

# APIC LEGISLATIVE MANUAL



APIC DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC POLICY

# FROM THE AUTHOR

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This manual has been created by the APIC Department of Public Policy to help encourage both individual and Chapter involvement in the federal policy-making arena. This user-friendly tool contains most, if not all of the information, background, and step-by-step instructions necessary to become involved and effectively make an impact on public policy.

We hope, through this manual, to emphasize the important role individuals play in APIC's overall policy efforts — and to facilitate that involvement so that outcomes are both personally and professionally satisfying.

I offer my special thanks and appreciation to those volunteer leaders who have played such an instrumental role in our advocacy efforts over the years by offering their clinical expertise on a host of key issues: Sue Sebazco, Rachel Stricof, Julie Savoy, Julie Rish McCord, and Loretta Fauerbach.

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## FROM THE COVER

Image: The Capitol Building, Washington, DC

Description: The Capitol Building houses Congress, made up of the Senate and the House of Representatives.

Source: DC Convention & Visitors Bureau (2002)

# CONTENTS

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<b>INTRODUCTION .....</b>	<b>V</b>
<b>SECTION ONE: WHAT IS PPT? .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<i>Developing a National Stance .....</i>	1
<i>Promoting a Grassroots Approach .....</i>	1
<i>Mission Statement.....</i>	1
<i>Chapter Legislative Representatives .....</i>	2
<b>SECTION TWO: PPT RESOURCES .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<i>Action Alerts .....</i>	3
<i>Position Statements .....</i>	3
<i>Legislative and Regulatory Initiatives .....</i>	3
<i>Development of APIC Chapter Position Papers .....</i>	3
<b>SECTION THREE: GRASSROOTS .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<i>What is Lobbying? .....</i>	5
<i>Grassroots Advocacy.....</i>	6
<i>The Legislative Branch .....</i>	6
<i>How Laws Are Made .....</i>	7
<i>Floor Action .....</i>	7
<i>Presidential Action .....</i>	8
<i>The Executive Branch .....</i>	9
<i>The Judicial Branch .....</i>	9
<i>Cultivating Contacts .....</i>	10
<i>How to Get Your Foot in the Door .....</i>	10
<i>Your Role as a Constituent.....</i>	10
<i>Serving as a Resource .....</i>	11
<i>Beyond the Basics: Identifying Future Legislative Champions .....</i>	12
<i>Where to Get Information .....</i>	12
<i>Online Resource List.....</i>	13
<i>State Government Web Sites .....</i>	14
<i>How to Write an Effective Letter to a Member of Congress .....</i>	14
<i>Meeting with a Member of Congress .....</i>	15
<i>Tips to Ensure Success.....</i>	16
<b>APPENDIX: GLOSSARY OF TERMS .....</b>	<b>A</b>

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## INTRODUCTION

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The APIC Public Policy Program graciously thanks you for offering your energy and talents to serve as a Chapter Legislative Representative (CLR) for APIC. We are confident that your experience as a CLR will prove to be valuable for you, your Chapter, the APIC National Organization, and most importantly — the infection control profession. As a CLR, you will work with your Chapter members and the Public Policy Team to influence federal policy that directly impacts the practice of infection control and the provision of quality health care.

Chapters are an integral component of APIC’s overall public policy program. Grassroots advocacy (the most important form of political advocacy) is performed at the local or “grassroots” level by individuals. Elected officials are our voices in Congress, however many individuals do not realize that elected officials actually look to constituents to help identify issues and areas for creating public policy. The solitary voice of one constituent is as powerful or more powerful than that of a large national interest group. By mobilizing our grassroots (our individual members), APIC as a national organization can appeal directly to individual elected officials, and thereby influence public policy development.

Chapter Legislative Representatives serve as the major link between APIC’s Chapters and the Public Policy Team (PPT). This relationship is much more than a link, however; it is a dynamic partnership, reliant on effective coordination and communication between the Chapters and the APIC National Office. The success of the PPT’s many initiatives are highly dependent upon the support and energies of Chapter members, particularly the CLRs. The PPT works in concert with the APIC leadership and the APIC Department of Public Policy to identify opportunities for legislative and regulatory involvement.

APIC’s Department of Public Policy is responsible for issuing communications to keep Chapters apprised of the program’s various activities. CLRs are encouraged to contact the National Office to request additional information or receive issue updates before Chapter meetings. The communication resources available to CLRs through the National Office are outlined in this manual.

The Public Policy Team welcomes your participation in APIC’s exciting and growing governmental affairs program and we look forward to another productive and rewarding year of influencing public policy.



## SECTION ONE

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# WHAT IS PPT?

The PPT is APIC's Public Policy Team. This team monitors legislative and regulatory activities that influence the practice of infection control and epidemiology in a variety of health care settings. The team acts as a clearinghouse for APIC members to obtain information relating to legislative and regulatory issues and provides science-based information on infection prevention and control to policy makers.

### DEVELOPING A NATIONAL STANCE

Through the PPT, APIC provides testimony before Congress and various government agencies on issues germane to infection prevention and control. Through these efforts, APIC raises the national awareness and visibility of infection control practice. The PPT also assists the APIC Board of Directors in formulating position papers on issues of national interest. The PPT is represented in several national-level coalitions, such as the CDC Coalition, the Coalition to Fight Sexually Transmitted Diseases, and the National Coalition to Eliminate TB.

### PROMOTING A GRASSROOTS APPROACH

For many years, APIC members have influenced the legislative and regulatory processes at the federal, state, and local levels. APIC encourages its members to continue their involvement in grassroots advocacy, to ensure that policy makers have the information they need to implement sound and effective policy.

To assist members in their efforts, the PPT has created the APIC Legislative and Regulatory Initiatives, available online ([www.apic.org](http://www.apic.org)).

### MISSION STATEMENT

The APIC Public Policy Team is charged with the responsibility of monitoring and analyzing legislative and regulatory activity and recommending organizational action. In addition, the team is responsible for developing and presenting oral and written testimony to policy makers, drafting and revising the APIC legislative and regulatory initiatives, and assisting Chapters in addressing policy issues at the local, state, and national levels.

## CHAPTER LEGISLATIVE REPRESENTATIVES (CLR)

APIC Chapters are key in the activities of the PPT. Each APIC Chapter appoints a CLR who coordinates the various government affairs activities of the Chapter and serves as the Chapter's liaison to the PPT.

