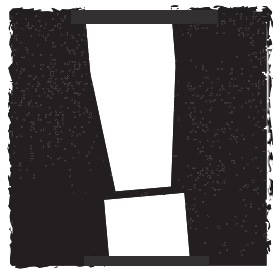


Advocacy 101



**tell
them**

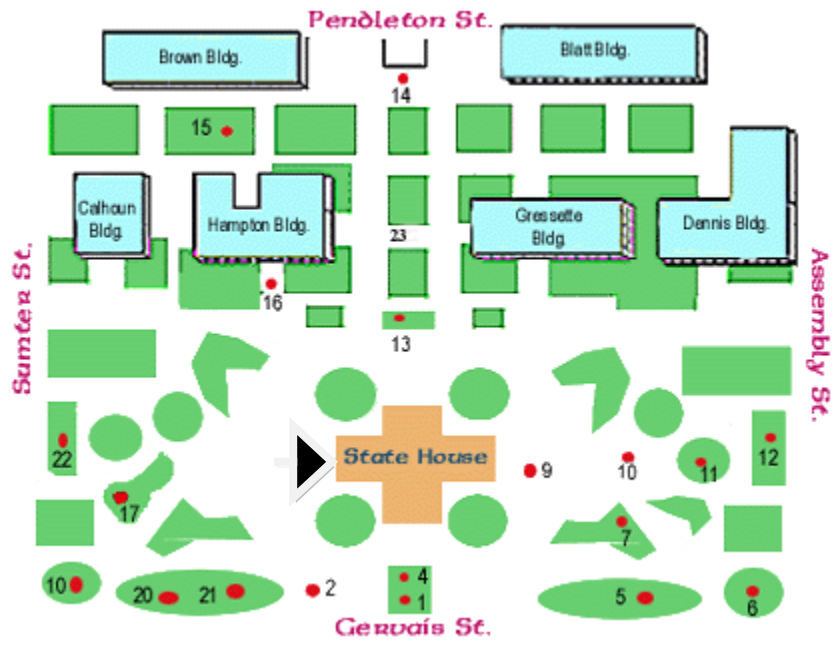
www.tellthemsc.org

**How to Change,
Inspire and Shape
Public Policy**

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Map of the South Carolina State Capitol Complex



- | | |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1. Confederate Monument | 21. Gun from the Battleship Maine |
| 2. Spanish-American War Monument | 22. City of Columbia Time Capsule |
| 3. B. Tillman Monument | 23. Strom Thurmond Statue |
| 4. Statue of George Washington | |
| 5. R.E. Lee Hwy. Marker | |
| 6. J.M. Sims Monument | |
| 7. Old State House Monument | |
| 8. Washington Elm | |
| 9. Bronze Stars | |
| 10. Palmetto Regiment Monument | |
| 11. Cannon Base | |
| 12. Grave-Capt. Lunsford | |
| 13. Gen. Richardson Monument | |
| 14. Confederate Women Monument | |
| 15. Liberty Bell | |
| 16. Gen. W. Hampton Monument | |
| 17. Cork Oak Tree | |
| 18. Revolutionary General's Monument | |
| 19. J.F. Byrnes Monument | |
| 20. Jefferson Davis Hwy. Marker | |

Public entrance

*The **Blatt Building** is the office building for **House Members**.*

*The **Gressette Building** is the office building for **Senate Members**.*

Parking and Entering the Capitol

Websites: www.scstatehouse.net
www.scgov.net

Phone: (803)242.4420
**Legislative Printing, Information &
Technology Systems**

This office, located on the third floor of the Blatt Building, provides information on anything pertaining to state government. There are printed lists of all legislators with the number and location of their offices and their contact information. For anyone without a computer, your local library will be happy to help you access all this information online. You may purchase a **Legislative Manual** online, request one from your legislator, or view and print the complete information online.

