

Municipal
Association of
South Carolina

Raising Hometown Voices to a New Level of Influence

**An advocacy guide for
South Carolina hometowns**

MASC
Municipal Association of South CarolinaSM
Advocacy. Service. Innovation.

**A tool kit to help you effectively work with the
South Carolina General Assembly**



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Check www.masc.sc (keyword: publications) for the latest version of Municipal Association publications.

About the Municipal Association of South Carolina

Formed in 1939, the Municipal Association of South Carolina represents and serves the state's 270 incorporated municipalities. The Association is dedicated to the principle of its founding members: to offer the services, programs and products that will give municipal officials the knowledge, experience and tools for enabling the most efficient and effective operation of their municipalities in the complex world of municipal government.

Advocacy Strategy Map



Be Involved

Why is it important for municipal leaders to be involved in the legislative process?

A common goal of municipal leaders is to improve the quality of life in their hometowns. Local officials quickly realize so much of what happens within their own borders is directed by others outside of their jurisdiction, primarily the state legislature.

To be an effective leader in your hometown today, you must recognize the significant role the legislature and other parts of state government play in regulating and funding the activities of local government.

Your municipal responsibilities must involve representing your hometown and region's interests to legislators. You must make your own opportunities in your own hometowns to influence legislative action that has an impact on your city or town's quality of life and economic success.

You can make a difference by connecting your legislators to the importance and value that hometowns contribute to the state's success!

Legislative Principles

Municipal Association legislative principles

South Carolina hometowns support advocacy initiatives focused on promoting economic growth, enhancing a positive quality of life, and encouraging accountability and fiscal responsibility. These principles recognize the common goals and core functions of cities and towns. Every year, advocacy initiatives tie back to these core principles.

Promoting economic growth

South Carolina hometowns are the core of economic growth and prosperity for our state. Cities and towns work in partnership with business and industry to provide the necessary infrastructure to assist in their growth and support their competitiveness. The success of our state's economic development efforts is dependent on the strength of our cities and towns to provide the quality services and amenities taxpayers and businesses demand. South Carolina hometowns support legislation that encourages economic growth by making our state competitive within the global economy.

Enhancing positive quality of life

Businesses repeatedly point to "quality of life" as one of the determining factors in making a decision where to locate. South Carolina's hometowns are the primary source of the valuable elements that create a positive quality of life supporting tourism, public safety, recreation, utility infrastructure, the arts and cultural activities. South Carolina's cities and towns support legislative efforts to provide residents and businesses with cost-effective and efficient programs and services that support a positive quality of life.

Encouraging local accountability and fiscal responsibility

Strong cities are necessary to support the economic development and growth of the entire area. Local municipal leadership must have the ability to provide resources in a manner that best supports each community's local needs. Research indicates residents want local control over the laws and regulations that affect the growth and development of their hometowns. With responsibility comes accountability. South Carolina hometowns support local fiscal accountability and management of resources that are critical to supporting well-run cities.

Advocacy Opportunities

Advocacy opportunities

The Municipal Association of South Carolina provides several opportunities throughout the year to visit the State House in Columbia and talk with your legislators. There are many other opportunities for you to advocate on behalf of your hometown in your own community and in Columbia. Advocacy takes place 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and 365 days a year. You don't have to attend these to make a difference with your elected leaders, but here is a start.

Hometown Legislative Action Day

The Association presents the advocacy initiatives for cities and towns during the Hometown Legislative Action Day each year. This meeting gives municipal officials the chance to meet in Columbia with members of the South Carolina General Assembly and learn in-depth about the issues.

Regional Advocacy Meetings

In the fall, the Municipal Association's staff members travel to all parts of the state to gather information from municipal officials and share legislative strategy. Local officials share best practices to engage residents and business leaders while enjoying a good meal and fellowship.

SC Chamber of Commerce Grassroots Regional Meetings

Association staff, board members and local elected officials attend the SC Chamber grassroots meetings to have our voices heard by the business community on issues that impact our hometowns.

Advocacy Opportunities

Hometown Tours

Legislators gain a better understanding of the challenges of running a city or town when they see first-hand the programs and services you provide your residents and businesses. Invite your legislative delegation for a short tour of city programs and facilities highlighting successful public/private partnerships.

Advanced Municipal Elected Officials Institute of Government

Advanced Advocacy and Intergovernmental Relations Course

Elected officials advocate daily for residents, businesses and visitors in their hometowns across the state. Graduates of the Municipal Elected Officials Institute can participate in the Advanced Municipal Elected Officials Institute and take their legislative advocacy skills to another level with an in-depth training on State House leadership plus chamber rules and procedures to successfully navigate the legislative process on behalf of your hometown.