### SERVING AS A CLR

The following criteria have been developed for CLRs:

1. The CLR shall be appointed by the Chapter President for a term of one year with an option to renew the appointment.
2. The CLR must be an active member of APIC.
3. The CLR will report to the Chapter President and serve as the primary Chapter contact for the Public Policy Team (PPT) and the National Office.
4. The CLR should have an interest in learning about the legislative process.
5. The CLR should have access to e-mail to receive all communications and requests for action.

### POSITION DESCRIPTION FOR A CLR

The following Position Description has been developed for a CLR:

1. Address legislative and/or regulatory issues as directed by the Chapter President.
2. Interact with policy makers on behalf of the Chapter, on issues related to infection prevention and control practice.
3. Distribute materials and information from the PPT to Chapter members and recommend appropriate Chapter action.
4. Mobilize Chapter members to respond to issues, when requested by PPT, and provide follow-up to PPT or National Office as requested.
5. Respond to Action Alerts, Notices, and other communications in a timely manner or by the designated deadline.
6. Attend or arrange for a substitute to attend the annual CLR meeting during the APIC Annual Educational Conference and International Meeting.
7. Share major outcomes of Chapter grassroots efforts with the National Office.

## SECTION TWO

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# PPT RESOURCES

As a CLR, you have powerful resources available to you. This section identifies the various types of PPT Communications Resources, and explains each type in detail. CLRs are encouraged to contact Jennifer Thomas Barrows, Director of APIC's Public Policy Program, via e-mail prior to Chapter meetings, to get the latest information ([jthomas@apic.org](mailto:jthomas@apic.org)).

### ACTION ALERTS

Action Alerts are distributed to urge immediate member action on issues of serious concern. This type of communication consists of a cover memo highlighting the issue and the recommended course of action, such as directions for sending a letter or making a phone call to a Member of Congress. The Alerts also include a list of Talking Points to incorporate into the letter or phone call. Action Alerts are disseminated via broadcast e-mail.

### POSITION STATEMENTS

The APIC Board of Directors, as well as task forces such as the Practice Guidance Team, issue position statements on specific topics, designed for distribution to interested parties. These are usually posted to the APIC Web site.

### LEGISLATIVE AND REGULATORY INITIATIVES

The APIC Legislative and Regulatory Initiatives packet is designed to assist Chapters and members in understanding APIC's perspectives on key issues. The PPT is responsible for updating the legislative and regulatory initiatives. The information is updated annually to accommodate for the dynamic nature of policy and newly emerging issues of concern.

### DEVELOPMENT OF APIC CHAPTER POSITION PAPERS

A Position Paper is an element of legislative strategy used to persuade, communicate arguments, or motivate other groups. This document should summarize the background, the Chapter's position, and rationale for the relevant issue in no more than two pages. Related material may be attached. Here are some basic development guidelines:

1. Chapters may develop Position Papers on issues either addressed or not addressed by the APIC National Office and should be in the format approved by the Chapter.

2. If the Chapter wishes to develop a Chapter-specific position paper on an issue previously addressed by the APIC National Office, it should request a copy of the national APIC position statement, and develop a paper that does not conflict with the national position statement. The Position Paper should go through the regular Chapter approval process.
3. If the Chapter wishes to draft a Position Paper on a topic not previously addressed by National APIC, it should ascertain the national status on the issue and ensure that a position paper on the issue is not currently available through the national organization. The Chapter should then proceed with the development and approval process articulated by the Chapter by-laws.
4. The Chapter may submit its position papers to the PPT for review and input if it desires. However, this is not mandatory. Copies of the Chapter-specific Position Papers should be archived within the Chapter and made available to the Chapter members.

## SECTION THREE

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# GRASSROOTS

Knowledge is the key to sound policy making at both the state and federal levels. You, as an experienced infection control professional, possess knowledge and expertise that is invaluable to policymakers. This section is designed to assist you in appropriately and effectively imparting your expertise to effect positive change in health care policy — to strengthen and improve the health care system and the practice of infection prevention and control.

### WHAT IS LOBBYING?

Lobbying is a frequently misunderstood term — often times conjuring up negative images of well-heeled interest groups throwing their weight and money around to buy votes. Many groups avoid the term “lobbying” altogether, and instead euphemistically refer to their interaction with government as “advocacy.” However, it should be made clear that *any time you attempt to educate, advocate, or influence public policy makers, you are by law lobbying.* We need not hide from this concept — lobbying is a natural and necessary component in our democratic process. The first amendment of the United States Constitution reads as follows:

“Congress shall make no law... abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.”

In short, speak out! Participating in the process is much easier than you might think. We are all experienced lobbyists. Any time we attempt to persuade someone to do something, we are participating in a form of lobbying. In a job interview, for example, we lobby by persuading our potential employer that we are the best person for the job. We simply need to apply these skills to the public policy-making arena.

Most professional associations employ lobbyists to represent the interests of their members in Washington. At times, their interests may be in opposition to APIC’s stated position on an issue. Therefore, it is all the more important that our interests and concerns are heard; that we ask questions, offer solutions and debate results. This is especially crucial when decisions are being made that will affect the public health. Infection Control Professionals have valuable expertise that government officials need in order to make sound public policy decisions.

This section explains the basics of grassroots advocacy, or lobbying — from the definition of terms to the actual steps in the process. While the focus of this section is on federal-level advocacy, this information is also applicable to state-level activity. Whatever the scope of your involvement, APIC encourages you to participate in the process, and we hope you will call upon the National Office and the APIC Public Policy Team if we may be of assistance to you in your efforts. Remember that we are here for you.

## GRASSROOTS ADVOCACY

The term *grassroots* refers to the dedicated constituency or membership of a particular interest group. APIC's grassroots are its individual members, who respond both individually and as part of Chapter efforts to effect legislation and regulation. It is key to remember that Members of Congress absolutely *want* to hear from you. As a constituent, your vote is vitally important to the legislators' future political viability. Furthermore, any good legislator recognizes and appreciates the need for outside input on the policy that is taking shape in Congress. The goal here is to become a resource for legislators on infection control issues; someone whom they can call upon for background information or expert advice.

For example, a legislator may be trying to respond to a constituent inquiry that concerns infection control, yet that legislator does not have the background information necessary to do so. If you have established yourself as a reliable and factual resource, your expertise will become invaluable to the legislator and his or her staff. This is important, since legislators often need expert witnesses at hearings — they may ask you to recommend someone. They also may look to you to provide expert advice on the drafting of legislation that pertains to infection control. This is good preventive medicine, as your involvement may lead to the enactment of sounder policy.

