

Tips and Resources for Lobbying the Maryland General Assembly

Besides running for office, helping HSM-friendly candidates, and voting in elections, the best thing an HSM member can do to stop illegal immigration in Maryland is to encourage (or discourage) the Maryland legislature to pass a particular bill into law. To do this, members communicate with Maryland legislators (Senators and Delegates) who are on the committee considering the bill, and (if the bill passes committee) who were elected by your District.

Exercising one's inherent right to petition their government is about the most important act a citizen can perform. HSM is extremely proud and appreciative of our citizen members who make this effort!

Whether a member testifies before a committee, sends a postal letter or e-mail to legislators, or phones a legislator's office, it is important to remember that we don't need to insult, disrespect or threaten anyone. The facts speak for themselves, and we have the U.S. Constitution on our side. Every year, our civil, rational and knowledgeable voices attract more and more people to our position. In contrast, citizens who use insulting speech are ignored by legislators and help our enemies. Be firm but respectful.

The Maryland legislature (General Assembly) meets every year from mid-January to mid-April. Some bills will encourage illegal aliens to stay in (or come to) Maryland, and some are meant to discourage illegal aliens from residing in Maryland. Some of these bills are in the House of Delegates, some are in the State Senate, and some bills have similar or identical bills that have been introduced in both chambers ('Cross Filed' on the hearing schedule).

Committee Vote

After a bill is introduced by one or more Delegates (in the House) or Senators (in the State Senate), it is assigned to a committee which will consider and vote on whether to 'recommend' the bill for passage (or not). As part of these deliberations, the committee will schedule public hearings where citizens can publicly testify to the committee on the merits (or lack thereof) of the bill.

For more detailed information about a particular hearing, (such as the location, witness registration deadlines, etc.) go to the "Hearings Schedule" webpage (http://mlis.state.md.us/2011RS/hearsch/hs_index.htm) and click on the link for the Committee that is hearing that bill. For instance, the House Appropriations Committee is hearing HB 343; so if you want to attend the hearing for HB 343, then go to the Hearings Schedule for the House Appropriations Committee. (note: We cannot provide a hot-link to the committee name in the spreadsheet because the webpage URLs for hearing information associated with a specific committee change daily)

Attending a committee hearing with other HSM members is an uplifting experience. However, if you cannot attend the hearing, the next best thing is to write a letter to the

members of the committee hearing the bill. Legislators receive hundreds of e-mails daily about various bills under consideration, so letters sent via snail mail may get more attention. But e-mail communication is certainly better than none, especially if a committee vote is imminent. Address letters to: "The Honorable (name of Delegate or Senator)"; the salutation should say, "Dear Delegate (name)" or "Dear Senator (name)." If you can't send a letter, you can still phone one or all committee members and encourage them to vote for or against the bill.

To find the members on any House Committee, go to the committee's webpage via... <http://www.msa.md.gov/msa/mdmanual/06hse/html/hsecom.html>, and click on the desired Committee listed.

To find the members on any Senate Committee, go to the committee's website via... <http://www.msa.md.gov/msa/mdmanual/05sen/html/sencom.html>, and click on the desired Committee listed.

Contact information for any committee member can be obtained by clicking on the member's name.

Rather than corresponding to individual Delegates or Senators, you may submit written testimony to the committee by faxing or mailing it (via snail-mail) to the committee's Chair. The committee's address and fax number are posted on the committee's webpage, beneath the list of committee members. Address the letter to: "The Honorable (name of Delegate or Senator), Chair"; the salutation should say, "Dear Chairperson (name)" or "Dear Chairman (name)." You must clearly reference the bill number at the top of your letter and state that you are submitting your correspondence as testimony for the record. Legislators are more likely to see your correspondence if the committee receives it before the bill's public hearing is held.

You'll make the greatest impression if you BOTH submit written correspondence AND phone individual legislators.

Full House or Senate Vote

If a bill has been recommended by committee, it is then considered by the full House or Senate. For recommended bills, if you have not done so already, contact your Delegate(s) or Senator and encourage them to vote for or against the bill.

For the House of Delegates,

If you know the name(s) of your Delegate(s), you can find their contact information at... www.msa.md.gov/msa/mdmanual/06hse/html/hseal.html.

To find the name(s) of the Delegate(s) in your District, go to... www.msa.md.gov/msa/mdmanual/06hse/html/hsedist.html.

To find the Delegates in your County, go to... www.msa.md.gov/msa/mdmanual/07leg/html/gaco.html.

For the State Senate,

If you know the name of your State Senator, you can find his/her contact information at... www.msa.md.gov/msa/mdmanual/05sen/html/senal.html.

To find the name of the Senator in your District, go to... www.msa.md.gov/msa/mdmanual/05sen/html/sendist.html.

To find the Senators in your County, go to... www.msa.md.gov/msa/mdmanual/07leg/html/qaco.html.

Thank you for your service to your children, your grandchildren, and your fellow citizens, present and future.