Participants get an insider's look at the State House with a behind-the-scenes tour to better familiarize themselves with how to find who around the capitol complex. This session goes beyond specific issues to examine the complexities of how a bill becomes law and the many rules that govern the process.

This is one for four classes required to complete the Advanced Municipal Elected Officials Institute.

Engaging Key Influencers

Who are key influencers?

Depending on the location and size of your city or town, a key influencer is going to be different. Key influencers are leaders in your community who are the “go to” people to get things done and can be an important partner in advocating for issues important to your residents and businesses.

Why do you need key influencers?

Start now to build long-term relationships with key influencers so you have long-range networks that can take action when called on to support the work of city and town officials and answer the call to action when legislation helps or hurts your city or town.

Here are some examples of key influencers:

- Business owners (local retail store owners, industry executives, local farmers)
- Local faith leaders
- Local school and education leaders (school board members, teachers, parents)
- Retirees
- Local media (television journalists, radio personalities, newspaper reporters, bloggers and editorial board members)
- Leaders in local nonprofit organizations

How do you engage key influencers?

1. Gather names and addresses of different types of key leaders in your community.

Remember: This does not happen overnight. Building your database and gathering correct names, current addresses and email addresses is an ongoing process that needs constant attention and work.



Tip – Ask each city councilmember to submit five names of people who are key leaders in the community

Engaging Key Influencers

2. Send handwritten notes to all of the key leaders on your list inviting them to an engagement session at city hall.

Remember: All you want from these key influencers initially is their input on the progress and future of your hometown. This is not a planning session toward a specific project or initiative.

Set up a breakfast or lunch engagement session, provide a meal and plan for a facilitator to lead the key influencers in a discussion of strengths, weaknesses and future progress of your hometown.

Ideally, you will want to have an outside person facilitate the meeting to keep the discussion from getting off track. The role of the mayor and councilmembers attending the meeting is to stay quiet and listen.

3. After the meeting, send a personal (ideally handwritten) note to all participants thanking them for attending and including them on future meetings.
4. Continue to keep these key influencers involved by sending them positive newspaper articles, inviting them to city events, and keeping them updated on legislative issues and how they affect your city or town. Consider forwarding the Association's weekly legislative update to this group.

What should I send to key leaders?

- A handwritten note from you
- Copies of a current newsletter or e-newsletter
- Positive newspaper articles about your city or town, editorials in major newspapers, and opinion columns from other business and community leaders
- Notices of awards your city or town receives (community certificates, personal leadership)

Remember: You don't have to send all of these materials at once. Set up a monthly mailing schedule to your key leaders where they get important newspaper articles, newsletters or invitations.

Tip – Have someone outside of your office read over your materials for typos and number checks. Always be the provider of accurate information!



Engaging Key Influencers

Important to remember - No matter what the community leader does for you, always say “thank you” in person and with a personal (ideally handwritten) thank-you note.

If you have already established relationships with key influencers and want to keep them engaged and invested in your city:

- Keep them informed with newsletters, e-mails and newspaper articles
- Invite them to attend city council meetings
- Ask them to write or co-author opinion columns for your local newspaper
- Always say “thank you” and recognize efforts of your advocates

Establish yourself as the best source of honest and accurate information on issues regarding your city or town. You want your key influencers to contact YOU FIRST with a question or a comment on an issue.

What can your key influencers do for you?

Once you have your grassroots network in place, there are specific times to activate this base of support. During the legislative session, your key community leaders can represent your city or town with accuracy but from a non-government perspective.

Ask them to advocate on your behalf by

1. Supporting legislation at the state level
2. Building community awareness
3. Writing editorials
4. Attending special events
5. Attending engagement sessions
6. Speaking out on issues important to the city

Municipal Association Legislative Tracking System

The Municipal Association's legislative tracking system allows for detailed searching and tracking of daily legislative activity. Whether you are interested in just a general overview of weekly activity or the language and history of a specific bill, searching is easy. Access the tracking system from the legislative link on the Association's homepage.

Features include

- Search for bills the Association is tracking by topic, legislator introducing the bill, weekly activity or monitoring level.
- Scroll down to the current week's keyword entry (Week of 1.26, for example) to get the most up-to-date information as it becomes available to the Association's staff.
- See the Association's staff comments on bills and get daily updates on committee and floor activity.
- Access past weekly reports by scrolling to the bottom of the "bills by subject" box and clicking on a week.
- Click on the "comments" button to send staff an email with your feedback about specific bills.
- Contact your own legislators directly from the site (click on the "officials" link).
- Bookmark the tracking page directly at www.ciclt.net/masc.

