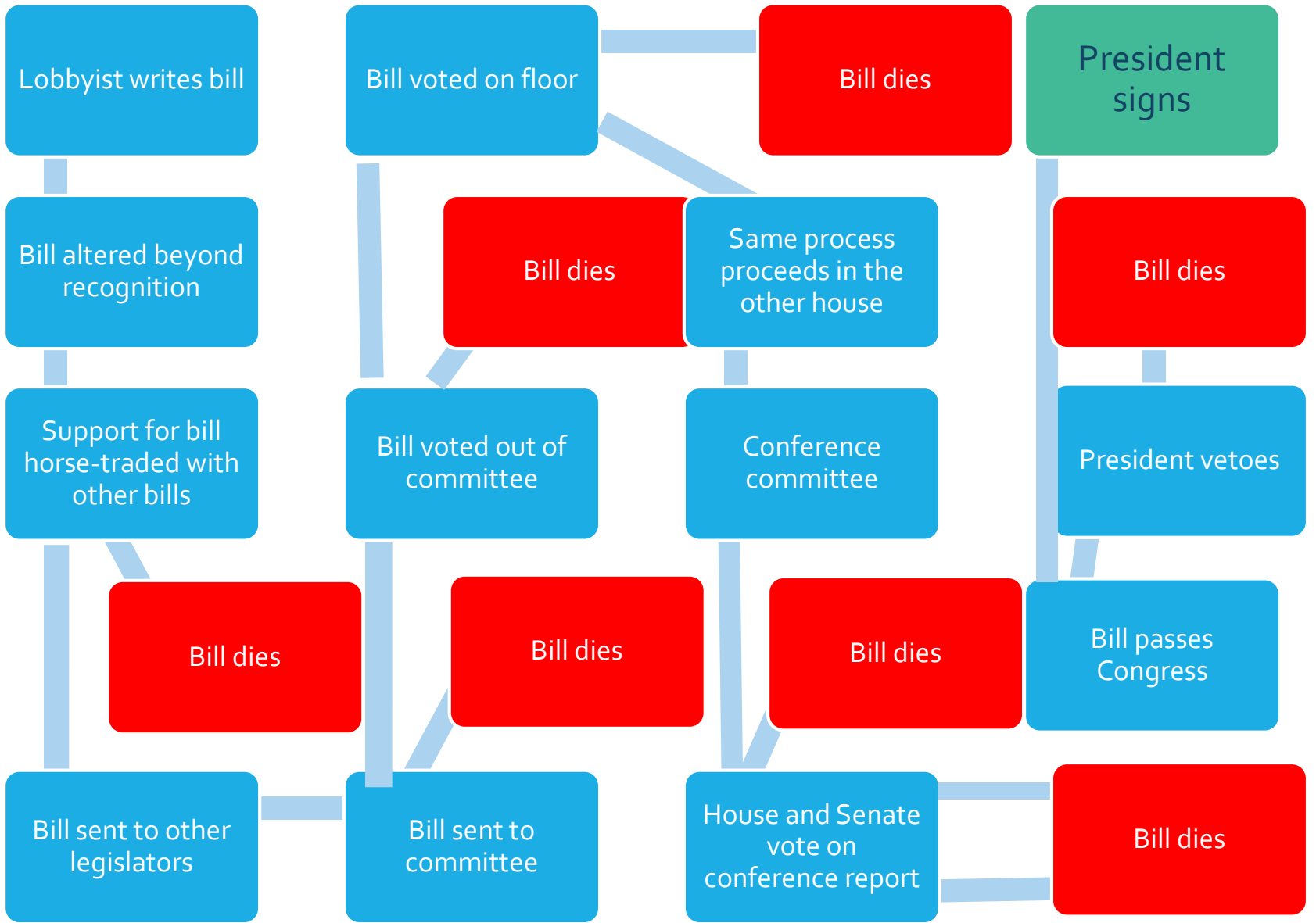
THE US LEGISLATIVE PROCESS

SENATE

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

IT STARTS WITH AN IDEA...





Meeting Structure

- Before the meeting
 - Do your homework
 - Know what you want to talk about
 - Put together necessary information
- Going as a group
 - Plan who will talk about which issues
 - Prepare materials, where applicable
- In the meeting
 - Be friendly!
 - Share stories
 - Have stats/numbers ready where necessary
 - Don't rely TOO much on numbers – stories are more persuasive
 - Ask for information
 - Provide concrete information

Activity

- Break into 5 groups
- Prepare your pitch as detailed in handout
- You have 20 minutes, then you will pitch your Member of Congress and staffer

Contact Us (Really!)

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