Methods of grassroots political action include letter writing, telephone calls, personal visits, and educational campaigns. Educational campaigns are intended to bolster public awareness and involvement and thus have a more substantial impact on Members of Congress. Letter writing and personal visits allow you to convey your concerns and provide strong personal examples of how legislation would affect your health care practice and/or patient care.

For you to be most successful in your advocacy efforts, it is essential to have a basic idea of the legislative and regulatory processes. The federal government consists of three branches: the executive, the judicial, and the legislative.

## THE LEGISLATIVE BRANCH

The legislative branch, or Congress, is comprised of the U.S. Senate and the U.S. House of Representatives. Congress exists to create laws. The Senate also has the function of approving the ratification of treaties and nominations by the President and the exclusive authority to approve federal circuit court and Supreme Court nominations.

The legislative branch has responsibility for listening and responding to the needs of the nation's citizens. The population of each state determines representation in the House of Representatives. House Members typically represent a district of approximately 500,000 to

600,000 people. The House of Representatives consists of 435 Members who are elected to two-year terms. All House Members are up for re-election every two years.

By contrast, two Senators are elected from each state, each representing the entire state. Senators serve a six-year term; this means that every two years, one-third of the Senate is up for re-election. The District of Columbia has a *shadow senator*, but this individual has no voting power and limited participation in the Senate.

## HOW LAWS ARE MADE

When Congress is in session, any Member may introduce legislation, or a *bill*, on virtually any subject matter. These legislative measures either create new programs or propose changes in existing laws. Private organizations can initiate legislation by gaining the support of a Member who agrees to introduce a bill on behalf of the organization's interests.

Once a bill has been introduced, it is referred to a *committee* that has jurisdiction over the issue that the measure addresses. If the bill addresses several issues, it may be referred to more than one committee. Often, the bill is referred to a relevant *subcommittee* of that full committee. Subcommittee consideration is usually necessary for the bill to eventually receive full committee action.

If the Chair of the subcommittee has sufficient interest in the bill, he or she will schedule hearings to gather more information on the issue. The Chair may be more inclined to act on a measure if he or she has received letters from constituents in support of the bill or if other Members of the subcommittee demonstrate an interest in the issue (they may have heard from *their* constituents). If the Chair of a subcommittee decides to hold a hearing, often the witnesses are chosen from his or her district or state. Hearing witnesses may also include other Members of Congress, state or federal agency officials, and experts from various interest groups.

Hearings are usually held to educate Members on specific issues so that they can be more informed when making policy decisions. Following committee hearings, the subcommittee begins the process of *mark-up*. This process consists of actually marking up the legislation — rewriting or re-arranging sections, adding and deleting language, as the entire bill is worked through. At this time, amendments agreed to by the subcommittee are incorporated into the bill, which, in the case of approval, is voted out of the subcommittee and referred to the full committee.

Additional hearings may be held at the full committee level and additional amendments may be incorporated in full committee mark-up sessions. If an amendment is not successfully incorporated at the subcommittee level, it has a second chance in full committee. When the full committee completes its work on a bill, the bill is *ordered reported* or *reported out* to the full House or Senate for a vote.

## FLOOR ACTION

A bill, after it has been reported out of committee, may then go to the Floor for consideration. In the Senate, the time for Floor debate and consideration on a measure is

unlimited, and amendments - both germane and nongermane - may be offered at any time. In the House, where there are 435 Members, more than four times the composition of the Senate, there is a more elaborate set of rules to maintain control of the debate.

In the House, before a bill goes to the Floor for action, it first goes to the Rules Committee, which controls the flow of bills to the House Floor. The Rules Committee determines how long debate on a bill will last, how many amendments will be considered, and when votes will occur. Once a bill is passed, it is forwarded to the other chamber where the entire legislative process is repeated.

If both chambers ultimately pass identical bills, the measure is immediately delivered to the President for signature. However, if the House- and Senate-passed versions differ substantively, a conference committee is convened to work out those differences. A conference or compromise bill and report are then submitted to the full House and Senate and must gain approval from both chambers before being sent to the President. If the conferees fail to reach agreement, or if either chamber refuses the conference agreement, the bill dies.

#### PRESIDENTIAL ACTION

The President has ten days (excluding Sundays) to act on a bill, once it has been delivered to the White House. The President may do any one of the following:

- *Approve the legislation*  
The bill then becomes law the day it is signed, unless the bill specifies a later date.
- *Approve the legislation by doing nothing*  
When Congress is in session, the bill becomes law if the President takes no action within ten days.
- *Pocket veto the legislation*  
This only occurs when legislation is passed near or at the end of a session of Congress and adjournment occurs before the President has had ten days to consider the measure. In this case, the bill dies.
- *Line-item veto provisions of the legislation*  
The President line-item vetoes (refuses specific provisions of) a bill and then sends it back to Congress for redraft or veto override by two-thirds majority in both chambers.
- *Veto the legislation*  
The President returns the entire bill to Congress without his signature, within ten days. Congress may attempt to override the bill, with two-thirds majority in both houses. In this case, the measure becomes law. Otherwise, the bill dies.

Bills that become public laws are assigned a public law number that corresponds to the Congress and the order in which the bill was enacted. For example, Public Law 105-12 would represent the 12th public law enacted in the 105th Congress.

The length of time it can take for a bill to become a law varies a great deal. Some bills may be

enacted in a matter of hours, as in times of national emergency; others may undergo years of debate, re-introduction, and re-drafting before finally becoming enacted. The magnitude of bills introduced in each Congress dramatically dwarfs the number of bills that ultimately become law. For example, in the standard two-year life of the 104th Congress, there were 5,590 bills and resolutions introduced - and a paltry 337 of these ultimately became law. During the 102nd Congress, approximately 11,700 bills and resolutions were introduced, but only 590 of those became public law. The majority of legislation that is introduced will never become law and likely will never even see any action in committee.

### THE FEDERAL REGULATORY PROCESS: EXECUTIVE BRANCH

After a bill is passed in Congress and signed into law by the President, it is up to the executive branch to implement the provisions of those laws by crafting and issuing standards or *regulations*. Regulations first take the form of a *proposed rule* and are published for public comment in the *Federal Register*. During the public comment period, organizations and individuals provide input to, or *lobby*, regulatory officials on issues of concern in the proposed rule.