Definitions of monitoring levels

- **Priority** – important issues that the Municipal Association is proactively working that directly affect cities and towns
- **Work** – bills related to the Municipal Association's advocacy initiatives
- **Of Interest** – issues that would have peripheral effect on municipalities in general, or issues that are specific to only certain municipalities
- **Graveyard** – companion or similar bills that are currently inactive or idle
- **Passed** – bills that have passed both the House of Representatives and the Senate

Legislative Tracking



State House Insider

Working the State House lobby

If I'm going to the State House, what do I do?

The lobby at the South Carolina State House is a very busy place. Full of legislators, lobbyists, constituents, staff, students and tour groups, the lobby can be an intimidating and confusing area to effectively communicate with your legislators. Here's the trick: know exactly where you are going, what to do when you get there and what you are going to say.

Why is this important? As a constituent and a key influencer yourself, you have the most important voice your legislator can hear. The number of people who make State House visits is also critical in showing broad support for key issues that affect cities and towns.

Quick tips

Turn off your cell phone and empty your pockets of all weapons, including pocket knives. Security is still tight to enter the State House, and the guards will confiscate any type of knife. Cell phone ringers must be off in the lobby and especially in the galleries.

Where do I park?

If you are a local elected official or staff, you can park in the Municipal Association's garage at 1411 Gervais Street on floors 4 and above.

Where do I go?

When you walk up the stairs from the visitor's entrance (Sumter Street), the Senate chambers are on your left and the House chambers are on your right. There are security officers on either side to prevent anyone from going behind the velvet rope. The front door of the State House leading onto the front steps is locked from the outside. The door leading to the back steps is accessible only to legislators and staff. The governor and lieutenant governor's offices are on the first level when you enter from the Sumter Street entrance, as well as the gift shop, auditorium and restrooms.

Phone numbers

Phone numbers for the House and Senate desks located in the lobby are:

House Desk: 803.734.2402

Senate Desk: 803.212.6700

To contact your legislator in his/her office before you arrive, visit the Association's tracking system Web page for phone numbers and office locations.

State House Insider

What do I do?

There is a desk where an assistant and pages (college students interning for members) sit. This is where you go to get a legislator out of session. Fill out your request form ahead of time (you can also fill it out when you get there; they will have plenty) and hand it to the assistant. She will give it to a page who will deliver the message to your legislator. You then wait in the lobby near the Senate or House chamber door for your member to come out.

What do I say?

You can always bet that there are at least five other people who want to speak to your legislators as bad as you do! So keep your message short and to the point. Keep their attention and get your point across in five sentences or less (or no longer than two minutes). Give them a copy of the Association's advocacy initiatives. Here are a couple of sample points that will give you an idea of how to frame your message.

- Connect your "ask" on a particular bill back to the hometown you and your legislator both represent.
- Use stories, numbers and statistics to reenforce your point.

Be sure to ask your legislator to introduce you from the floor of the chamber.