Columbia is the second planned city in America, and the uptown is laid out in perfect squares. Take a few minutes to familiarize yourself with the streets around the Capitol, and you will have no problems. Allow at least **30 minutes** for parking and walking to your meeting. Parking can be a problem because often during the session, many meters along Assembly Street and other streets are covered with orange bags and set aside for special purposes. There is limited metered parking along Pendleton, Main, Sumter, Gervais, and further up Assembly. Red meters may only allow a maximum of half-hour or one hour (**one quarter for each 15 minutes**). Green meters allow a maximum of two hours. Some of the blue meters along Senate Street may allow up to five hours.

To avoid the possibility of a ticket or having to feed a meter, use one of the public parking garages. The nearest public parking garage to the Capitol is located across from the front of the Capitol facing Gervais and may be entered from Assembly or by going one block and turning right on Lady. Another public garage is located on the corner of Assembly and Washington, one block past Lady. Turn right onto Washington for the entrance. One other nearby garage is located in the Keenan Building on the corner of Gervais and Marion, with the entrance on Marion.

For those with special needs, you may want to enter the Capitol grounds from the Sumter Street side. There is a ramp at the public entrance for wheel chairs and easier walking. Once inside, inquire about directions to the elevators that go to the second floor, the location of the General Assembly chambers. **Water fountains and restrooms are on the right at the end of the public entry hall.** To the left of the entry hall is the main hallway leading to the rotunda and the twin stairwells to the second floor. On the right side of this hall is a rack filled with brochures about the Capitol and other point of interests. Beside the rack is the Capitol Tour Office that features excellent tours of the Capitol and its grounds every couple of hours. On the left side of the hallway is the State House Gift Shop, filled with all things South Carolina.

Offices for members of the House of Representatives are located in the Blatt Building, in the back of the Capitol on Pendleton Street and Main Street. The Capitol divides Main Street and this may be confusing to first time visitors. The offices for the members of the Senate are located in the Gressette Building, directly behind the Capitol, near the Assembly Street side.

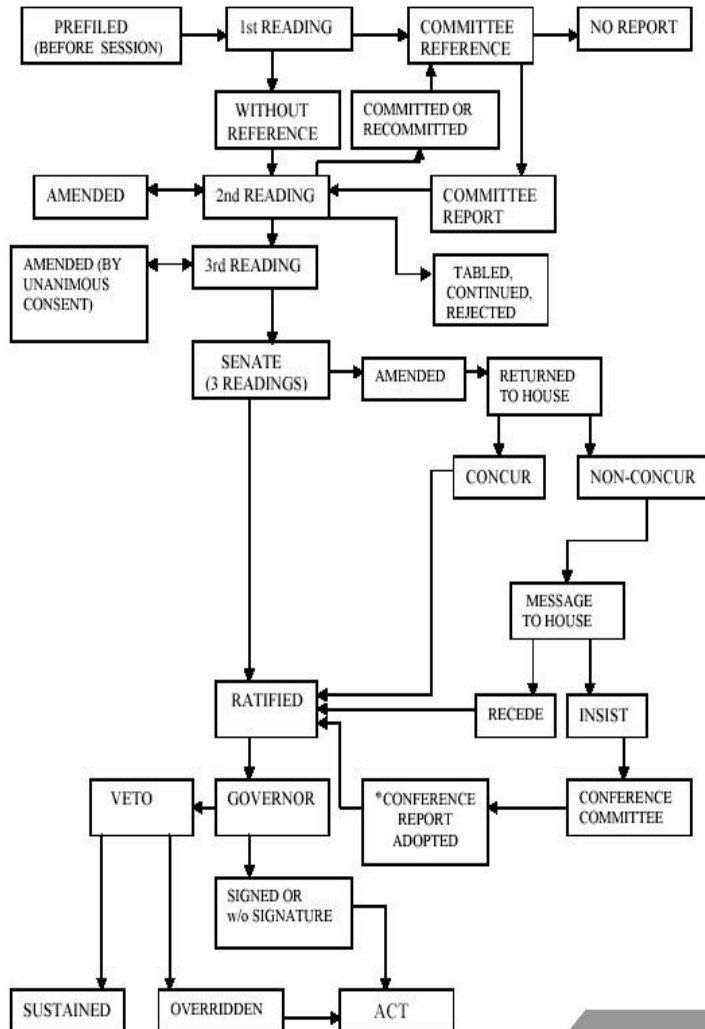
The Legislative Process

The General Assembly meets from the second Tuesday in January through the first Thursday in June of each year. During this time, they participate in making new laws, changing old laws and studying what outcome laws will have on the people in their districts and our state.