Early in the process, the agency publishes a notice of proposed rule making in the *Federal Register*. This notice generally includes the text of the proposed regulations or a description of the issues involved in a particular area that is to be regulated. The agency also invites public comment on the proposal, usually imposing a deadline of anywhere from 30 to 120 days.

Occasionally, the public comment period also includes the opportunity to testify at public hearings. After the comment period, the agency uses the information that has been gathered and makes changes to the proposed rule as it deems appropriate. The content of the final regulation may be significantly influenced by views presented during the public comment period. It is vitally important that stakeholders (any group or individual with an interest in the issue) be involved in the rulemaking process, to best ensure that all aspects are considered.

Final regulations are promulgated after the agency has reviewed public comments, made appropriate modifications, and conducted a thorough internal review. Once finalized, the rule is published in the *Federal Register*, usually at least 30 days prior to its effective date. Occasionally, agencies may request additional public comment on a published final rule.

### THE FEDERAL REGULATORY PROCESS: JUDICIAL BRANCH

The nation's court system makes up the judicial branch of the federal government. These courts interpret and change laws, as necessary and appropriate. The Supreme Court is the highest court in the nation and as such can assert itself in any area of public policy. The court system is divided into two parts - the state and the federal court systems. The state court system includes trial courts, intermediate appellate courts, and state supreme courts. The federal court system includes district courts and twelve circuit courts of appeal.

## CULTIVATING CONTACTS

Now that you have some familiarity with the policy making process, it's time to start cultivating important contacts. Get to know your legislators, their committees, and their areas of interest and/or expertise. Remember that all Members maintain a Washington office as well as one or more district offices in their home states. Learn how to contact them, regardless of whether they are in DC or in their district offices. You may do so by letter (faxed or mailed) or telephone. Request a schedule of your legislators' local town meetings—these open forums are frequently conducted during district work periods and provide a great opportunity to express your views and increase general awareness on an issue.

Perhaps most importantly, never underestimate the value and importance of legislative staff. You should establish a good working relationship with the legislative assistants (LAs) who handle health issues for your legislators, to be truly effective. Considering the complexity and diversity of legislative issues, it is virtually impossible for Members of Congress to be knowledgeable on every issue. These congressional staff (also called *staffers*) provide background information and advice to Members on issues as they come before Congress - and they do so on a daily basis.

Although these Congressional staff usually have an overwhelming portfolio of issues that they handle, they do develop a certain level of expertise in a few of these areas. Your contact work can help staff not only gain a better understanding of our issues, but may actually spur them to champion our issues. Infection control and epidemiology is certainly a fascinating and ever-evolving field. This can be pretty exciting to a legislative assistant tackling policy issues such as emerging pathogens and funding for programs of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

## GETTING YOUR FOOT IN THE DOOR

There are two simple and virtually foolproof methods for developing solid and effective professional relationships with policy makers and their staffs:

1. Clearly identify yourself as a constituent.
2. Establish yourself as an informational resource.

## YOUR ROLE AS A CONSTITUENT

We have already mentioned the importance of your role as a constituent. Your status as a voter entitles you to share your views with your legislators and their staffs - whether it be in face-to-face meetings, letters, or by telephone. Remember that it is your *constitutional right* to voice your opinions - it is an inherent part of the democratic process, not to mention an invaluable service.

When scheduling meetings or writing letters, always identify yourself as both a constituent and a health care practitioner. It is also effective to mention your broader involvement in a local, state, or national professional organization, as this represents a wider base of voters that will be impacted by legislation. At some point in your meeting or at the end of your letter, also mention that you may be contacted in the future, as necessary, for information

on infection control issues. Remember to list a phone number where you can be reached and provide a business card, if possible.

In some instances, your work and home addresses may be within two different Congressional districts. You may certainly use this situation to your advantage, by sending the same correspondence to both representatives, using different return addresses. Since your facility and its workers are clearly constituents, this is perfectly legitimate. It is not necessary to do this “double hit” as a general rule - but it is useful to remember if one of those representatives sits on an influential committee that may be considering one of our important issues. Remember that since senators represent the entire state, you are a constituent of both of your state’s U.S. Senators.

### SERVING AS A RESOURCE

Information is the number one most sought after resource of any legislative staff. Knowing this can make your lobbying efforts much easier. Your first contact with your legislators’ offices, therefore, should be of a more proactive, information-sharing nature. It is preferable not to wait until you are in a crisis situation before cultivating these important contacts. Members of Congress are faced with multiple crises in any given workday. When you are seeking support on an especially pressing issue, your request will stand out among others and receive prompter attention if you have done a little preparatory contact work beforehand. Here is how you get your foot in the door:

Pull together a packet of information, including *APIC’s Legislative and Regulatory Initiatives*, that would likely be of value to your legislators, and make appointments to meet with them when they are in their states during district work periods. It would be doubly effective if you can also make a personal phone call to their legislative assistants (LAs) for health, in their Washington, DC offices and introduce yourself. Let the LAs know that you may be called upon if they should ever be in need of information. Follow up the phone call by sending another copy of your information packet to the staffer, along with your business card and a short note thanking him or her for speaking with you. Also take this opportunity to reiterate your interest in serving as an informational resource.

A Congressional staffer often times needs background information or advice on very short notice. Perhaps there is a committee hearing on emerging infectious diseases and he or she needs to find out what the most important issues of the day are. Part of a staffer’s job entails gathering background information and crafting questions for the Member to ask of the hearing witnesses. You can provide background information and make suggestions for areas that should be addressed by policy makers. Constituents who prove themselves to be credible and timely providers of information are sometimes asked to serve as hearing witnesses or to meet with policy makers to draft legislation.

At the very least, your involvement will help to foster a greater awareness and interest in infection control issues, which is no small achievement. When the time comes for you to request support or opposition on an important legislative issue, your connections with your legislators’ staffs will have been firmly established. As a result of this strong working

relationship and your serving as a good source of information, the likelihood of successfully gaining the support of the legislator is increased substantially.

### BEYOND THE BASICS: IDENTIFYING FUTURE LEGISLATIVE CHAMPIONS

Once you have made initial contact with your legislators and their staffs, you can work to enhance their awareness of infection control issues as time goes on. Invite your legislators to visit your facility and be sure also to invite their key health staffer or someone who can pass information along to that staffer. There's nothing like a hands-on experience or "day in the life" to elucidate the important role of ICPs in the delivery of health care. Policy makers will see first hand what issues you are faced with on a daily basis and how those issues directly impact patient care.