State House Insider

After you talk with your legislators in the lobby

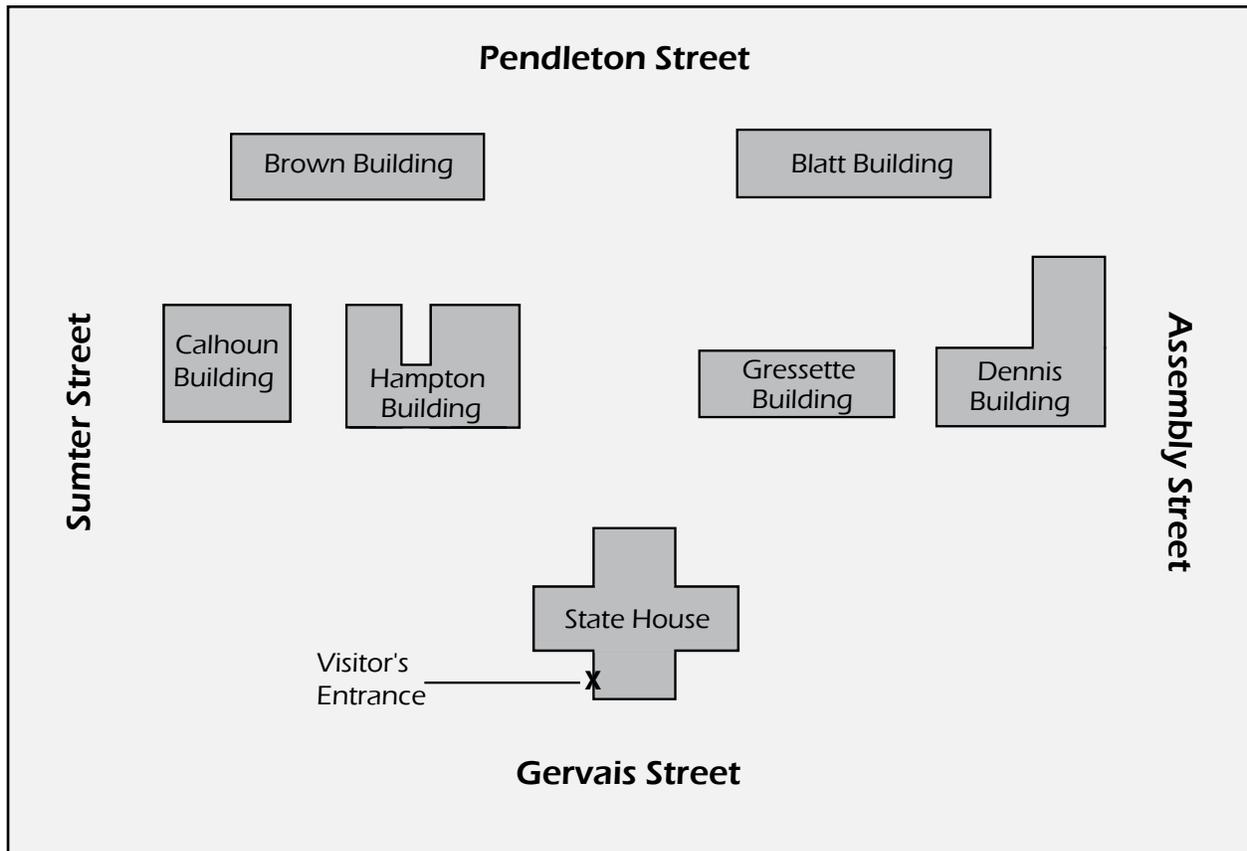
You may walk up the stairs and sit in the gallery of either chamber. This is an area that overlooks the floor so you can watch debates and all the action. You must turn off your cell phone and remain quiet during your time in the gallery. If your legislators know that you are coming to Columbia, they may want to officially introduce you to other members by making the introduction from the floor. He or she will ask you to sit in the gallery and wait for your introduction. You will be asked to stand and be recognized. Members will applaud, and you can sit down.

When you get home

- Take a few minutes to write a follow-up thank you note.
- Stay in touch with your legislators about these issues. Don't wait until we need their help to talk with them.
- Share what you heard in Columbia with other members of council and your local key influencers.

State House Grounds

Map of the grounds of the South Carolina State House



Communicate with Legislators

Communicating with your legislators

The basics

Developing a relationship with your legislators before asking for something (money in the budget or support/oppose legislation) is critical to the success of your advocacy efforts. At your first meeting, introduce yourself, your city or town, and the services it provides. Say thank you for all of their hard work. After all, you know how much work it takes to be a public official. It's always easier to say thank you before you say please.

■ **Build grassroots support**

Make sure you keep your city residents, key influencers and businesses informed about the issues. Explain the issue and have a periodic legislative report at council meetings. Also, make sure residents and businesses know what services the city provides. Write a column for your local paper or develop a newsletter reporting on the value of the services provided by your city or town. Encourage residents who express thanks to you for a job well-done to share it as a letter to the editor in your local paper.

■ **Don't be a stranger**

First, get to know your legislators. Don't jump in with the heavy issues before you've gotten to know them. If at all possible, your first contact should be in person, not by phone or letter. At that first meeting, find out what issues they're interested in and their political views. Give them the background facts on your community and your local government. Host your delegation on a hometown tour. (*See page 5.*)

■ **Remember you serve the same people**

You and your legislators have one important thing in common – you serve the same constituents. You all are elected officials, dedicated to serving the public's interest, not a special interest. You make a strong point when connecting your issue to the people you serve rather than explaining its impact on the “impersonal” municipal government.

■ **Know both sides of the issue**

Before you talk to your legislator about an issue, you need to know the facts about the issue. And you need to know both the pros and the cons of the issue. Otherwise, you won't be able to effectively counter the arguments against your position. The Association can provide background on the issues through its monthly newsletter, weekly *From the Dome to Your Home*, website and other communications.