1. When a bill is first presented, it is read so that every member in that body can hear it.
2. Then the bill is sent to a committee to be studied. Public hearings may be held by some committees. Notice is given for these hearings and published on the State House Website. The committee can change the bill, accept the bill or reject the bill.
3. If the bill is changed or accepted by the committee it is then sent to the full body who in turn vote whether to accept the bill as it is, change the bill or reject the bill. When a bill is accepted by the required number of members of one body, it is considered passed.
4. The passed bill must then be sent to the other body of the General Assembly for their review. For example, if a bill is passed in the House, it must be sent to the Senate for their review.
5. The bill then goes through the same process in the second body as it did in the first body.

When a bill is passed by both bodies it is sent to the Governor for his signature. When the Governor signs the bill it becomes a law.

How A Bill Originating in the House Becomes an Act



**If a Conference Report is rejected, the bill may by a two-thirds vote of each House be referred to a Committee of Free Conference*

Provided by the South Carolina Association of Nonprofit Organizations

SOUTH CAROLINA BUDGET BASICS

Did you know?

The State Constitution requires the Governor to submit a balanced budget.

The State Constitution requires the Legislature to pass a balanced budget.

The State Constitution requires the Governor to sign a balanced budget.

STATE BUDGET CALENDAR

August:	Budget Guidelines sent to Agency
October:	Agency Requests Submitted to Governor
January:	Governor Submits Budget to Legislature
June:	Legislature Adopts Budget
July:	New Fiscal Year Begins

THE BUDGET PROCESS

It Begins With the Governor... The Governor is required to submit an Executive Budget to the General Assembly. The Executive Budget must contain a complete and itemized plan of all proposed expenditures for each state department or other agency, beginning with the first day of the next fiscal year (a fiscal year begins July 1 and ends June 30.) Opposite each item of the proposed expenditures, the detailed budget document must show the amount appropriated for the last preceding appropriation year, for the current appropriation year and the increase or decrease.

Then to the House... Legislative debate on the General Appropriations Bill begins with the House Ways and Means Committee. Members of the Ways and Means Committee are divided into subcommittees, and each subcommittee is assigned a functional area of the budget such as corrections or public education. The subcommittees meet and develop budget recommendations

for presentation to the full committee. The Ways and Means Committee then presents its version of the budget bill to the full House. The House of Representatives usually debates the bill and considers amendments for three days; however, the length of debate can and does vary. State law requires the House to give third reading of the General Appropriations Bill by the end of March or the legislative session is extended.

Then to the Senate...After passage by the House, the bill is sent to the Senate and referred to the Senate Finance Committee. As is the practice in the House, Senate Finance committee members are organized into subcommittees by functional areas. The Senate Finance Committee then recommends a budget bill to the full Senate. The budget is usually not passed by the Senate until late in the session (May.)

And if the House and Senate Versions Do Not Agree...When the House and Senate have passed differing versions of an appropriation bill, a six member conference committee (three House members and three Senators) is appointed to develop a compromise bill. In developing a recommendation for a compromise budget bill, the conference committee does not have the power to insert any new matter which is not in the House or Senate version or to alter or delete any matter agreed upon by both houses. If the insertion of new matter is necessary to develop a compromise, a member of the conference committee may move that the conference committee be resolved into a committee of free conference. If free conference powers are granted by both the House and Senate, the committee may rewrite the bill. When the conferences from both houses agree on a budget, their report is sent to both Houses for adoption.