Furthermore, there is a very strong possibility that such a tour will pique the interest of a legislator and/or staffer - this is how legislative "champions" are cultivated. Champions are those who agree to "carry the water" on an issue - this is absolutely necessary to move any issue forward in Congress. The more champions we can develop, the broader our base of support in Congress. Staffers are often involved in suggesting issues that their Members should champion, so the importance of your outreach efforts to them cannot be overemphasized.

Keep your legislators informed of your facility's activities and get them involved, when possible. For example, perhaps your facility is celebrating Infection Control Week. This is a prime opportunity to send your legislators a short press release or letter detailing the week's activities and inviting them and their staff to attend an event. Perhaps they would agree to say a few words to your group about what Congress has done to enhance infection control policy, such as supporting the activities of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). This type of event could be arranged for any educational campaign.

### WHERE TO GET INFORMATION

It is obviously important to have adequate background on an issue before contacting a Member of Congress to support or oppose a measure. To obtain current information on a bill's status, contact the legislative information service, *Legis*, at 202-225-1772. Through the *Legis* office, you can find out where a bill is in the process; how many co-sponsors the bill has; and any action the bill has undergone. Sometimes you just need to know the exact title or bill number to write a letter. *Legis* is a great source of this kind of information.

To obtain a copy of a bill or committee report, send a self-addressed label with your request to one of the following offices:

House Document Room  
B-18, Annex 2  
Washington, DC 20515  
Tel: (202) 226-5200

Senate Document Room  
SH-B 04  
Washington, DC 20510  
Tel: (202) 224-7860

The *Congressional Research Service* (CRS) is a service of the Library of Congress. Many people do not realize that they have access to information directly from the Library, via their Members of Congress. This can be exceedingly valuable, should you need background

information on virtually any issue. Simply call or write your legislator and request that CRS gather some information for you. You can even introduce your children to Congress, by encouraging them to write a letter to their legislator requesting CRS information for a school report.

The preceding information is designed to empower you to access public information that assists you in your grassroots efforts. Always remember, however, that the Public Policy Department of the APIC National Office is here to help you, too. We can provide insight on APIC's involvement in a particular issue, and may be able to provide you with additional documentation to help build your position. Please do not hesitate to e-mail [jthomas@apic.org](mailto:jthomas@apic.org) for assistance.

You are encouraged to contact the National Office to keep us apprised of your efforts. This can be extremely valuable, as your contacts may someday be the starting point for us to secure a Member's support on an issue. When you consider that there are 535 Members of Congress, any of whom we may need to contact at any time, we count on you to help in our outreach efforts!

#### ONLINE RESOURCE LIST

The following online resource list includes our top recommendations for government information, publications, and resources that may be helpful during a grassroots lobbying campaign.

Thomas – Legislative Information  
<http://thomas.loc.gov>

Federal Register  
<http://www.access.gpo.gov>

The White House  
<http://www.whitehouse.gov>

Centers for Disease Control  
<http://www.cdc.gov//cdhtml>

Agency for Healthcare Research & Quality (AHRQ)  
<http://www.ahrq.gov>

Environmental Protection Agency  
<http://www.epa.gov>

OSHA  
<http://www.osha.gov/>

## STATE GOVERNMENT WEB SITES

Most states have Internet sites, but the type of information available from those sites varies. Many of these sites are designed to support tourist information, but some states have government sites as well. These sites are available using standard Web search programs using key words such as: “state name” and “government” or “legislature,” etc. Other state agencies may also have useful sites. Again, when searching, use the name of the state and the state office: “governor,” secretary of state, etc.

## WRITE AN EFFECTIVE LETTER TO A MEMBER OF CONGRESS

Letter writing can indeed be an art form. It is also a very powerful tool. While the advent of e-mail certainly portends a future of enhanced and more broadly accepted computer communications, personal and tangible letters remain a much more effective method to convey your concerns to Congress. Form letters wherein you essentially sign your name to the bottom of a pre-typed letter, however, are usually ineffective - so don't waste your stamp.

In many cases, on issues of particular importance to the infection control profession, the Public Policy Team provides a letter template for you, attached to an Action Alert. In these cases, much of the work has been done for you, but we suggest that you take a few minutes to include a personal touch to your letters; a few words about where you work and how a particular issue will affect you professionally and the public health at large.

A review of the basics:

- Identify yourself as a constituent.
- Identify yourself as a health care professional.
- Identify yourself as a member of a larger group or coalition, particularly any group that is comprised of other constituents.

Be specific:

- Reference the exact name of the bill you are supporting or opposing; as well as the bill number.
- State clearly your request for support or opposition on the issue; steer away from ambiguity, as it can lead to misinterpretation.
- Request action. If you are seeking his or her *support* on a bill, ask the legislator to *cosponsor* the measure. Request also that he or she urge the appropriate subcommittee Chair to schedule hearings on the issue as soon as possible. If you know that the measure is due for a floor vote in the immediate future, urge the legislator to vote yes on the bill. Request his or her current position on the issue. If you *oppose* an issue, clearly say so and provide information about how you and your patients will be affected. Be direct in requesting that the legislator oppose the measure. Again, request his or her current position on the issue.

Be succinct:

- Try to limit your letters to two pages or fewer — one page is optimal. Include concise supporting documents, if necessary, such as one-page Fact Sheets or Talking Points, with helpful statistics and compelling, pithy statements.

Be as constructive as possible:

- If a bill addresses a problem that truly exists but goes about solving it in the wrong way, offer ideas about a more reasonable approach. Offer your expertise in the re-working of the bill, if appropriate, or suggest that the legislator seek input from the APIC membership, through the National Office, or from officials at the CDC.

Be persistent:

- If this is an issue of great importance to your profession, do not cease your involvement after one visit, letter or phone call. Remember that legislators are dealing with a multitude of issues every day. They appreciate reminders about what may be going on with a bill. Keep on top of the issue. Organize other members of your Chapter to send letters, make calls, or schedule visits with legislators. Refer back to the section in this manual on “Beyond the Basics...” for additional lobbying ideas.

Be courteous:

- Always be kind — understand that there are many interest groups with competing goals. Present yourself as a reasonable individual, sincerely concerned with patient care and public health. Be willing to compromise to a certain extent - this opens the doors to negotiations and may ultimately lead to the development of better policy.