Communicate with Legislators

■ Understand the legislative process

It is a lengthy process for a bill to become a law. It usually goes through one or more legislative committees before ending up on the House or the Senate floor. After a bill passes one side, it must pass the other. After it passes both the House and the Senate, a compromise must be worked out if the two versions differ.

■ Express your opinion

Don't be afraid to frankly state your opinion on legislation that may affect your city or town. Don't be abrasive, however. Don't exaggerate or overstate the facts. This will undermine your credibility.

■ Stay on message

Have one idea in mind you want to communicate, and avoid bombarding your legislator with lots of general issues at once. Make your case and ask specifically for what you want. When appropriate, weave the message that strong cities are critical to the state's competitiveness into all of your communications with your legislators.

■ All politics is local

Show your legislators the local effects of a bill or proposal. Be as specific and as factual as you can be. For example, there really isn't a statewide recycling effort, but rather hundreds of local recycling programs. All politics is local.

■ Timing is everything

Calling a legislator to ask him or her to consider the municipal point of view doesn't do much good if the votes have already been cast. Every bill goes through a committee process and along the legislative way, contacting the right person at the right time is all important. Weekly updates in *From the Dome to Your Home* or a call to the Municipal Association staff can help you get the timing right.

Communicate with Legislators

Making contact

Personal contact with your legislator is always the best way to make contact and get across your point. Taking councilmembers, residents and business leaders with you to a personal meeting is even better. Get to know your legislators' staff. They are the people closest to the official. If you can't schedule a meeting, send a hand-written note on your personal stationery to the legislators' office, home or business. Always be concise and to the point in your writing. Email is fast but generally not as effective.

■ Should you meet, call or write?

It depends on how much time is available. Meetings – face-to-face contacts – are best, when there's time. Calling is the next best method. Letters can be effective when they are short and have original, specific details about how the issue affects you.

When you get a chance to meet with the legislators, have your facts together. Be as brief and to the point as you can. Be sure to identify the bill by number and subject. (There are hundreds of bills introduced each session.) Put the issue in your own words and again, talk about the local impact.

Follow the same procedures when phoning a legislator. Also, it's often a good idea to identify yourself and your municipality more than once during the conversation so the legislator will remember you.

Ask for the legislator's cell phone number and ask if they prefer to receive text messages.

Each legislator should get an individually addressed letter. Again, refer to the legislation by bill number and subject.

■ Relationship with legislative staff

A positive relationship with a legislator's staff can be just as beneficial as a relationship with the legislator. Establishing yourself as a timely and trustworthy source of information to the staff will pay off.

■ Resolutions

A resolution about a specific legislative issue passed by your council can be effective because it shows that your governing board supports a position. However, don't just send the resolution to a legislator without a personal letter explaining your position. Also send a copy of the resolution to your local paper, post it on the city website and Tweet/Facebook the information.

Communicate with Legislators

- **Giving credit and saying thanks**
Thank you is a neglected phrase these days. Whenever a legislator supports your position, say thank you. Drop him a short note. Better yet, thank her publicly in your hometown. Give credit wherever appropriate. Invite them to see the good results of their legislative work. Invite them to your council meeting to thank them in person, or say it in a letter to the editor in the local paper.
- **Make it personal**
Make sure the letter is written in your own words. Don't use a form letter. Legislators pay more attention to a personal letter than a form letter. Even though the Municipal Association may provide you with a sample letter, don't use it word-for-word.
- **Be accurate**
Be sure to use the correct salutation and address. Spell the legislator's name correctly.
- **Make your point**
Be brief, specific and to the point. Send a separate letter on each issue or bill you want to discuss. Legislators often maintain a file for each bill or significant issue, so separate letters help them.
- **Be sure of your facts**
Make sure you understand the bill or issue. You can call the Association staff for background or information. The weekly *From the Dome to Your Home* and monthly *Uptown* newsletter are good sources of information. The Municipal Association maintains an index of articles on its website.
- **Give the local angle**
Tell how a bill or an issue specifically affects your city or town. Be as detailed as you can. Give the legislator your opinions. Use Municipal Association information for facts and background.
- **Don't exaggerate**
Be honest and straightforward. Don't exaggerate or overstate your case. Avoid a threatening or abrasive tone.

Communicate with Legislators

Follow-up

Just like writing a thank you note after you receive a birthday gift, writing a thank you note to your legislator is an important part of the relationship development. After a meeting or phone call, take a minute to write a thank you note to your legislator. Send an email to the Municipal Association staff to report any important information.