And Back to the Governor...After the General Assembly has passed the state budget, the Governor has the power to veto distinct items or sections which have been labeled as such by the General Assembly. In 1998, the State Supreme Court ruled that the Governor cannot strike individual sentences or parts of sentences in a bill appropriating money. If the Governor vetoes an item or items in an appropriation bill, the bill becomes law as to the remaining sections of the bill. The procedure for consideration of the Governor's vetoes by the two houses is the same as for other bills, except that only vetoed items are considered and not the entire bill. Each vetoed item is considered separately, with a two-thirds vote in both houses necessary to override the Governor's veto on each item.

Preparation is the Key to Success

Allow Time for Legislation and Requests

Annual Session Begins: The Second Tuesday in January

Annual Session Ends: The First Thursday in June,
unless there is an extension

The best time to contact and work with your legislator about a new proposal or request or a change in an existing law is July through mid-December, when they are out of session. This allows sufficient time to prepare legislation to be pre-filed before the session is convened. Each bill has to be carefully researched and written by highly trained attorneys before it is submitted to General Assembly members. **This takes time.**

Questions Legislators Often Ask- Be Prepared!

What have our neighboring states done about this issue?
When did they do it? How is it working? (A copy of the bill or proposal is the best aid.) **How will this impact the budget?** (Your legislator may suggest a visit with the governor or one of his/her staff member to discuss the impact on the budget. At times it can be helpful to have your proposal in the governor's budget.) See page seven (8) for full text on the budget.

Effective Communications is Your Best Tool. Use It Wisely!

Most Effective: Personal visit and take a friend or two, more if available

Next Most Effective: Personal phone calls and/or well written one-page letters

Least Effective: Emails, unless the legislator says they prefer

Be aware: legislative staff is extremely limited. Usually each senator has one staff person and four representatives share one staff person. This may mean calling several times before you get to speak with a legislator. It also means you most often must take the initiative with additional communications. Due to a heavy schedule and lack of staff, responses to letters and phone calls come slowly or not at all. Most of the time, it is up to you to follow up. You will usually find legislators doing their very best with communications, but on occasion they need your help and understanding. They almost always welcome good ideas.

Concentrate on the legislators you help to elect and whose district you live in, because once convinced of an idea for legislation, they will work to spread enthusiasm among their colleagues. Remember, most legislators maintain a list of the people who actively participated in their campaigns with donations and/or sweat.

Subcommittees have the fewest people to convince and committees have the next fewest members. The final step is the full body of the General Assembly with 46 senators and 146 representatives to convince about a piece of legislation. It is always best to have the members of the subcommittees and committees working on behalf of a bill. If you are unable to get legislation through a subcommittee with a positive recommendation for consideration, it will be an uphill battle in full committee. The subcommittee or the committee can effectively kill a piece of legislation and prevent it from moving forward. In politics, compromise and perseverance are often the most essential ingredients for success, so if it is worthwhile, keep bringing it back.

Establishing a Rapport with Legislators

◆ **KNOW YOUR REPRESENTATIVES**

Get to know your representative on a personal basis. It is critical that you know who represents you and that your representative knows the issues that are important to you.

◆ **BE ACCURATE AND FACTUAL**

The fact that you want, or do not want, a piece of legislation to pass is not a sufficient argument. You must support your position with facts and be credible and respectful in your presentation of those facts. A legislator should be able to consider you a resource for information. If you misinform, your credibility may be seriously jeopardized.

◆ **GIVE CREDIT WHERE CREDIT IS DUE**

When your position prevails, thank everyone involved in the success. When your position is defeated, it is still critical to thank everyone who made an effort to help you. The legislative process is a team effort.

◆ **LEARN TO EVALUATE ISSUES OBJECTIVELY**

The introduction of legislation does not mean that it will become law. In fact, many bills do not become law. Before forming an opinion about any legislation, learn the "who", "what" and "why" of it. Realize that there is almost always more than one side to a story, and try to determine how each interested party views the legislation.