Address your letters to your legislators at the following House and Senate addresses:

The Honorable (Senator’s name)  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510\*

The Honorable (Representative’s name)  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515\*

Dear Senator (last name):

Dear Representative (last name):

## MEETING WITH A MEMBER OF CONGRESS

As we stated previously, meetings with your legislators or their staff can take place in the home state or in Washington, DC. To schedule an appointment with a legislator, call that Member’s office and ask to speak to the scheduler. Explain that you are a constituent and that you would like to speak with the legislator on a certain date. Provide the scheduler with information, such as where you work and what issue you will be discussing. If the Member is not available to meet with you, request to meet with a staffer who handles those issues or someone who can pass the information on to the legislator.

If you plan on bringing other individuals to the meeting, such as several members of a coalition, be sure to disclose to the scheduler how many participants will be in attendance. You will likely be allotted fifteen to thirty minutes for your meeting. It is usually a good idea

\* Please note that the zip codes of the House and Senate are different.

to confirm your appointment, as the time draws closer. Do not be surprised or offended if the Member has to rush out during your meeting for some unexpected reason or for a vote - this is a common occurrence. We have already discussed the role of the legislative staffer, but as a reminder, do not be offended or disheartened if you are unable to meet with the legislator.

If you are one of a group of individuals meeting with a legislator, you should plan ahead of time what each of you will say, addressing specific aspects of the issue. It is imperative, however, to ensure that there is a spokesperson for the group. This person should control the flow of the meeting, and conclude the meeting with any key points that are worth repeating.

Here are a few tips to ensure your success:

1. Be on time. But also be prepared to wait, if necessary. Congressional office activities are unpredictable - you will be appreciated for your patience and understanding in the case of any delays. If *you* are running late to your appointment, call the legislator's office and let them know. They are usually very accommodating and appreciate the courtesy of a phone call.
2. Be flexible and good-natured. Do not be insulted if you are asked to meet in a rather informal setting. This is very common. Typically Congressional offices are overcrowded and bustling with activity. You may be fortunate enough to meet in the legislator's personal office; on the other hand, you may meet in the hallway outside the office or in the lobby!
3. Introduce yourself to the legislator and/or staff with a firm handshake and pleasant demeanor. If you are with a group, each person should introduce him or herself. Make a point to remember the legislative assistant's name - and include him or her often in your conversation and eye contact.
4. Understand that time is very limited. Be as concise as possible and acknowledge how much you appreciate their taking the time to meet with you. If you are discussing a specific bill, mention the exact title and bill number. Get to the heart of the matter, outlining key points of the bill and then talk briefly about how they will affect you and your patients. Use local examples (your facility and others in the area) that will truly mean something to the legislator.
5. Do not be overly technical. Remember that you are an expert in your subject - but the legislator and his or her staff most likely are not. As time goes on, if you are dealing with them on this issue, you may be asked for more technical information, but in the beginning you need to capture their interest. Arcane language and too many statistics will not accomplish this.
6. Provide a one-page fact sheet on the issue, with your position clearly stated, as well as a contact name and telephone number. If you oppose an issue, try to offer an alternative course of action that should be considered. Ask for the Member's position on the issue and if you can count on his/her support or opposition.

7. You may also wish to provide some other information about general issues of importance to your profession, such as *APIC's Legislative and Regulatory Initiatives*, so that there is something for them to refer back to after you leave. Provide your business card and offer to serve as a resource if they have questions or need further information. Obtain the staffer's business card so that you may follow up later.
8. As the meeting is concluded, thank the Member and staffer for their time, and reiterate that you are happy to provide information in the future, should they ever need it. Leave promptly — chances are good that the next appointment is waiting in the lobby.
9. Follow up with a formal letter thanking the Member for his or her time and reiterating your position. Include any information that may have been requested during your meeting and make a special effort to acknowledge the time and attention paid by the legislative staffer.
10. Stoke the fire. It is important not to lose ground with your contact work. Touch base every once in a while with the legislative assistant you met with — send along important and timely articles to them that may be of interest to the legislator. Even two or three such contacts per year are highly effective.



## APPENDIX

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# GLOSSARY OF TERMS

### *Act*

Legislation that has been passed by both houses of Congress and signed by the President (or in the case of a veto over-ride, passed by Congress), thus becoming law.

### *Amendment*

Legislative proposal to alter the language or provisions in a bill or in another amendment. An amendment is usually debated and voted on in the same manner as a bill.

### *Amendment in the Nature of a Substitute*

An amendment that seeks to replace the entire text of a bill or significant portion of it.

### *Appropriations bill*

Legislation that allocates funding to authorized programs — however, appropriations amounts may be less than authorized (ceiling) amounts (see *Authorization bill*).

### *Authorization bill*

Legislation that establishes or continues the legal operation of a federal program or agency, including the authorized (officially determined) funding levels for those programs. Programs may be authorized for a specified period of time or indefinitely. The authorization bill is usually a prerequisite to the appropriations bill and sets a ceiling for all funding amounts that will be determined by the appropriations committees.

### *Bill*

Legislative proposal before Congress, designated as either H.R. (House of Representatives) or S. (Senate), depending on where the bill originates, and by a number assigned in the order in which it was introduced, beginning with each two-year Congress.

### *Budget*

The document submitted to Congress by the President in February of each year. The budget estimates government revenues and expenditures for the following fiscal year and recommends specific appropriations (funding).

### *Budget Reconciliation*

A procedure to bring tax and spending bills into conformity with levels set in the Congressional budget resolutions (see *Budget Resolution*).

### *Budget Resolution*

A concurrent resolution passed by both houses of Congress, which does not require the President's signature, and sets forth or revises the Congressional version of the federal budget (see *Concurrent Resolution*).

### *Caucus*

A group of Members with a common interest. The most powerful caucuses are the Republican and Democratic caucuses or conferences in each chamber. There are

approximately 100 other caucuses representing interests, such as the Congressional Caucus for Women's Issues and the Congressional Black Caucus.

#### *Chairman's Mark*

The draft of a bill that the Chair of a committee or subcommittee uses as the starting point of a mark-up (see *Mark-up*).

#### *Chamber*

The meeting place for the total membership of either the House or Senate, as distinguished from offices and committee rooms.

#### *“Christmas Tree”*

A legislative measure that is ornamented with many unrelated amendments benefiting a wide range of interests. Usually a Senate measure, since the House rules, unlike the Senate, require that amendments be germane to the bill.

