

# How to Get Involved in the Hawaii State Legislative Process



## 1: Communicate with your Legislators

If you have an idea or if there is an issue that is important to you, let your Senator and Representative know about it by sending them an email, a letter or call their office. When sending a letter or email, remember to keep it brief and get to the point, be kind, tell the truth and don't exaggerate. Explain your idea or position and why it matters to you. Be sure to share your contact information. Not sure who your representative is? Search for them on <https://www.capitol.hawaii.gov/fyl/>



## 2: Share an idea for a new law

Legislators introduce new bills during the first week of the new session, which begins in mid-January. Find a legislator who represents you or who has supported similar bills in the past and share your idea with them. Include what you think the law should do and use bullet points to highlight main objectives. Let them know if you have research, sources or examples to back up your idea.



## 3: Ask for a public hearing

Once a bill is introduced, it goes into committee. It must be "heard" in a public hearing to be voted on and to move forward. You have to follow your bill carefully and be quick to ask the chair of the committee, by phone or letter, for a hearing. If a bill does not get a hearing, it will miss its deadlines and "die in committee." If your bill does not make it out of committee, try following similar bills; otherwise you must wait till next year to reintroduce your bill. Visit the [capitol website](#) to view the committee chair assignments.



## 4: Testify & repeat as necessary

If a bill gets scheduled for a hearing, you may get the opportunity to testify for or against the bill in writing and/or in person. If the bill moves from one committee to the next, be ready to send in your testimony again. Try to find others to help you testify and gather legislative support for your bill. Having a bill become law is not an easy process and can take a few years. Be patient, be persistent and be passionate.



## 5: Want to learn more?

The Public Access Room (PAR) can assist you in learning more about the process, timelines and contact information for your legislators. They can also help you navigate the legislature's website to keep track of bills, sign up for hearing notices and more. Contact them by phone at 808-587-0478 or by email: [par@capitol.hawaii.gov](mailto:par@capitol.hawaii.gov). For a list of your representatives and to follow this year's bills, visit [www.capitol.hawaii.gov](http://www.capitol.hawaii.gov).