- **Additional information**

If the legislator asks for more information, furnish it as soon as possible. An Association staff member can help you with additional information, research and localizing statewide legislation.

- **Contact with other members of the General Assembly**

When you write someone other than one of your legislators, send a copy of the letter to your legislators. For example, you write a committee chair in support of a bill. Send copies to your legislators so they will know your position.

- **Keep the Municipal Association informed**

Let the Association staff know of your efforts and the reactions of your legislators. This will help us do our job better.

- **Ask for action**

Ask your legislator to take specific action and ask for a reply. Let him or her know what action you would like taken. There is always something a concerned legislator can do. Asking for a reply can help get a response.

- **Use the media for thank you notes**

Legislators read local newspapers from cover to cover. Write a thank you note in the form of a letter to the editor and submit it to your local paper. All of your residents will have a chance to see how much you appreciate the legislator's support.

Top 10 keys to correspondence with your legislators

1. Spell the name correctly.
2. Do not send a form letter - personalize it, preferably hand-written.
3. Make sure you have the correct address:
 - a. Office in Senate (Gressette Building) or House of Representatives (Blatt Building)
 - b. Office in the legislator's district.
 - c. Home
4. Address the legislator as Senator or Representative _____, not by the first name. If you are on a first name basis with your legislator, add a P.S. with a personal note using the first name.
5. Identify where you live. This will let the legislator know you live in his district.
6. In a very clear, concise manner, let your legislators know what you are requesting.
7. Tell her briefly why you want her to support your issue or budget request.
8. Ask him to please respond on how he will vote on your request.
9. Thank her for her consideration. Thank her for the job she is doing for the district.
10. Tell him you look forward to seeing him in the near future.

Communicate with Legislators

SC General Assembly

The South Carolina General Assembly - everything you need to know to be a good advocate for cities and towns

The South Carolina General Assembly is composed of two chambers:

- Senate
- House of Representatives

The South Carolina General Assembly meets once a year. The session begins the second Tuesday in January and ends the first Thursday in June. The General Assembly meets on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday to take up statewide matters and on Friday for local matters. Committee meetings are held either in the mornings before the session starts or after the session adjourns in the afternoon.

Senate Standing Committees

- ◆ Agriculture and Natural Resources
- ◆ Banking and Insurance
- ◆ Corrections and Penology
- ◆ Education
- ◆ Ethics
- ◆ Finance
- ◆ Fish, Game and Forestry
- ◆ General
- ◆ Interstate Cooperation
- ◆ Invitations
- ◆ Judiciary
- ◆ Labor, Commerce and Industry
- ◆ Medical Affairs
- ◆ Rules
- ◆ Transportation

South Carolina Senate

The South Carolina Senate is composed of 46 senators elected from single-member districts.

Senators are elected in even-numbered years for terms of four years.

The lieutenant governor serves as president of the Senate. The president of the Senate presides over the Senate, makes rulings on points of order and casts a vote in the event of a tie.

The president pro tempore is a senator elected by the Senate to serve as the president in case of the president's absence.

The majority leader is elected by the majority party to be its leader.

The minority leader is elected by the minority party to be its leader.

There are 15 standing, or permanent committees, in the Senate. Other special or select committees may be designated to handle specific legislation or conflicts between the House of Representatives' version of a bill and the Senate's version of a bill. These committees are called either "ad hoc" or "conference" committees.

Senate rules are very important in governing the business of the body.

South Carolina House of Representatives

The South Carolina House of Representatives has 124 members elected in even-numbered years for two-year terms.

The speaker of the house, who is elected by the House membership, leads the House of Representatives. The speaker appoints committee members.

A majority leader and a minority leader are elected by the membership of the House of Representatives.

There are 13 standing committees in the House of Representatives.

House rules govern the House of Representatives.

SC General Assembly

House Standing Committees

- ◆ Agriculture, Natural Resources and Environmental Affairs
- ◆ Education and Public Works
- ◆ Ethics
- ◆ Interstate Cooperation
- ◆ Invitations and Memorial Resolutions
- ◆ Judiciary
- ◆ Labor, Commerce, and Industry
- ◆ Legislative Oversight
- ◆ Medical, Military, Public and Municipal Affairs
- ◆ Operations and Management
- ◆ Regulation and Administrative Procedures
- ◆ Rules
- ◆ Ways and Means