◆ **ENDORSE YOUR LEGISLATORS**

When a legislator deserves re-election, offer him or her your support. Financial support is critical to campaigns, as are workers and volunteers. Remain loyal to those legislators who have been helpful to you.

◆ **BE BRIEF**

Legislators are "tugged at" from hundreds of groups weekly. A well-prepared and informative person can present his case to a legislator in a short period of time. The legislator will appreciate your respect for his or her busy schedule. If you have very detailed information you would like to share with him or her offer it in writing.

Establishing a Rapport with Legislators

◆ **BE CONCISE**

Highlighted bullet points always offer an overview of facts in a concise, easy to understand format.

◆ **EXPRESS YOUR APPRECIATION**

Thank legislators for their time when calling or meeting.

◆ **BE FAIR**

Your legislator represents all constituents regardless of political party. Don't chastise a legislator when he or she does not share your particular view.

◆ **BE UNDERSTANDING**

Put yourself in the legislator's place by trying to understand his or her position on an issue. He or she wants to be helpful, and needs to be fully informed of all aspects of a situation.

◆ **BE REASONABLE**

Recognize that there are legitimate differences of opinions. **Never** indulge in threats or recriminations. You will seem defensive in your debate, and may erase positive steps you have already made.

◆ **BE FRIENDLY**

Do not contact legislators only when you need something from him or her. Keep in touch with them, and never be remiss in thanking them with a letter or phone call when they provide assistance.

◆ **BE COOPERATIVE**

If your legislator makes a reasonable request, try to comply with it. Supply him or her with facts that will help him or her better understand an issue or point of view.

◆ **BE REALISTIC AND REASONABLE**

Remember that legislation is usually the result of compromise. Do not expect to get everything and not give.

Constituent Relationships

Building a Solid Foundation

- ◆ Keep up with how your legislators vote. Express your reaction to those votes on issues in which you are interested.
- ◆ Invite your legislator to speak at a local meeting.
- ◆ Ask to receive your legislator's newsletter.
- ◆ Invite your legislator to visit your office.
- ◆ Invite your legislator to lunch and be prepared to discuss important issues.
- ◆ Attend political functions and fundraisers in the district.
- ◆ Get personally involved in your legislator's election campaign.
- ◆ Consider hosting a fundraiser in your home or local meeting place. You may also host a "meet and greet", a non-fundraising reception.
- ◆ Get to know his or her family, and about their life outside of politics.
- ◆ After developing a personal relationship, invite your legislator to social functions.
- ◆ When your legislator begins to seek your opinion on matters and considers you an informational resource, that is a sign that you have been successful in building a productive constituent relationship!

Meeting with Legislators

Personal meetings, either to discuss specific issues or simply to introduce yourself as an interested and involved constituent, are the **most** effective means of political communication.

Meetings are sometimes difficult to arrange, given a legislator's busy schedule, but they are just as vital as any other important business meeting. The initial contact can be made with the legislator directly or through key staff members. Unless you already know your legislator, you should write or phone to request an appointment.

Do not overlook the opportunity to meet with a staff member, particularly if he or she is working closely with the legislator on an issue of concern to you.

Further, try to schedule meetings with your legislator when he or she is in his/her legislative district visiting constituents.

It is important to be familiar with key aspects of your issue before the meeting. This does not mean that you must be a legal expert. You should, however, be prepared to discuss how an issue affects you, your family, and your community. On the following page are a few pointers for a successful meeting.

Meeting with Legislators

- ◆ Be concise and well organized, and try to state your views in 10 minutes or less.
- ◆ Be firm in your remarks while being attentive to the legislator's views as well.
- ◆ Never forget that this meeting is an open exchange of ideas, not an opportunity for you to lecture the legislator.
- ◆ Never threaten or speak in a disrespectful manner to the legislator or any member of his or her staff. They are like most others and will not respond to these tactics.
- ◆ Prepare a one-page summary of key points about your position on the issue at hand. Leave a copy with the legislator at the conclusion of your meeting. Be sure to include your name and a way to contact you should the legislator need additional information from you.
- ◆ Follow-up your meeting with a thank you note and re-emphasize key points which were discussed.
- ◆ You may also wish to write a note of thanks to those staff people who helped arrange, or participated in, the meetings.
- ◆ Include in your thank you notes to your legislator and their staff any additional information you promised to send.