#### *Clean Bill*

The revised bill, following committee mark-up, that is re-introduced as a new measure and given a new bill number (see *Mark-up*).

#### *Clerk of the House*

The Chief administrative officer of the House of Representatives with duties corresponding to those of the Secretary of the Senate.

#### *Cloture*

The limiting of debate in the Senate. Cloture motions, intended to limit debate, require the signatures of 16 senators. Sixty senators (three-fifths of the membership) must vote for cloture for it to be invoked. Once invoked, each senator is limited to one hour of debate.

#### *Committee*

A subdivision of the House or Senate that prepares legislation for full chamber action and conducts investigations as directed. Some committees are divided into

subcommittees that study legislation, hold hearings, draft legislation, and report their recommendations to the full committee. Only the full committee may report legislation to the full House or Senate for further action.

#### *Committee Chair*

The Member who presides over committee hearings and legislative committee action. The Chair is the individual within the majority party of the committee with highest seniority.

#### *Concurrent Resolution*

A resolution that must pass both chambers of Congress but does not require the President's signature and does not have the force of law. Concurrent resolutions are usually designated as H. Con. Res. or S. Con. Res., depending on where the measure originates. Concurrent resolutions are typically used to make or amend rules applicable to both houses or to express the sentiment of the two houses.

#### *Conference*

A meeting between selected Members of the House and Senate to work out the differences between the House-passed and Senate-passed provisions of a bill. The final agreement is called a conference report and must be approved by both chambers.

#### *Congressional Record*

The daily printed account of the proceedings of both Houses of Congress.

#### *Congressional Research Service*

An extension of the Library of Congress that provides research information on any topic requested by a Member or Congressional staff.

#### *Continuing Resolution*

A joint resolution passed by Congress and signed by the President that allows federal agencies to continue to operate at current fiscal year funding levels until their annual

appropriations bills for the next fiscal year are enacted. These are used when the current fiscal year is ending and the new fiscal year has begun before appropriations have been completed. Often called a “CR.”

*Dear Colleague*

A letter from one Member to another (or to all Members of one or both chambers), seeking support for a bill or amendment.

*District Office*

Members of the House and Senate usually have one or more district offices where they work when they are in their home states.

*District Work Period*

Usually a recess, however, also a time when the Member conducts Town Meetings and other constituent-related events in the home state.

*Entitlement Program*

A federal program, such as Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, Veteran’s Compensation, or unemployment compensation, that guarantees a certain level of benefits to those who meet the criteria as set by law.

*Expenditures*

The actual spending of funds as distinguished from their appropriation. Funds are appropriated by Congress and expended by the executive branch.

*Filibuster*

In the Senate, a time-delaying strategy of debate, amendments, general verbal rambling, and other tactics used by the minority to defeat a proposal supported by the majority or to achieve a compromise on a measure. A filibuster can be stopped only by invoking cloture, which requires the support of 60 senators.

*Fiscal Year*

The government’s financial operations calendar, running from October 1 through September 30 each year. The number of the fiscal year denotes when that fiscal budget period will end.

*Frank*

The privilege granted to send mail postage-free; also the term for the facsimile signature that appears on envelopes in lieu of stamps for official outgoing mail that is sent postage-free. All Members are granted franking privileges.

*Hearing*

A committee session for the gathering and sharing of information on a particular subject. Witnesses, who typically include government officials, representatives of interest groups, and other specialists who are knowledgeable about the subject under consideration, provide oral and written testimony to the committee. The committee uses this information in determining future legislative action on the issue.

*Hopper*

A box on the desk of the House Clerk where bills are deposited upon their introduction. In the Senate, the introduction of the bill is announced by the sponsoring senator, who then passes the bill to a Page who delivers it to a desk in front of the Senate President’s rostrum.

*House*

The House of Representatives, as distinguished from the Senate. However, each entity (House and Senate) is referred to as a *house* of Congress.

*Joint Committee*

A committee comprised of a specified number of members from both the House and Senate that studies and reports on specific policy areas. A joint committee does not have legislative authority.

*Joint Resolution*

Designated as H.J. Res. or S.J. Res., this type of measure must pass both chambers and receive the President's signature, just as a bill does. If approved, it has the force of law. A joint resolution is used to address a very specific issue, such as proposing an amendment to the Constitution. In this instance, a Presidential signature is not required, as long as it receives ratification from three-fourths of the states.

*Law*

An act of Congress that has been signed by the President or has passed over Presidential veto by a two-thirds vote in both houses of Congress.

*Legislative Assistant (LA)*

A Congressional aide with responsibility for a number of legislative issues. These assistants provide background and advice to Members when issues arise in Congress.

*Lame Duck Session*

A session of Congress that occurs after the November elections, but before the newly elected Members of the new Congress have been sworn in, in January.

*Line-item Veto*

The authority to veto part, rather than all of an appropriations bill. The term line item refers to individual accounts within a given program or agency that could be rejected without jeopardizing the entire appropriations bill.

*Majority Leader*

The chief strategist and floor leader for the party in control of the House and Senate; elected by Members of the majority party.

*Majority Whip*

The assistant to the majority leader in both the House and Senate. This person keeps Members advised as to the legislative program, rounds them up for important

votes, and keeps the party's leadership informed of how many votes they can expect for and against a measure.

*Minority Leader*

Floor leader for the minority party in both the House and Senate.

*Minority Whip*

Chief assistant to the minority leader.

*Nominations*

Appointments, by the President, to executive branch, federal judicial, and diplomatic posts, all subject to Senate confirmation.

*Omnibus Bill*

A bill containing several separate, but related legislative proposals.

*Ordered Reported*

A full committee approves a bill and *orders it reported* (referred) to the House or Senate. This means that the bill has cleared the committee, but is not quite ready for floor action. First, the committee must write a report explaining the bill and committee actions on it. The main body of the report contains the majority views, with other views appended. The bill and report are filed in the House or Senate and, at that point, the bill is considered reported.

*Outlays*

Payments made to fulfill obligations incurred by federal agencies or programs (see *Budget Authority*).

*Override*

A process whereby Congress rejects (or overrides) a Presidential veto of a bill. It requires a two-thirds vote of the entire membership in each chamber.

*Pocket Veto*

An action whereby the President withholds his or her approval of a bill and thereby vetoes it, after Congress has adjourned either for the year or for a specified period.