Important Terms

Important terms

1. **Act** – legislation enacted into law. A bill passed by both houses of the General Assembly, enrolled, ratified, signed by the governor or passed over the governor’s veto or becomes law without his signature. An act is a permanent measure having the force of law until repealed.
2. **Adjournment** – the end of the session for the day, with the hour and the day of the next meeting set before adjournment.
3. **Adoption** – approval or acceptance of an amendment, resolution or bill.
4. **Amendment** – any change made or proposed in a bill by adding, changing, substituting or omitting language.
5. **Appropriations bill** – legislation that allocates funds from the state treasury to various departments of government for specific use.
6. **Bicameral** – a legislature containing two houses. (i.e., Senate and House of Representatives)
7. **Bill** – a draft of a proposed law presented to the legislature for consideration.
8. **Budget** – suggested allocation of state funds presented to the legislature for consideration. The governor is the first to draft a budget.
9. **Calendar** – list of pending legislation, according to the order of business scheduled for consideration by the rules on a legislative day. Printed daily and placed on members’ desks. Available daily from www.scstatehouse.gov.
10. **Caucus** – an informal meeting of a group of the members of the House of Representatives or Senate with a common interest.
11. **Chair** – designation of a presiding officer or chairperson of a committee.
12. **Chamber** – the hall for the meeting of a legislative body.

Important Terms

13. **Committee** – members appointed to consider and recommend disposition of bills, resolutions and other related matters.
14. **Committee, ad hoc** – committee appointed for a specific purpose. An ad hoc committee dissolves upon the completion of that specified task.
15. **Concurrence** – an agreement where one house agrees to a proposal or action that the other house has approved.
16. **Concurrent resolution** – a legislative measure used to express the general sentiment of the House and Senate. Concurrent resolutions are not submitted to the governor and do not have the force of law.
17. **Conferees** – three members of the Senate and three members of the House appointed to a conference committee.
18. **Conference Committee** – composed of three members of the Senate and three members of the House appointed by the presiding officers to resolve differences between the two chambers on an amended bill.
19. **Conference Report** – written notice from a conference committee to the House and Senate of action taken in committee on the bill.
20. **District** – the area of the state represented by a legislator. Each district is determined by population and is known by a number. There are 46 senate districts and 124 house districts.
21. **Division Vote** – vote taken by standing in the Senate or by a 30-second roll call in the House, with no record other than the total recorded in the journal.
22. **Filibuster** – a strategy by which a member can control the floor through extended debate on a measure thus delaying or preventing passage.
23. **First Reading** – the introduction of the bill and the first of three readings.
24. **Fiscal Year** – the accounting period of 12 months. State government runs July 1 through June 30.

Important Terms

25. **Floor** – the portion of the General Assembly chamber reserved for members and officers.
26. **Free Conference Committee** – same as the conference committee except with additional power to insert new matter into the legislation to achieve a compromise. Free conference powers are granted by two-thirds vote of the membership of each house.
27. **Germaneness** – the relevance or appropriateness of amendments, speeches, etc.
28. **Joint Session/Assembly** – a meeting of the House and Senate usually in the House chamber. It is called by resolution for specific purposes such as elections or speeches.
29. **Journal** – a record of the previous day’s proceedings, including messages, roll calls, remarks made by members that are requested to be printed and action taken on all legislation considered that day. Available daily from www.scstatehouse.gov.
30. **Majority Leader** – a member of the majority party elected to be leader by members of the party.
31. **Majority Vote** – a vote of more than half of the legislative body considering a measure.
32. **Minority Leader** – a member of the minority party elected to be the leader by members of the party.
33. **Motion** – formal proposal offered by a member during a committee hearing or floor session.
34. **Point of Order** – a motion calling attention to a breach of order or of the rules.
35. **Point of Personal Privilege** – a statement defending the rights, reputation or conduct of a legislator in his or her official capacity.
36. **President Pro Tempore of the Senate** – the designated officer acting in the absence of the regular presiding officer, the lieutenant governor.

Important Terms

37. **Quorum** – the required number of members present to conduct business.
38. **Ratify** – sign or give formal consent to legislation making it officially valid.
39. **Reading** – presentation of a bill before the Senate or House by reading the title. A bill is either in first, second or third reading until passed by both houses.
40. **Reapportionment** – redivision of citizens into equally populated election districts, based on the census.
41. **Recess** – intermission in a daily session.
42. **Reconsideration** – a motion giving the opportunity to take another vote on the item in question. The motion for reconsideration must be accepted by a majority of the members present and voting.
43. **Resolution** – an opinion expressed by one or both bodies but does not have the force of law.
44. **Roll Call** – the recorded vote on an issue. In the House, roll calls are taken by an electronic voting system connected to the individual members' desk switches. In the Senate, roll calls are taken by voice vote, with the names of the members being called in alphabetical order by the reading clerk.
45. **Rules** – methods of legislative procedure. Joint rules govern both chambers. Senate or House rules regulate only the one chamber.
46. **Second Reading** – each bill introduced must be read three times before final passage. Second reading occurs after a bill has been reported from committee.
47. **Sine Die** – final adjournment. Its literal meaning is adjournment without delay.
48. **Speaker of the House** – the presiding officer in the House of Representatives, elected by the membership.