Office Visits

An Open Door Policy with Legislators

Visiting your Senators and Representatives in his or her office affords you several invaluable opportunities. If you have never met him or her in person, putting faces with names will benefit you both in the future. There simply is no substitute for face to face communication with a legislator. In personal meetings, you have a captive audience. The following should help to make your personal visit a productive and meaningful one:

- ◆ Inform your legislator in writing that you plan to be in the area and would like to drop by his/her office for a visit. Don't be discouraged if he or she has a booked schedule. It may take several tries before you are able to arrange this meeting, but your patience and persistence will pay off.
- ◆ Read highlights of your legislator's biography before your meeting so that you are aware of what you may have in common.
- ◆ Be sure to introduce yourself to his or her staff. They can be very helpful in your future dealings with the lawmaker.
- ◆ Write a note of thanks after you have visited your legislator's office. Make specific references to your visit. Be certain to include any additional information your legislator requested or you promised.

Telephone Tips

When a bill is coming up for a vote and time is so short that you cannot get a letter mailed to your legislator in time, telephoning is probably your best means of communicating your point of view.

When you know your legislator well and can expect to get him or her on the phone, it is reasonable to try a phone call. Many of the techniques outlined in the letter writing also apply to telephone calls. It is very important to remember to call during normal business hours.

Be aware that you will only have a few minutes for the conversation, and that you will need to be very concise and exact in expressing your view.

Always identify yourself as a constituent. If you cannot speak directly with the legislator, leave your name and telephone number with a staff person.

Also, leave with him/her the manner in which you would like this legislator to vote (for or against) on a specific bill number (i.e. Senate Bill 213) or amendment to a bill, giving the bill number.

Finally, you may want to **briefly** state why this bill or amendment is good or bad (i.e. H. 3739 relating to the Birth Control Protection Act).

Important Columbia Contact Information:

Governor's Office - (803) 734-2100

Reaching a House Member on the Floor - (803) 734-2010

Reaching a Senator on the Floor - (803) 212-6700

S.C. General Assembly Website:

www.scstatehouse.net

The Fundamental 'Do's and Don'ts' of Letter Writing

Use personal stationary or business letterhead when writing legislators. Address the letter correctly. On the envelope and on the inside address, refer to the elected official as "The Honorable _____."

For example:

*The Honorable _____
South Carolina Senate
Street Address
Columbia, S.C. Zip*

*The Honorable _____
House of Representatives
Street Address
Columbia, S.C. Zip*

- ◆ **Do** address your Senator or Representative properly: "Dear Senator/Representative last name."
- ◆ **Do** write legibly (handwritten letters are fine if they are readable.)
- ◆ **Do** keep your comments brief and to the point. Clearly state your reason for writing. **Cover only one issue per letter.**
- ◆ **Do** include the bill number and subject matter about which you are writing. Explain how you feel the issue would affect you.
- ◆ **Do** be courteous and reasonable.
- ◆ **Do** write when you approve of something your legislator does. Words of appreciation will be remembered.
- ◆ **Do** include your return address.