When Congress is in session, a bill becomes law without the President's signature, if he or she does not act on it within ten days, excluding Sundays, from the time the President receives it. However, if Congress adjourns within that ten-day period, the bill is killed without any formal veto action by the President.

*Point of Order*

A tactic to halt any pending business in the House in order to: 1) force a quorum call; 2) remove bill language that does not pertain to the purpose of the bill; or 3) remove from the written record certain words spoken in violation of the House rules (e.g., criticism or name-calling).

*President of the Senate*

The Vice President of the United States presides over the Senate. In his or her absence, a *president pro tempore* presides.

*President Pro Tempore*

The chief officer of the Senate in the absence of the Vice President. Elected by the other senators, he or she usually is the majority party senator with the longest continuous service in the Senate.

*Public Law (PL)*

A measure that has passed both houses of Congress and been signed into law by the President. Laws are listed numerically by Congress. For example, Public Law 102-10 denotes that the bill was passed by the 102nd Congress and was the tenth measure passed by that Congress that was signed into law.

*Quorum*

The minimum number of Members that must be present for the transaction of business. In the Senate and the House, it is a majority of the membership (51 in the Senate and 218 in the House).

*Ranking Member*

The Member of the majority party on a committee who ranks first in seniority after the Chairman.

*Ranking Minority Member*

The Member of a committee who ranks first in seniority within the minority.

*Recommit a Bill*

After deliberations on a bill, a motion is made on the Floor, just before the final vote, to return that bill to the committee that reported it. It usually signifies bad news for the bill. A motion to recommit may include instructions to the committee to report the bill again with specific amendments or by a certain date. The instructions may also be to conduct a particular study, with no definite deadline for final action.

*Reconciliation*

The 1974 Budget Act provides for a "reconciliation" procedure to bring tax and appropriations bills into conformity with Congressional budget resolutions. Legislative committees must adjust revenues and expenditures by a certain amount and by a certain time. These recommendations are incorporated into one omnibus reconciliation bill, which must then be approved by both houses of Congress.

*Recorded Vote*

A vote in which each Member's vote on a legislative proposal is recorded, either electronically or by a written tally.

*Report*

A committee that has been examining a bill under its jurisdiction *reports* its findings and recommendations to the chamber when the committee sends the bill for consideration and vote. This process is called *reporting* a bill. A *report* is also the document setting forth the committee's explanation of its actions on a bill and is sent to the chamber along with the bill. House

and Senate reports are numbered separately, designated as either S. Rept. or H. Rept.

#### *Resolution*

A measure with no force of law (designated as S. Res. or H. Res.), passed only by the chamber in which it was introduced, and dealing only with business pertaining to that chamber. It does not require passage by the other chamber or approval of the President.

#### *Rider*

A measure unrelated to a bill but attached to it. A rider is used when the measure's sponsor hopes to get it through the legislative process more easily.

#### *Rule*

A *rule* is a standing order governing the conduct of the House or Senate, such as duties of officers, order of business, attendance, and voting procedures. In the House, a *rule* may also be the procedure established by the House Rules Committee for Floor debate on a particular bill.

#### *Secretary of the Senate*

Chief administrative officer of the Senate; responsible for directing the work of Senate employees, education of Pages, administration of oaths of office, receipt of registration of lobbyists, and other activities necessary for the Senate's continuing administrative operation.

#### *Select or Special Committee*

A committee set up for a special purpose and a limited time by resolution of either the House or Senate. Most special committees are investigative in nature and have no legislative authority.

#### *Sequestration*

The automatic withholding of budgeted funds to keep the federal budget on target with deficit-reduction guidelines in a given fiscal year.

#### *Speaker*

The presiding officer of the House of Representatives, elected from the majority party membership and by a vote of that membership at the beginning of each new Congress.

#### *Special Session*

A session of Congress convened after it has adjourned *sine die* (indefinitely), completing its regular session. The President under his constitutional powers (e.g., to declare war) convenes special sessions.

#### *Standing Committees*

The committees established permanently by House and Senate rules, as distinguished from Special and Select Committees.

#### *Supplemental Appropriations*

An appropriations bill considered after passage of regular (annual) appropriations bills, providing additional money for a government program during the course of a fiscal year. Requested by the executive branch, a supplemental appropriation is used to meet funding needs that were not anticipated during the regular appropriations process.

#### *Suspension of the Rules*

On the first and third Mondays of each month, and the last six days of a session, the Speaker of the House may entertain a motion to suspend the rules on legislation that is non-controversial. Under this procedure, debate is limited to twenty minutes on each side, no amendments are permitted, and the bill requires a two-thirds vote for passage.

#### *Table*

A motion used in both chambers to kill a bill, without having to vote on it directly. A motion to table cannot be debated and comes to an immediate vote. Once a bill is tabled, it is dead.

*Unanimous Consent*

Used in lieu of a vote on a non-controversial motion, amendment, or bill. An objection by one Member will prevent consideration by unanimous consent.

*United States Code*

A consolidation and codification of the general and permanent laws of the United States, arranged by subject matter under fifty titles. The code is revised periodically.

*Veto*

The President's rejection of a bill passed by Congress. When Congress is in session, any measure that the President wishes to reject must be *vetoed* within ten days of its receipt by the President, excluding Sundays.

Otherwise, the bill becomes law without the President's signature. When a bill is *vetoed*, it is returned to the house of origin with a message stating the President's objections. A Presidential *veto* may be overridden by a two-thirds vote of the membership in both the House and the Senate (see *Override*).

*Voice Vote*

In either the House or Senate, Members answer "aye" or "no" in chorus and the presiding officer determines which group has more votes. A voice vote is often followed by a recorded vote on the same measure.

*Well*

The area in front of the Speaker's rostrum in the House from which Members address the House. Senators speak from their desks.

*Whip*

See *Majority Whip*, *Minority Whip*.

*Without Objection*

In lieu of voting on non-controversial motions, amendments or bills, the Chair allows a measure to be approved in either the House or Senate, as long as no Member voices an objection.

*Yielding*

When a Member has been recognized to speak, no other Member may speak without permission from the recognized Member. This permission is called *yielding*.









## ABOUT APIC

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This book is brought to you by the Association for Professionals in Infection Control and Epidemiology (APIC), in a continuing effort to further our mission, vision, and reach. APIC improves healthcare by reducing risks of infection and related adverse outcomes.

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