Important Terms

49. **Speaker Pro Tempore of the House** – substitute presiding officer, taking the chair on request of the speaker in his absence. Elected by the membership.
50. **Special Order** – matter of business set for designated time and day.
51. **Sponsor** – legislator who introduces a bill, amendment or resolution.
52. **Standing Committee** – regular committees of the legislature, set up by the rules to perform certain legislative functions.
53. **Table** – a means of disposing of a bill or other matter.
54. **Take a Walk** – to purposely be absent to avoid voting on a measure.
55. **Third Reading** – occurs when the measure is about to be taken up on the floor of either house for final passage.
56. **Unfunded Mandates** – any provision of legislation that imposes a responsibility on a state, locality or tribal government, for which adequate funding to carry out the responsibility is not appropriated.
57. **Veto** – the action of a governor in disapproval of a measure. On its return to the legislature, each house either sustains the veto or overrides it. To override means to pass the bill over the governor’s veto. Sustain means to agree with the governor’s veto.
58. **Voice Vote** – oral expression of the members when a question is submitted for their determination. Response is given by “ayes” and “nays.” The presiding officer states his decision as to which side prevailed.

Stay in the loop

The Municipal Association offers many different ways to stay informed on important advocacy opportunities as well as keeps you in the loop with newspaper stories and media opportunities. Using primarily websites and emails, the Association gives members several ways to receive information about legislative activity.

Legislative Tracking System

This online system allows up-to-the-minute updates on committee activity, floor debate and bill introductions.

From the Dome to Your Home

Emailed every Friday during the legislative session to all municipal officials, *From the Dome to Your Home* covers the week's action in the State House along with new bill introductions, committee activity and other important information.

Uptown

This monthly newsletter reports on local government issues, legislative concerns, affiliate associations' activities and innovative programs of member municipalities.

Daily News Clips

Emailed every morning, the daily news clips is an Association news service that gives a quick overview of news articles from around the state related to municipal government and municipal legislative issues. Visit www.masc.sc (keyword: Daily Clips) to subscribe.

City Connect blog

The Association launched *City Connect* as a way to package information in a "quick read" format for local officials. Topics are timely and often related to issues being considered at the SC State House or on Capitol Hill. Visit www.masc.sc (keyword: City Connect) to subscribe.

Cities Mean Business magazine

The Association and *SC Biz* magazine, a statewide business publication, publish a semi-annual magazine to spotlight how strong cities are important contributors to the state's economic success. Targeted to business leaders and policy makers statewide, *Cities Mean Business* has a circulation of 15,000 readers and features stories about city-led initiatives to boost the local and regional economy.

Uptown Update

This weekly newsletter keeps officials updated on upcoming meetings, legislative news and other topics of interest.

Stay In The Loop



Legislative Committee

Affiliates

Association of South Carolina
Mayors

Municipal Court Administration
Association of SC

Municipal Technology
Association of SC

SC Association of Municipal
Power Systems

SC Association of Stormwater
Managers

SC Business Licensing
Officials Association

SC Community Development
Association

SC Municipal Finance Officers,
Clerks and Treasurers Association

SC Municipal Attorneys Association

SC Municipal Human Resources
Association

SC Utility Billing Association

Municipal Association of South Carolina Legislative Committee

Members of the Municipal Association legislative committee guide the advocacy initiatives of the Association for the upcoming year. Committee members represent elected officials and municipal employees from big cities to small towns. Presidents of the Association's 11 affiliates are also on the committee along with the presidents of the SC Police Chiefs Association, SC Association of Fire Chiefs, Recreation and Parks Association, the SC Water Quality Association and the SC City County Managers Association.

Municipal Association of South Carolina Advocacy and Communications Department

The Municipal Association advocacy and communications department serves as your eyes and ears at the State House as well as in the media. Technical assistance questions, lobbying, press management, newsletters, research, graphic design and legislative tracking are just a few of the services this department provides to members. Staff is available to answer questions and provide information that you need.

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