The Fundamental ‘Do’s and Don’ts’ of Letter Writing

- ◆ **Do** write early in the session before a bill has been introduced if you have ideas about an issue you would like to see incorporated in legislation.
- ◆ **Do** write the chairman or members of a committee holding hearings on legislation in which you are interested. Remember, however, that you have more influence with your Senators and Representatives than other members of congress.
- ◆ **Don’t** sign and send a form or mimeograph letter.
- ◆ **Don’t** begin on the righteous note of “as a citizen and taxpayer.” Your elected Representative assumes you are not an alien, and he/she knows we all pay taxes.
- ◆ **Don’t** apologize for writing and taking his/her time. If your letter is short and expresses your opinion, he/she is glad to give you a hearing.
- ◆ **Don’t** say, “I hope this gets by your secretary.” This only irritates the office staff.
- ◆ **Don’t** be rude or threatening. It will get you nowhere.
- ◆ **Don’t** be vague. You don’t want to leave your Senator or Representative wondering what you had in mind.
- ◆ **Don’t** send a carbon copy to your second Senator or Representative. Write each letter individually.

Letter Writing 'Don'ts'

These two examples are ineffective because they violate the rules of communication. They fail because neither offers enough detailed explanation, or a definitive stance on an issue. Faxes should only be used when time limits are extremely short.

FAX

Senator Johnson,

**Since you are my
Senator, please vote
for H. 3739**

Joan Johnson

MEMO

Senator,

H. 3739 is good legislation,.
Please vote for it.

Joan Johnson

Committee Hearings

Tips on Testifying

- ◆ Notice of public hearings are placed on the website or you may call (803)242.4420. Public testimonies are generally taken only in subcommittee hearings.
- ◆ Open your remarks with “Mr. or Madame Chairman and members of the committee, thank you for allowing me to speak on behalf of children.”
- ◆ If you are a constituent of one of the committee members, be sure to mention it.
- ◆ Tell the lawmakers specifically what you want. Keep your statement as simple and brief as possible, and base your remarks on irrefutable facts instead of mostly on matter of opinion.
- ◆ Do not read to the committee. Maintain eye contact with the committee members as you present your testimony. Address one issue at a time, and don't get sidetracked.
- ◆ Use a real life story, if at all possible.
- ◆ If committee members speak during your testimony, **remember to listen** as much or more than you speak.
- ◆ Provide a written summary of your testimony in an easy-to-read format.
- ◆ Attend prior meetings to see how the hearing process goes for that particular committee or subcommittee.
- ◆ Cite support from other interested parties.
- ◆ Try to foresee questions you may be asked and be prepared to answer them. Remember when to say, "I don't know, but I will get back with you."

The Election Process & Voting

1. Educate Yourself & Vote!

2. Pick a candidate you like and support their campaign.

3. Other things you can do:

- Make telephone calls promoting the candidate
- Discuss your candidate's positions during informal conversations with friends, family, and neighbors.
- Hold a “meet and greet” social at your home for the candidate.
- Go door-to-door handing out campaign literature with a fellow volunteer.
- Display a candidate's yard sign on your property or bumper sticker on your car.
- Add a personal note to post cards promoting your candidate and mail them to your friends and acquaintances.
- Donate money--every little bit helps.
- Volunteer at the candidate's campaign office.

Register to Vote:

www.DeclareYourself.com

Tips for Writing a Letter to the Editor

Brief, Clear, & to the Point!

- 150-200 words; two to four paragraphs
- One issue in one letter
- Main point expressed in a single sentence
- Supporting arguments limited to the two or three most powerful
- Open with a short, engaging sentence
- Place the most important and compelling information at the beginning
- Illustrate relevance and importance of the issue to the readers and their community with local statistics and events or personal stories
- Use commonly used terms--avoid jargon and personal attacks
- Advocate for a specific action to occur

Nuts & Bolts

- Adhere to the newspaper's letter-to-the-editor policy (usually printed on the page where the letters are published)

This Manual Belongs to _____

My Government Officials

NAME	STAFF	CONTACT
Office of the Governor P.O. Box 12267 Columbia, SC 29201		Phone: 803-734-2100 Fax: 803-734-5167 www.scgovernor.com/ index.asp

This book is a compilation of tips and
ideas gathered and compiled by
TellThem!.

A Special Thank You
to those who
contributed to the Publication of the
Manual:

New Morning Foundation
Capitol Consultants
SC League of Women Voters
Affordable Housing Coalition of SC

Updated: February 2009